

The DIVA, OSR and CPI

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Introduction

Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) can have a dramatic effect on productivity, cost and quality within the Research setting. (Axelrod p.203: 2011). The Office of Sponsored Research at Seattle Children's Research Institute embarked on the CPI journey massively transforming processes and culture. The results were dramatic and worthy of every research institution's attention. Seattle Children's Research Institute has grown 10% in grant acquisition per year over the last 7 years. Correspondingly, hiring has been at a 2% growth rate. Reducing waste and increasing efficiency has become a means of establishing prestige. During the transformation it was discovered that visibility, standard work, one-piece flow and reliable method were the most productive ways to reduce waste. It was also apparent that "Diva" behavior, present in all departments, generated great amounts of waste due to the toll it requires of all parties. We discovered that it was important that the Central Office standardize communications and methods to mitigate any possible negative interpretations and to reinforce cultural change.

Objectives

Address Turn Over Versus Turn Around Times

"The rapid turnover caused great losses in institutional knowledge and in the department budget. Every time a SPO was replaced, the cost to OSR was nearly double their annual salary."



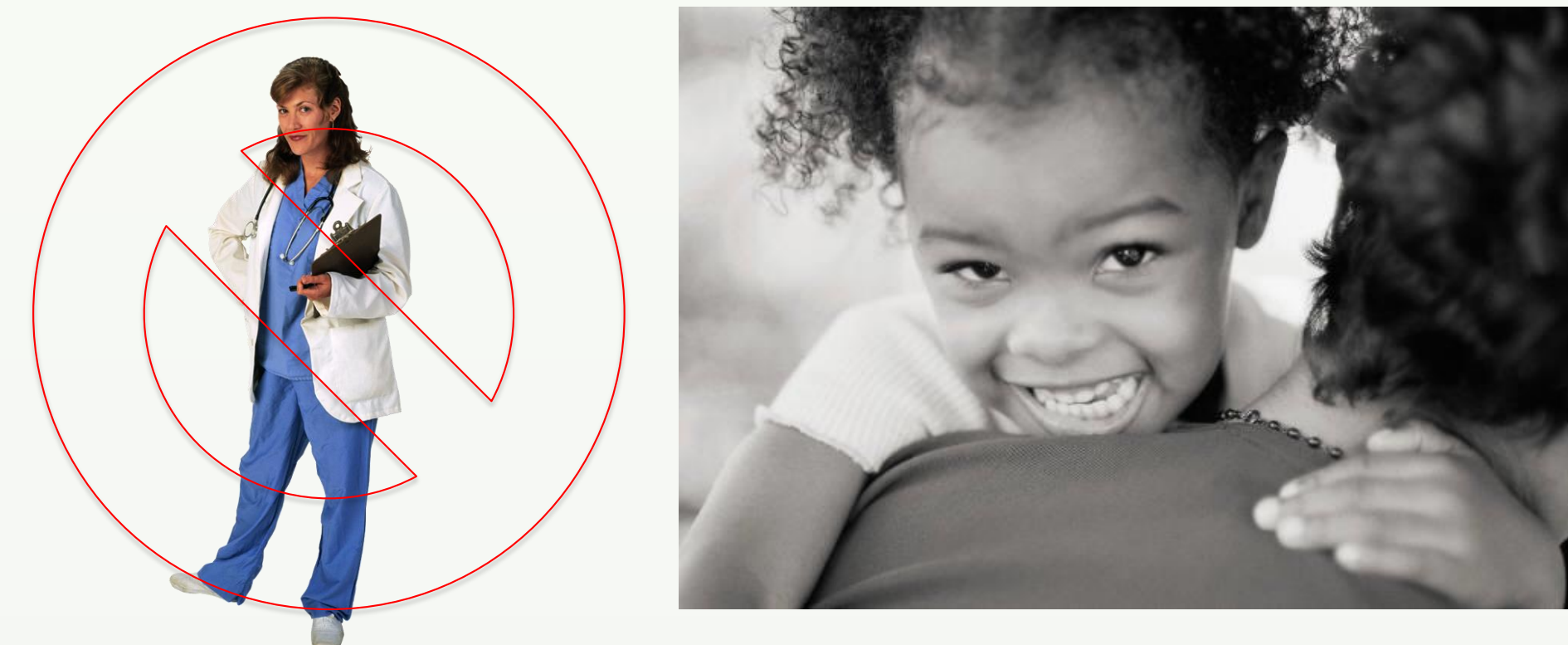
Searching for an Answer

Continuous Process Improvement demands standardization. Similar to the Scientific Method, standardization delivers and with replication comes adopted clinical and operational best practice.

