

FieldStrength

Publication for the
Philips MRI Community

ISSUE 42 – DECEMBER 2010

Partnering to implement and maintain improvements in MRI utilization

Philips Utilization Services provides decisive support in managing change that increased patient throughput and satisfaction



This article is part of FieldStrength issue 42
December 2010

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User experiences



Yutaka Akane, CEO and **Satoshi Isogai**, Chief Administrator brainstorm the potential for improvement

“20% of the success is down to the technical changes. The rest is the result of managing the change process.”

Yutaka Akane, CEO of the Medical Satellite Yaesu Clinic in Tokyo, Japan, had a successful record as a businessman before he started in radiology. He spotted a gap in the market: to deliver top-class, cost-effective, private radiology services. His goal now is to become the Japanese market leader. Central to that goal is always ensuring the best possible performance of staff and equipment. Naturally, this includes using the MRI systems for the greatest, long-term benefit of both the patients and the business.

The Medical Satellite Yaesu Clinic has locations in the Yaesu and Kanda neighborhoods of Tokyo. In Yaesu, the MRI suite has an Intera 1.5T and an Achieva 1.5T system. With a traditionally higher patient load, the management selected the Yaesu site to improve first. The main changes were to be achieved in a Kaizen event, a project that optimizes a small, self-contained process in a single burst of change. These are particularly useful for organizations new to the Lean and Six Sigma quality improvement methodologies.

The Kaizen team in Yaesu brought management, radiologists, technologists, nursing staff and administrators together with local and international consultants from Philips. In February 2009, the investigations started with the data and statistics gathered for the systems and made available through NetForum. Philips Utilization Services helped analyze examination and patient changeover times, to pinpoint where the potential could lie.

A careful approach for confident change

Most obvious was a scatter of long changeover times between examinations. These were often because of patients arriving late or not showing up. The experienced Philips team helped develop scripts to ensure the relevant patient contact data were collected at registration, and for phone calls to confirm the appointment a day in advance. “Many people were hesitant,” says Mr. Satoshi Isogai, Administrator. “But having someone from outside, who could say how other clinics successfully dealt with such issues, helped overcome this threshold.” The pilot phase proved it could reduce missed appointments. And this success convinced them to change the process permanently.

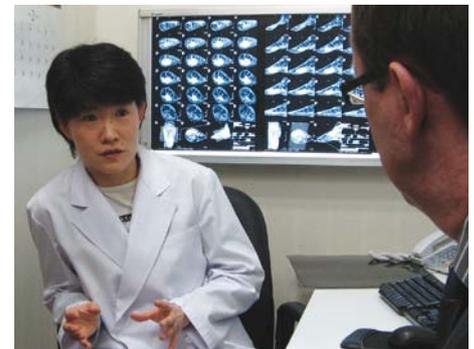
This approach characterized the Kaizen event in Yaesu. Changes were piloted and refined. Once a change was proved possible, it was introduced more widely. For example, patient changeovers could be slower than necessary. “Increasing awareness of each other’s processes helped

“Having utilization data and an objective view reinforced the improvements until they became self-sustaining.”

NetForum
www.philips.com/netforum

Visit the NetForum User Community for more information on Utilization Services.

	MR1		MR2		MR3		MR4	
	Initial	After 8 months						
Change-over time (min.)	10	9	13	10	21	11	23	12
Scan time	22	21	24	24	36	25	28	26
Number of patients	21	23 (+2)	19	21 (+2)	11	20 (+9)	12	18 (+6)



Radiologist **Dr. Ogura**

us align nurse and technologist workflows.” says Ms. Yoko Komiyama of the nursing staff. They tried out an integrated workflow for a few hours, and then fine-tuned this on one scanner. When they were confident of the improvement, they extended it to the second system. Overall, they reduced average changeovers from 11 to 4.5 minutes.

Controlling and extending the benefits

Preserving such successes became part of the weekly management team meetings. In the early stages, the local Philips consultant supported these meetings by providing observations and feedback on the performance data. “Having utilization data, and an objective view as part of the team kept us on our toes,” says Mr. Takashi Tabuchi, chief technologist. “This reinforced the improvements until they became self-sustaining.” The crowning endorsement for the success in Yaesu is that the in-house Kaizen Team extended the improvements to the Kanda site, late in April

2009. Because most of the challenges were already familiar from the Kaizen event in Yaesu, this time they needed only a little support from Philips in analyzing the data from NetForum.

Perseverance, backed up by convincing data, are the cornerstones of sustainable success. In Yaesu and Kanda, not only are patients happier about the reminders and shorter waiting times, but also the staff in Yaesu carries out around four extra examinations a day.

“20% of the success is down to the technical changes,” reflects Mr. Akane. “The rest is the result of managing the change process.” By partnering with the staff of the Medical Satellite Yaesu Clinic during the Kaizen event and afterwards, Philips Utilization Services played an important role in ensuring that success. ■



Nurse explaining the exam to the patient.