Supply cost savings, performance improvement, and recruitment and retention led the list of OR managers’ important accomplishments in this year’s OR Manager Salary/Career Survey. The survey asks open-ended questions about both challenges and accomplishments.

One of the biggest challenges—maintaining or growing surgical volume, especially when an ambulatory surgery center opens in the area. Building or renovating ORs and expanding services were challenges for several. Staffing challenges included finding experienced cardiovascular nurses and designing internships for RNs and surgical technologists.

**Saving on supplies, inventory**

Inventory control and cost containment were major achievements for both large and small ORs. Orthopedic and spinal implants were specifically mentioned.

- The manager of a 3-room OR and GI facility in rural Michigan said her team had moved all of its orthopedic and pain management supplies and implantable mesh to a consignment basis, saving money and reducing inventory.
- In Illinois, a 24-OR department reduced its orthopedic vendors from 6 to 3 and capitated pricing for implants, saving $180,000 annually.

Other accomplishments were implementing automated systems for preference cards, patient charging, and inventory. Standardization of supplies and controlling product entry were also mentioned.

**Improving performance**

OR efficiency and infection prevention were the focus for performance improvement (PI) projects.

- One facility boosted on-time starts from 14% to 81% in 10 months, while another improved from 28% to 72%.
- One manager became a systems director for 3 campuses, increased OR utilization, improved on-time starts, decreased turnover time, and reduced cancellations—not surprisingly, these were also her biggest challenges.
- Many had met goals of the Institute for Health Care Improvement’s (IHI) 100,000 Lives Campaign, which aims to prevent avoidable patient deaths by adopting proven practices, and the Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP), a nationwide effort to prevent complications. A number had improved on administration of prophylactic antibiotics, maintaining patients’ temperatures, and meeting protocols for preventing deep vein thrombosis.

**Recruitment and retention**

Respondents described steps that have boosted staff satisfaction, with the goal of retaining their experienced staff:

- revised the on-call schedule to have one team that works weekends only and is paid for 80 hours every 2 weeks, improving physician and staff satisfaction by 20%.
- had 4 positions approved for nights and weekends for a 5-room OR suite so the staff doesn’t have to take as much call.
- adjusted staffing in a 10-room OR suite by increasing ancillary staff and reducing the number of RNs in one room.
Several reported adding support personnel, including a full-time educator, business manager, bariatric services coordinator, and information system coordinator. Recruiting physicians can be as difficult as attracting nurses. For rural hospitals in particular, the arrival or departure of 1 or 2 surgeons can mean the gain or loss of an entire program. The manager of a 3-room OR in rural Tennessee said her major accomplishment was keeping staff with decreased volume. Another in rural Texas said her principal accomplishment was staying operational with enough FTEs to operate safely, decrease overtime, and reduce hours on call.

Also in Texas, the manager of a 3-room suite wrote that her accomplishments were an increased number of cases and surgeons, expanded endoscopy services, and successful RN recruitment.

A manager of a 3-room OR in rural Texas said she was able to hire 2 obstetrical/gynecological physicians to replace one who left. She also counted as an accomplishment successfully completing 1 year with a new orthopedic surgeon.

Building for service

Some managers named as their big accomplishment completing an OR building project. Among examples:

- completing a $28 million construction project
- opening 4 state-of-the-art computer-integrated, digital ORs
- opening a new hospital with staff hired for all areas, building volume, and recruiting surgeons
- renovating the day surgery unit for a 3-OR facility in rural Maine.

Personal triumphs

Personal successes made the year especially noteworthy for some.

- A number said they had completed bachelor’s or master’s degrees.
- The director of a 3-room OR plus other areas was named “clinical director of the year” at her rural hospital in Texas. She also participated in a trial to have a physician removed from the staff and lose all privileges. She said this was the first physician to lose privileges in the history of the organization and set a “huge example” for other physicians and their behavior.
- A director of a 4-room OR redesigned the performance review process from being handwritten to computer assisted. She took responsibility for employee reviews from the 3 clinical managers, which she said resulted in a more consistent process, more time for clinical managers to spend with staff and patients, and more time for the director to spend with each employee. The director uses a peer-review check sheet to record information from coworkers and managers to use in performance reviews.