Objectives (continued)

Identifying the Customer

It is the patients who are the customers not the Primary Investigators, the patients who are looking to our researchers to develop cures and improve outcomes.



Plan for What Remains to be Done

Looking ahead, OSR will continue to challenge the accepted notion of investigator as customer. Although SCRI internal partners are increasing their acceptance of an equal partnership with OSR and expecting OSR to be a direct customer service provider, the external world has not. Often frustrated with the "first in, first out" and "one piece flow" approach to our agreements, many external partners become frustrated and attempt to interrupt OSR process through demands and threats. Developing a standard process regarding preemptive outreach to other institutions to educate them about OSR process would avoid non-value added dialogue and constant touchbacks.



Methods

Building the Foundation for Change

To support reduction of waste and increased efficiency in workflow. Leadership attends training in basic CPI tools.

5S The center hub of OSR's work, the file room, was 5 "S-ed" (Sort, Straighten, Sweep, Standardize and Sustain) to begin preparing for the transformation to an electronically documented tracking system.

A3 Worksheet Size tool for improvement

RPIW Rapid Process Improvement Workshops

Documenting the Work in Progress

Resadmin - Work enters through one inbox

Batter's Box- Uploaded into eRA system, assigned a unique Identifier number and photo documented

Heijunka Box - loading leveling tool where physical pieces of "snap shots" are assigned to Sponsored Projects Officer and queue

