

BJC HealthCare: The Full Story

“During our lean deployment, I found Destra to be not only technically competent, but more importantly for our purpose of ‘learning to fish’, very effective as teachers and mentors. Their approach to the deployment taught us what we needed to know and how to implement and own what we learned.”

- Colleen Sutherland

Director of Leadership Communication and Change Management

Overview

BJC HealthCare system has 13 hospitals and community health centers located in and around St. Louis, MO. In 2006 BJC selected Destra to assist with the re-deployment of a system-wide lean process improvement initiative (Process Excellence Initiative or PEI). An earlier effort with a different vendor had lost momentum due to lack of engagement with key stakeholders and failure to account for cultural factors.

These 13 medical centers were loosely affiliated with no history of corporate directives, and those directives that did exist were mostly aligned around performance targets. BJC described its culture as “Directed Autonomy with Congenial Control.” There was also little information sharing or collaboration between their medical centers.

Business Need

The rationale for reinstating PEI was that impending changes in the Medicare reimbursement process would have a dramatic impact on BJC’s operating budget. They needed to ensure that all of the medical centers were operating as lean as possible to minimize any potential financial consequences of these changes.

However, there was no perceived crisis below executive management, so one task was to create a “sense of urgency” to get ahead of curve on cost reduction and patient satisfaction efforts. Another dynamic was that the CEO was skeptical about doing PEI due to concerns about the return on the initial investment.

However, there was a high level of enthusiasm and passion from the CFO, the VP of Quality, and the practitioner levels. These elements, plus an aggressive transformation budget were keys to successful implementation.

Our Approach

We used a rigorous deployment structure that began with a Senior Executive Alignment session with the Leadership Team and hospital CEOs. In this session we confirmed the need for a renewed PEI effort and the link to BJC’s business strategy. We also identified the “common vs. unique” elements of the deployment, e.g., what would be universal to all medical centers and where would they have discretion as a way to address the “loose confederation” culture.

We also agreed on the need to integrate Change Management (Destra's Accelerating Change and Transitions™ or ACT) methodology into the deployment and PEI training. BJC wanted to develop good change agents, not just good technical problem-solvers. We also made sure the CEO was on board and fully supportive of the effort, including what, specifically, his support would look like.

We created an internal Deployment Team, which worked closely with Destra. This team worked to ensure project selection, Champion support, and provide coaching to project leads.

We then cascaded training with the mantra “No one shall be trained before their supervisor”, and in sequence conducted eight Executive Alignment Workshops, eight Champions Workshops, and seven Green Belt sessions for a total of almost 600 people. People attending Green Belts had already met with their Champion and had an PEI project they worked on in an action-learning manner to better integrate the training into their actual project work and dramatically reduce the time that they got “runs on the board.”

Finally, we utilized Destra's ZapQuote™ lean simulation to demonstrate the power of lean and six sigma, give everyone a “hands-on” experience with lean tools and concepts, and establish a “Golden Thread” to provide a common experience to all levels.

Project Results and Benefits from various medical centers:

- **ED Length of Stay:** The amount of time to admit a patient from the ED was reduced by nearly 40%.
- **Bed Assignment:** Baseline data showed that it took an average of 48 minutes to assign a patient bed. The team developed and implemented the use of an electronic bed board that allowed the Charge Nurse on each nursing unit to better plan the assignment of patients. As a result, 75% of the patients admitted from the ED receive a bed assignment in five minutes or less. An additional 15% of the patients receive a bed assignment between 6 and 10 minutes.
- **Discharge Process:** The goal was to enable patients to leave the hospital within 120 minutes or less from the notification that the patient is clinically ready to go home. They decreased the amount of time to discharge a patient by over 90 minutes, and reduced patient complaints by over 60%.
- **Blood Stream Infection Reduction.** This project was led by two physicians who attended Green Belt training and worked with the nurses to implement hand hygiene and scrubbing the hub as infection prevention measures. They went to ZERO infections for over 117 days. This broke the prevailing belief that 4 oz. premature babies are going to get infections and little can be done to prevent this from happening.

Other Results

- Cost savings of \$100,000
- Over 350 Green Belts trained
- Billing errors decreased by 50%

Benefits (beyond specific projects)

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Benefits (beyond specific projects)

- The CEO (and many other Execs) attended the 10-day Green Belt Training.
- Members of the Leadership Team commented “I get it now” and actively use the tools to “Lead the Way” for PEI efforts.
- The culture is shifting to “One Organization” – more common less unique, where they now share information, resources, and project results.
- They are developing a “Just Do It” Mindset – finding an area for improvement and go after it!
- The mindsets are changing from “*We’ve always done it this way*” to “*I can find a better way.*”
- Change Management (Destra’s ACT) continues to be an integral methodology at all medical centers (2014).
- PEI also continues to exist, now termed “Transformation Support” with support from all levels.

Our Final Take:

We firmly believe that addressing the cultural issues and including our change methodology into the project work built commitment at all levels and helped ensure the sustainability of the PEI initiative.