



Case Study: Improving Transplant Patient Experience through Kaizen

A major challenge at this call center dealt with the management of incoming telephone calls and the proper routing of these calls. In other words, the call was not getting to the right person at the right time. The lack of a single point of contact and a call triage process were significant hindrances that precluded that requirement from occurring. Specific significant issues with the current state included:

- An excessive number of center points of contact
- An inconsistent center message delivery to callers
- Variety of calls (directions for example versus transplant calls) slowing system down
- The lack of a call triage system resulting in excessive number of “hand-offs”
- Nonstandard workspaces in need of 5S

Guidon Performance Solutions engaged a cross functional team consisting of subject matter experts from Operations, Scheduling, and Systems and Procedures during this Kaizen. A key output of the engagement was the Call Center current state process map. The mapping of the Center’s Operation allowed the team to immediately see the waste inherent in their current process.

In addition to the generation of the current state map, the Kaizen team applied a number of Lean Six Sigma concepts. These concepts, which were followed up with simulation, included:

- Issue and Resolution Brainstorming
- Affinity diagrams and ranked prioritization
- Creation of and discussion on Impact/ Difficulty matrix
- Creation of standard work (script generation for operator(s))
- Generation of future state map
- Deployment of schedule and lead-time calculations

During the week-long Kaizen Event the team adhered to the collaborative approach espoused by Guidon. The cross-functional/ cross level approach helped ensure all were engaged at the time of implementation. Key results from the week-long event included:

- Creation of a central point of phone contact for the center
- Reduction of total steps from 19 to 5
- Reduction of hand-offs from 11 to 1
- Reductions of decision points from 4 to 1
- Reduction of staff touch points from 42 to 2
- Reduction of process cycle time from 19 minutes 25 seconds to 1 minute 59 seconds
- Creation of standard work (standard script) and creation of center web page to assist in communicating center changes

This successful Kaizen reinforced to the center’s participants the power of mapping the process in identifying waste and improvement opportunities. Their identification of waste and opportunities was critical to improving the overall patient/client experience. Truly the application of mental rather than financial capital helped make this engagement a success with no additional costs incurred.

Client: A transplant center located in the southwest United States

Industry: Healthcare

Service: Supply Chain, Kaizen event

Challenge:

- Calls to the center have approximately 9 points of origin and 7 potential points of contact
- The customer experience was far from positive
- The creation of a call triage system with the expectation that changes be made with no incremental cost to the organization

Solutions:

- Recommended applying Lean principles to the center flow
- Establishment of a single contact point for all incoming calls which were then triaged based on call topic and the urgency of the communication

Results:

- Centered on a streamline process reducing the number of steps by 74%
- At first cycle time averaged 19.5 minutes and through the collaborative effort was reduced to just under 2 minutes
- Abandoned call percentage improved to 1.8% from 4.6%
- Call volumes decreased from 15,504 to 10,269



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