

The image features the Philips logo in a white rounded rectangle at the top left. Below it, the words 'Healthcare' and 'Consulting' are stacked in white text on blue rectangular backgrounds. The background of the entire top section is a photograph of a modern, multi-story hospital building with a grid-like facade of windows and brickwork at the base. The sky is blue with some clouds.

PHILIPS

Healthcare

Consulting

Increasing efficiency and staff satisfaction in the central OR

Who/where

Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE), Germany. The OR management project was executed in collaboration with Philips consultants, with the goal of optimizing OR capacity and increasing staff satisfaction.

Challenge

Due to growing demand in cases and with no possibility to extend resources, the UKE needed to increase the efficiency of its central OR. In the past, surgical procedures often had to be changed at short notice, which led to dissatisfaction among staff. In addition, complex working structures limited stakeholder transparency into decision-making processes and responsibilities. To address these concerns and improve staff satisfaction, the UKE launched a transformation project and chose to bring in external expertise that would go beyond traditional consultancy.

Solution

The Philips consultants analyzed the OR processes together with key stakeholders at the UKE and created a comprehensive process overview. The Philips team then led a workshop to collectively develop solutions for the defined areas of improvement. The results of the workshop were the starting point of the implementation phase, during which the consultants provided support with project coordination, moderation, the introduction of templates and a standardized structure.

Results

Throughout the project, the expertise of all UKE staff involved was actively incorporated. This 'insider' perspective ensured that potential areas for improvement were identified quickly and accurately. At the same time, a strong team spirit developed that significantly increased the stakeholders' motivation for a successful implementation. The first successes were achieved within just one year: a 77% reduction in central OR downtime and 5% more surgeries were performed. This led to improved staff satisfaction and increased economic efficiency. Furthermore, a blueprint was developed that will allow the UKE to set up and execute its own transformation projects in the future.

Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE) in Hamburg comprises more than 80 clinics, polyclinics and institutes in 14 centers. The UKE has 13,560 employees and admits more than 100,000 in-patients annually. In addition, there are over 400,000 outpatients, of which around 130,000 are treated in the emergency department. Together with the medical faculty of the University of Hamburg, the UKE also plays an important role in academic training.



“We deliberately chose to bring in external moderation and methodology expertise. We weren’t looking for complete concepts or consultancy in the sense of recommendations about what to implement – we needed support with the implementation itself.”

Pia Koch
Commercial Manager,
UKE Hamburg-Eppendorf

Improved utilization of OR resources

In order to meet increasing care demand and handle a growing number of patients, the UKE feels the need for wide-ranging transformation. One of its transformation initiatives focuses on OR management. Every day, between 75 and 100 surgeries are performed at multiple sites. The amount of surgeries could be higher given the high demand; however, expansion of OR capacity is not currently feasible and the UKE must work within its current physical parameters.

The UKE had previously worked with a number of consultancy firms; however, their concepts were primarily focused on reducing costs. Pia Koch, leader of the UKE transformation project, reflects, “This wasn’t actually our primary starting point.” Ms Koch’s role as a commercial manager encompasses the UKE’s Center for Anesthesiology and Intensive Care Medicine, Center of Surgical Medicine, central emergency room and OR management organization. She explains, “Our question is rather: How can we enhance our performance with our existing resources and spatial limitations?” In this regard, the transformation project has three clear goals:

- increase the hospital’s case mix (CM) for surgical procedures
- improve staff satisfaction
- enhance overall efficiency in the central OR.

Tapping into in-house expertise

Reflecting on her experiences working with external consultants, Ms Koch has a clear belief: “The change process needs to be put into motion by the organization itself. We weren’t looking for more recommendations; we wanted to find someone who could accompany us on this transformation journey.” In the past, many projects struggled to gain acceptance among staff. And as Ms Koch observes: “It would be quite utopian to imagine that you could move from such a complex starting point to a complete transformation in just one or two years. It has to be something you can transfer into a continuous improvement process.” It was therefore

very important for the project manager to leverage the knowledge and experience of the staff. As this objective completely matches the Philips co-creation approach, the UKE relaunched the transformation program with the Philips consultants. The approach of having the UKE’s staff actively shape the process with external moderation support was a decisive factor in this choice.