Assigning the Work in Progress (WIP) to Queue

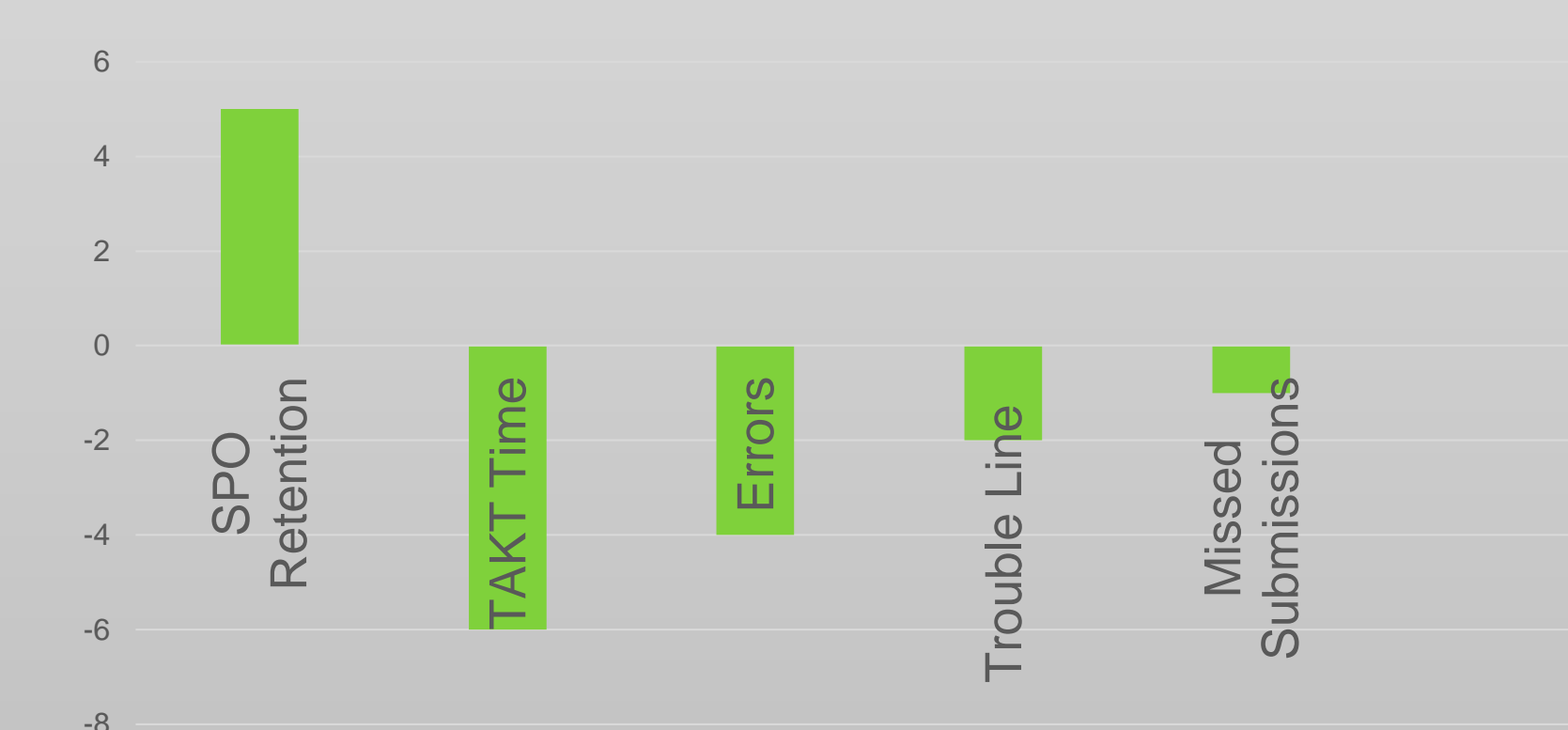
Rapid Line - processing deadline driven WIP, such as proposals, progress reports, and other requests with significant hard deadlines

Party Line - work that could easily be processed in one day or started by one SPO and completed by another, such as award notices, account set ups, subcontract issuance and others.

Cradle to Grave Line - complex WIP that requires back and forth multi-day negotiation and interactions such as Clinical Trial Agreements, subcontract negotiations, Material Transfer Agreements and other negotiation requests and complex contracts.

