PROCESSING LOW-PRIORITY CHLAMYDIA & GONORRHEA REPORTS: KAIZEN IN ACTION

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Using data and meetings throughout the Kaizen process lead to improvements that were different from the initial assumption of the "problem" and pre-identified solutions, underscoring the need for utilizing information and systematic methods to improve processes.

• Kaizen events engage the whole community, and the team is able to develop improvements, which has a significant change management impact and helps develop positive energy and build morale among the staff. It is therefore critical to not only gauge Kaizen event success as an event but also include these improvements to measure the success of the whole organization.

• Full participation of all team members is critical to success. This includes engaging persons who are disconnected during the event, re-directing persons discussing different topics, eliminating outside tasks, and providing a very clear sense of purpose.

• Kaizen team members struggle with conflicts resulting in absence in the event for periods of time.

Communication from management to the Kaizen Team prior to the event demonstrated to team members that management was supportive of the Kaizen process and the solution to the "problem" was in their hands.

• Pre-work for a Kaizen Event can be time consuming, yet absolutely necessary especially data collection. Collecting and analyzing baseline data prior to the event makes it easier to understand the process, work through root causes behind each waste/resource and capture impact of improvements during the testing phase.

• Teaching the team about the 8 kinds of waste and then focusing on waste during the cause and effect analysis helped the team to (1) focus on the process not the people and (2) change perspective on the "easy" being processed vs. hard (i.e., reports are waiting to be processed, not people waiting to process reports).

• Testing potential solutions during the event allowed the team to get immediate feedback and was an integrating activity at the end of a busy week.

• Holding the event onsite (pavilion) provided the opportunity to pull in staff involved in different parts of the process, walk the process during mapping and improvement activities.

• Access to and availability of resources, such as a project, worksheet, and printouts, is imperative to keep the process moving during an event.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

• Build on success of Kaizen Event by continuing to engage team members in ongoing CS meetings to address new challenges and participating in more Kaizen events and CI initiatives.

• In order to sustain the gains made during Kaizen event, at both the people and process level, include the action plan, specific tasks to measure and verify improvement results, and follow-up regularly with process owners to confirm conversion progress and/or progress.

• Before upcoming Kaizen events, provide pre-event training to team members to build capacity in waste identification and "pursue out" activities. This includes providing an overview of the CI process and necessary tools, including travel and registration details, field work, and resources for CI event.

• Consider incorporating rapid cycle CI events to allow for more frequent problem solving and improvement.

• Encourage team members to participate in future Kaizen events to build capacity in waste identification and "pursue out" activities. This includes providing an overview of the CI process and necessary tools, including travel and registration details, field work, and resources for CI event.

• Consider incorporating rapid cycle CI events to allow for more frequent problem solving and improvement.

• Provide ongoing CI support and resources to team members.

• Encourage team members to participate in future Kaizen events to build capacity in waste identification and "pursue out" activities. This includes providing an overview of the CI process and necessary tools, including travel and registration details, field work, and resources for CI event.

• Communicate these expectations to future Kaizen team members and management regarding team norms and participation during event.

• Complain data collection, value stream and sub-process mapping provide a future Kaizen events to allow for future problem solving.

• Continue to hold future Kaizen events on a regular basis and find new ideas that can be implemented.

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