In-depth analysis of the entire OR process

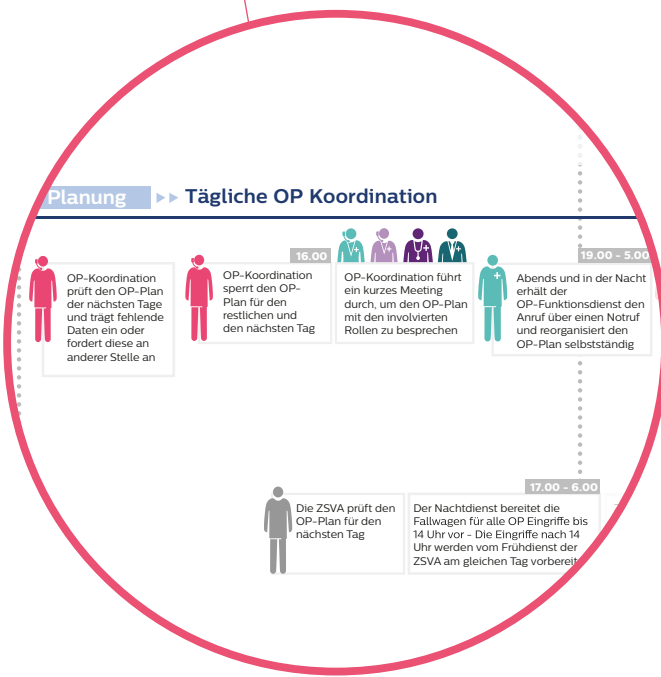
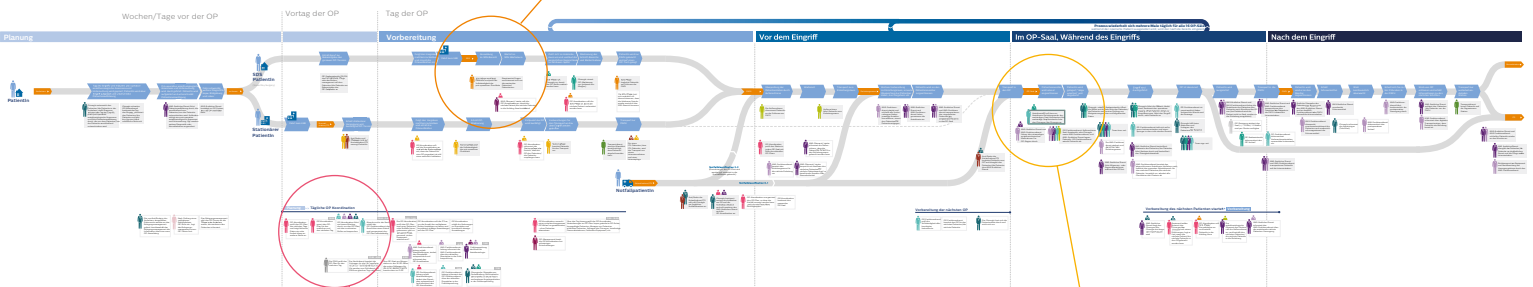
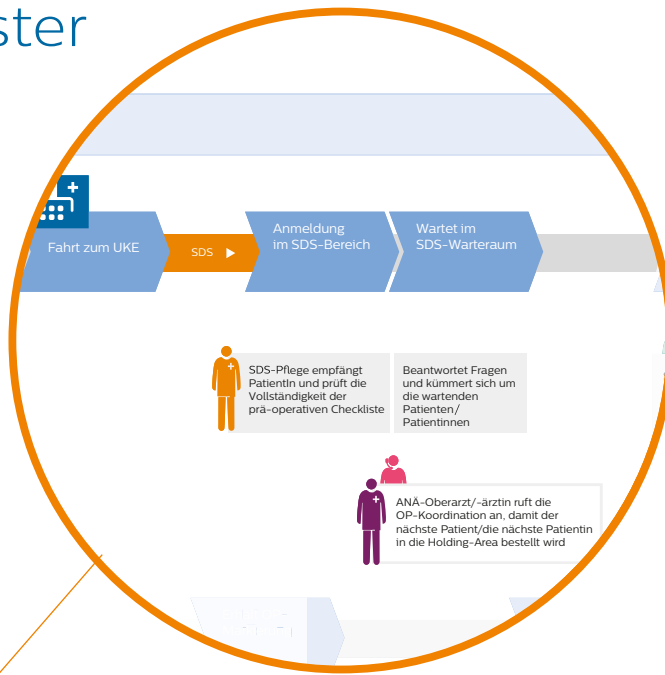
To start, an in-house UKE taskforce laid the foundations for the transformation process. During this phase, UKE staff captured data, prioritized key topics and considered the hospital’s organizational structures. A few months later, the UKE engaged the support of Philips consultants.

The consultancy team performed a comprehensive analysis that included the results from previous consultancy engagements and involved all hospital departments that are connected to the OR processes. The starting point for this analysis was the central OR itself. Using the central OR core process as a baseline, the consultants interviewed staff from all associated functions, including management, physicians, surgeons, anesthetists, OR and anesthesia nurses, cleaning and transport service staff, as well as administrators and sterile supply teams. By observing the process in action and conducting these interviews, the consultants were able to capture day-to-day information on processes in the OR and the experiences of the various stakeholders, while identifying the details of sub-processes. This analysis led to the creation of a detailed process flow poster visualizing the current workflows. The poster contained flow diagrams and clearly showed process bottlenecks, which were vital for the UKE and Philips consultancy team to jointly develop optimization measures. Evaluation of the findings indicated potential for improvements in terms of punctuality of the first surgical incision in the morning, surgery preparation times and changeover times in the afternoon.

Process flow poster

The patient journey

Rollen, Aufgaben & Prozesse



The process flow poster shows the relationships between the interconnected and interdependent sub-processes in the central OR – helping to understand their complexity.



