

Summary

Laurentius hospital experienced many changes in recent years. The organisation structure changed a few years ago in order to support a more process oriented approach. Secretary's used to be employed by one doctor but are now in service of the hospital and everybody is serving all doctors within the Out Patient Department (OPD). Furthermore, the Central Appointments Department has been decentralised and every OPD has its own appointments line.

This research was initiated by complaints of managers, doctors and employees about the work on the secretariats of the OPD's. Managers are dissatisfied about the controllability, doctors about the productivity and product quality and employees complain about the pressure of work.

The goal of this research is to find the causes of these problems and to develop and implement solutions. The way this should be done is modelled upon a model of two main lines along which the analysis takes place, one concerns the targets and policy of the system in the existing and future situation and the other concerns the performance and structures of the system. Research along the two main lines results in a design for a new situation. It's all carried out in accordance with the Delft Systems Approach in which processes serve as a basis for the whole organization structure.

Seven OPD's were involved in this research. The functional structure, the organic, the personnel and the consensus structure of these OPD's has been analysed. The bottlenecks found resulted in an assignment description for the solutions phase of the research.

The solutions phase consists of the definition of targets and policy for the new situation as well as a design of the organization structure. The targets and the policy are shaped by the wants and wishes of stakeholders of the OPD's and by six key-performance indicators i.e. effectivity, productivity, controllability, flexibility, innovative potential and quality of work. The targets and policy serve as a basis for requirements specifications for the new control structure, the organic and personnel structure and the consensus structure. The goals and requirements result in a model for the new situation. Implementation of that model is carried out according to Kotter's 8-step change model.

The proposed model has been implemented on the OPD of Neurology after measuring the experience of the stakeholders, the productivity, the accessibility and the amount of deferred duties.

Secretary's now serve a limited number of doctors within the OPD in order to decrease diversity and unpredictability for each secretary. Besides that, every employee has more operational responsibilities which will result in a higher quality of work. Telephone traffic has been organized in a way resulting in a lower unpredictability regarding each employee's duties. Furthermore, a coordinating function has been introduced on operational level and a consequent consensus structure has been implemented.

The effects of the changes will be measured by means of a control measure.

The complaints are caused by bottlenecks which relate to the process structure, the control structure, the organic, personnel and consensus structure which together form the organization structure.

- Process structure
 - High degree of unpredictability
 - High degree of diversity
 - Low degree of registration of procedures and processes
- Control structure
 - Insufficient available control loops on strategic, tactical and operational level
- Organic structure
 - High degree of functional clustering
 - Strict separation between controlling and operating functions
- Personnel structure
 - No balance between accountability and authority on operational and tactical level
 - No management function on operational level
 - A big span of control of the management
 - Insufficient managerial competences
- Consensus structure
 - Unclear way of decisionmaking
 - Low degree of participation in decisionmaking

These bottlenecks enlarge the complexity of the system, the secretariat of the Out Patient Department. Complexity is the main cause of the problems resulting in the signalled complaints such as a low controllability and a high pressure of work. Reduction of complexity has to be realised by redesigning the organization structure and by expanding the controllability. Doing this, the existing unpredictability and diversity are considered as boundary conditions.

Reduction of complexity will be realised by taking the following requirements into account:

- The control structure has to realise effective control and renewing of operations;
- The organic structure has to be product-flow oriented;
- