

Surgical Management Consultants

Whitepaper

COMPETITIVE STRATEGY FOR A SURGICAL DEPARTMENT

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In today's highly competitive medical environment with its rapid evolution in the direction of consolidated and managed care, and even more rapid changes in technology and procedures of choice, the **surgical department** that is not in the process of developing an ongoing **competitive strategy** for the future may well find itself relegated to an ever diminishing scope and volume of surgery. The end result will be a significant loss of revenue that in many instances was once a significant part of the overall hospital income. This in turn may lead to a lag in modern technology acquisition, which will result in an inability to attract qualified professional personnel. In a very short period of time a small to medium sized hospital that had operated in the black for years may suddenly find itself overwhelmed with debt, and downsized to a triage station, or a chronic care facility, or even closing entirely.

In developing a **competitive strategy** the first step is to fully analyze your present position in the medical 'industry' and correlate it to your present resources. Your resources include your raw materials, your physical plant, and your knowledge and labor pool. Your raw materials include all your potential customers or patients. Your physical plant includes facilities, equipment, and technologies. Your professionals (surgeons and physicians), medical personnel (nurses and technicians), and non-medical personnel, compose the knowledge (competencies) and labor pool.

The next step is to benchmark your present position in the medical 'industry' by comparing your present productivity to that of similarly located, equipped, and staffed **surgical departments** throughout the country. Once you have decided what your gold standard will be and you have unanimity of opinion from all involved that **that** will be **the goal**, then and only then, are you ready to move on to the third step.

The third step is to develop a plan of action with a definite time frame, and to bring everyone who will be affected aboard. That is each and every stakeholder must be considered, how they will be affected, and how they can help (or hinder) the implementation of the plan. It is also imperative that senior management are in total agreement with any plans for the department. Since many persons involved in any **change** will inevitably have personal agendas that will often conflict with the overall plan, in most situations, where significant **change** is considered, an outside coordinator and facilitator will be necessary. His or her job will be to arrange for the collection of data, the assimilation of the data,

organize think tanks, work constantly to bring each and every involved person aboard and keep the train on track and on time. Such a role can usually only be carried out successfully by someone who can devote his or her full time to the effort.

The key for a **surgical department** to maintain viability and reach its true potential in this day and age is to find and develop a favorable competitive position in the health industry, and this necessitates the development and implementation of a **competitive strategy**.

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