

My facility may retain a consultant to assist in the implementation of scientific methods of OR management. What can I learn from talking to people at other facilities that have already done this?

The validity and usefulness of the methods of scientific OR management are based on findings in the peer-reviewed literature. During the peer-review process, manuscripts are scrutinized by other experts in the field, who carefully consider the statistical validity of the analysis and the general applicability of the study. Limitations or caveats are presented in the discussion section of each paper, which may indicate if the paper is relevant to any one hospital's situation.

Informal discussions with colleagues at other facilities are of limited value, because identifying peer facilities should be based on matching so many variables as to be impractical. Such variables include: the employment arrangement of the anesthesia providers, the presence of nearby outpatient surgery facilities, the percentage of outpatient surgery, the percentage of urgent (add-on) cases, the ease with which surgeons can schedule urgent (add-on) cases, the presence of elective cases on Saturdays, the presence of emergency surgery, the timing of release of allocated OR time, the number and organization of schedulers, the number of ORs and differentiation by team, the physical distances among ORs, the percentage of ORs finished by 6 PM, whether allocations of at least some OR time are made to specific surgeons, the availability of OR information system data, and the percentage of days with delays in PACU and/or ICU admission. Experiences at facilities that are not similar will generally be misleading as to the potential impact of implementing specific OR management methodologies. In contrast, good mathematical and statistical representations of surgical suites consider all of these issues simultaneously. [Click here](#) for an article providing more detail.

However, by talking to individuals at other facilities, one can learn a lot about the qualifications of the consultant or the consulting firm that has been retained to assist in applying the statistical methods. When seeking to evaluate if the consultant is qualified to do the job for which he or she has been hired, explore the following questions:

Did the consultant have knowledge of the science and have experience in its application?

Did the consultant explain clearly the basis and evidence for recommendations?

Did the consultant portray a professional appearance and demonstrate punctuality, organizational sensitivity, and affability?

Is it likely that the software used by the consultant produced correct, statistically sound answers?

Were the reports and materials offered by the consultant clear and concise?

Was the assessment conducted by the consultant comprehensive?

Did the consultant help establish a process for on-going analysis (e.g., annually)?

Return to [Frequently Asked Questions](#)