

Disequilibrium

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The challenges facing today's OR Directors are multifaceted and demand constant vigilance. It is a balancing act to keep all customers satisfied, maintain efficient and effective systems, provide safe, quality care, all while operating within budgetary parameters.

"Disequilibrium" can result when problems arise in any one of those operational arenas. The ripple effect can be far reaching and energy depleting, resulting in loss of revenue and even a diminished community image. Among the possible concerns may be:

- An increase in surgical site infections
- Interdisciplinary conflict
- The inability to meet clinical practice standards
- A sentinel event

Facilities may not have the ability to commit internal resources to investigative problem solving and mitigation. Too often issues become mired in indecision and inactivity leading to increased frustration. In an effort to free the Director to concentrate on the "day to day" activities, more facilities are engaging Professional Consultants to do an on-site focused assessment. This process can provide objective opinions and recommendations toward realistic solutions.

Engagement of a Professional Consultant to perform a pro-active "operational assessment" has become an increasingly effective tool. In such cases, all components of perioperative patient care are examined. This has proven to be particularly insightful in the area of patient safety and infection control – two of the current "hot button" issues.

Professional Consultants are also utilized to validate perceptions related to politically sensitive issues, such as physician conflicts, staff professionalism, and administrative pressure. An objective, external professional assessment lends credibility to findings and strategic action plan. This dynamic process provides the catalyst to create a climate of positive change and care improvement.

It is not unusual for a Professional Consultant to identify problems peripheral to the identified issue. This dynamic and unique approach results in significant secondary gains for the facility. Issues are rarely isolated in their occurrence. Perioperative care is a continuum of integral processes; therefore there may be a need for continuing education, management mentoring, or perhaps an interim manager to oversee these initiatives.

Choosing a Professional Consultant is key to the success of the outcome. It is essential that expectations are clearly expressed. Professional Consultant resumes should indicate a depth and breadth of experience and education enabling them to address the client's concerns. References of previous engagements relating to focused issues should be made available. The initial contact with the Professional Consultant should put one at ease and reinforce a sense that this person is credible, approachable and skillful.

The consultation outcome should offer a clear and strategic direction related to the identified problem(s) including specific opportunities for improvement and time lines for achieving these goals.

Kim Richards and Associates, Inc. can provide your facility with expert consultation as well as immediate, experienced interim management. We're just a call away!