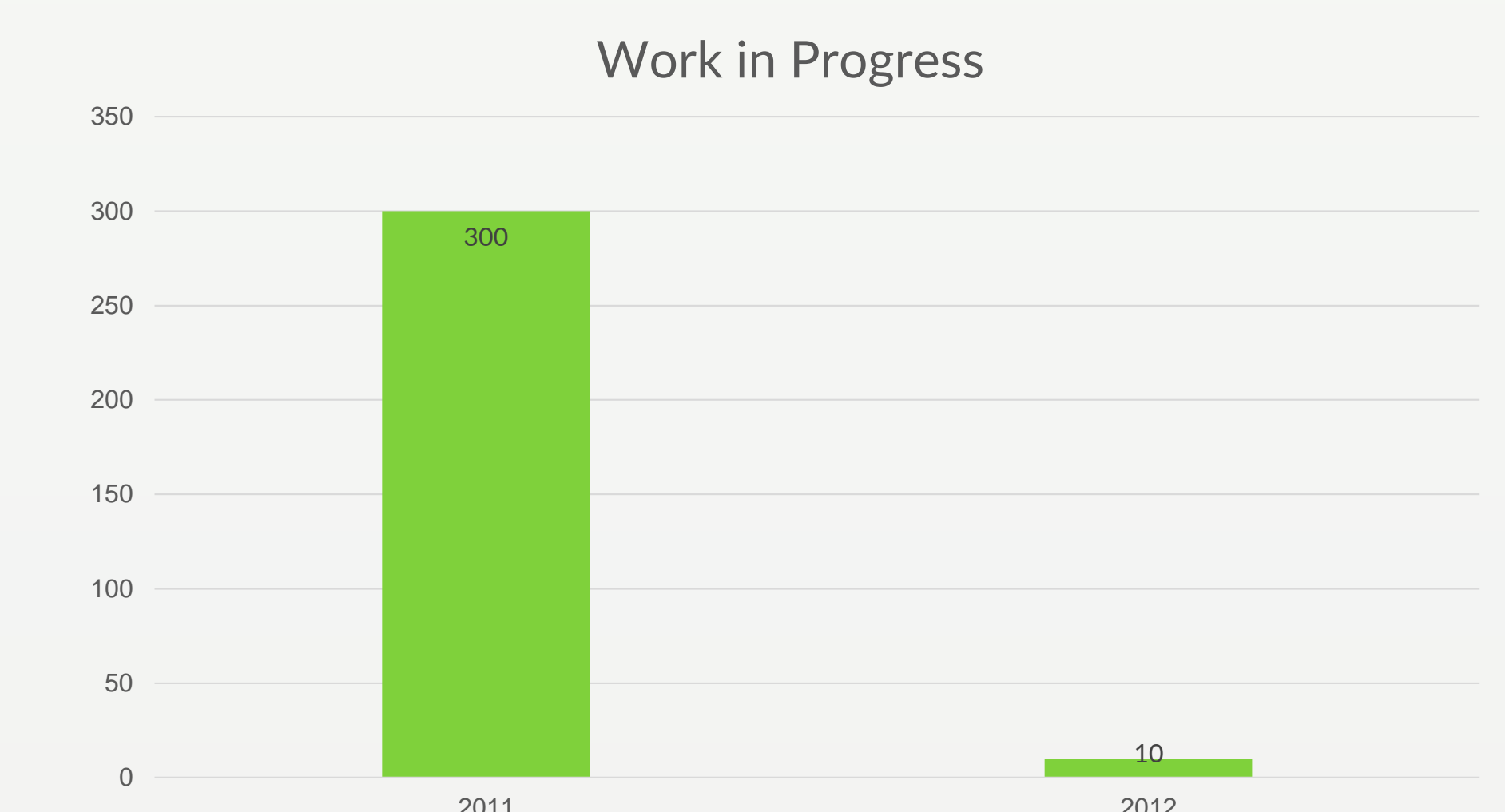
Trouble Line - established to quickly deal with issues and barriers that prevent work from moving forward in a timely manner.

Evaluating the Change



Results

OSR has discovered that it is the documentation, standardization of work and reliable methods that will serve the patient best by cutting waste and increasing efficiency. Party Line intake time at the beginning of the transformation in October of 2011, was 30 days with over 300 pieces in the queue waiting to be initiated. Six months later, in May of 2012, WIP is initiated within two days of receipt with less than 10 pieces in the queue.



Conclusions

Lean Management and CPI have a solid place in the world of Research Support Services. The transformation OSR work practices has challenged individual work beliefs and methodologies but has overall, resulted in great strides forward in terms of increasing efficiency, reduction of waste and standardization of method.. The Institution, after analysis of the previous successes in the IRB and the newfound control with which the work is managed in OSR, has concluded that the evidence-based results are worth the struggle. Regardless of cost savings, with our standard practice in place, we have united and become a collective force in producing a profoundly better product.

References

Axelrod, S., Hendricks, J., & Stapleton, F. Bruder (2011). CPI in Basic and Clinical Research. In P. Hagan & H. Jeffries & J. Wellman (Eds.), *Leading the Lean Healthcare Journey* (203-213). New York: Productivity Press

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