

CASE: IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT?

You are an administrative staff specialist newly employed by the hospital to act as a management engineer and address a number of issues relating to operating efficiency. Your first assignment is to analyze work methods and staffing in the central sterile supply division of materials management. The department was singled out for study for the following reasons:

- The manager—a registered nurse who has held the job for more than 25 years—has requested two more processing aides, although her staff is already one person larger than that of another area hospital of equivalent size.
- There has been a recent, seemingly unexplainable, upturn in the consumption of disposable

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- A number of storage shelves appear to be stocked to overflowing with infrequently used items.
- The department issues frequent rush orders to obtain needed items that have completely disappeared.
- Observed conditions in the department include an overcrowded storage area, a seemingly inadequate decontamination area, and a grossly oversized processing area referred to by most employees as “the ballroom.”

On your initial visit to the department, the first thing the manager says to you is, “So you’re the one who’s going to tell us what we’re doing wrong?” Her tone is none too friendly.

Instructions

Develop a proposed approach to a complete study of the department, including the “sales pitch” you would use to try to win the manager’s cooperation and support. Specify what should be done, why it should be done, and how you propose to address the inevitable resistance of both manager and staff.