

36.

Are key words for phone answering necessary?

Question

We have introduced key words for phone answering and have encountered major pushback from OR staff regarding internal phone calls. How do I show value in saying, “Good morning, this is the (Name of Hospital) operating room, Patty speaking” when the caller is a fellow employee?

Answer

Explain that just as customers have first impressions, so do staff. Many important interactions take place by phone. A simple name and department identification sets a courteous tone. I would then ask staff if they would appreciate that courtesy.

The best organizations are also looking at closing statements. For example, at the end of each internal call, one human resource department says, “Is there anything more I can do for you?” This has really helped others see the human resource department as a service provider. It also role models.

On another note, when you are implementing such items, consider how you are sequencing them. Don't implement key words for staff to say until leaders have role modeled key words to staff during rounding on employees. Leaders should ask questions such as: “What is working?” “What systems are not working as you would like?” “Do you have the tools and equipment to do your job?” I find that asking these questions to staff will better align their behavior if they have seen improvements that benefit them.