The UKE is regarded as a prime example of a digital hospital – and this strong digital foundation played a crucial role in helping the Philips consultants to evaluate the status quo at the hospital. The team was able to draw from an extensive pool of data, which could then be compared and correlated with the process descriptions provided by the staff of the UKE. The involvement of the UKE's central finance department and in-house IT specialists proved to be of great value. As Ms Koch explains, “A data-based approach was vital given the

complexity of the process, because it enabled us to make decisions based on facts rather than purely on gut instinct. In addition, we could be sure that the areas for improvement that we had identified together with the Philips consultants were truly relevant. And, crucially, it gave us a way to measure the improvements. That is extremely important.”

Teaming up to co-create

To enact a successful transformation, achieving a common understanding of the initial situation is an absolute must. With this goal in mind, the Philips consultants organized a co-creation workshop which was attended by various stakeholders including cleaning service and logistics staff, OR and anesthesia nurses, physicians, anesthetists, and representatives of the UKE's administration. Using the process flow poster as a baseline, the participants teamed up to work out each of the identified key topics. Thanks to the commitment and effort of the stakeholders and the target-driven moderation of the Philips consultants, the workshop produced its first results by the end of the day – providing a starting point for the next steps in the project. At the same time, the mutual understanding that developed during the workshop had a positive effect on those involved. As Ms Koch reflects, “Upon working together, our teams developed an entirely new appreciation of their colleagues and their work.”

The project's success can also be measured in quantitative terms. The incorporated changes during the transformation led to a 77% reduction in downtime in the central OR, from 300 to 70 hours per month. Moreover, the UKE was able to increase the number of surgeries performed by 5% – a total of 1,400 more procedures.

“We significantly reduced our downtime periods and performed a far higher number of surgical procedures – with a greater proportion of these being performed during our core working hours.”

Pia Koch
Commercial Manager, UKE Hamburg-Eppendorf

Data-based reporting

To sustain the success of the transformation program, it was important that the Philips consultancy team continued to provide support during the implementation phase. This was a key initial requirement from the UKE, next to involving all key stakeholders in the process.

Following the co-creation workshop, several teams were set up to work on individual sub-projects that were selected from over 30 cross-process action items. Stakeholders from each of the departments and professions involved were part of these teams. The Philips consultants were on hand to moderate and structure the project meetings, develop templates and share their methodology expertise.

As the UKE prepares to continue the project independently, it is important for the UKE staff to receive feedback that helps them understand where they are in the transformation process. A data-based KPI reporting tool will be implemented that can be accessed by the responsible project teams. This tool will also be used to keep staff and the board of directors informed about the status of the project. The information displayed in the tool will be summarized in such a way that project teams, central OR and hospital-wide management teams, general surgeons and surgical department team leaders will quickly be able to have an overview of the current situation in their respective area of responsibility. As Ms Koch remarks, “In simple terms, we don't have any secrets; everyone can see everything. But experience shows that not everyone wants that – so to prevent any kind of fatigue from setting in, the key figures can be delivered on request.”



A blueprint for improvement processes

In addition to optimizing central OR processes, the UKE asked Philips to develop a standardized blueprint that they can use themselves to drive their transformation forward. This included establishing an organizational structure with steering groups and sub-projects where communication and information flows can be controlled in a transparent way.

Besides defining this structure, the Philips consultants provided practical support with organizing projects in a logical way and worked with the UKE's teams to create tools such as a competency matrix for the hospital's functional service departments. These tools and methods were transferred to other departments as well. As a result, the UKE staff will be able to initiate and execute transformation projects themselves in the future, and the hospital's project management department will be able to tackle complex large-scale projects on its own. The process flow poster remains displayed inside the central OR department – reminding all staff that a dynamic transformation process requires continuous improvement.

Improved staff satisfaction

The project has fostered a new team spirit – not least thanks to the strengthened mutual understanding between the groups and departments involved. Overall, a positive and appreciative culture has developed, with open lines of communication. As Ms Koch observes, “Any inhibitions to approaching each other have faded away – and I think that's great. It is really fun to work every day to make real change happen.”

The UKE has set off on a new path. And, not only is it moving in the right direction, but the successful progress of the transformation is motivating its staff to tackle the stages that lie ahead.

“We wanted to do more with our established structures and existing staff – and this project has matched this perfectly. We have achieved an outstanding increase in our efficiency, with satisfied employees who feel appreciated and valued. The communication and collaboration between our teams has improved as well. Great!”

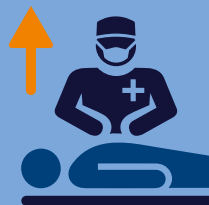
Pia Koch

Commercial Manager, UKE Hamburg-Eppendorf

Results include:



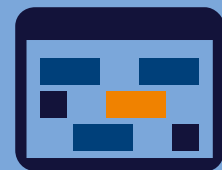
77% reduced downtime in the central OR



1400 more surgeries



Improved staff satisfaction



Blueprint for future transformation projects

Results from case studies are not predictive of results in other cases. Results in other cases may vary.

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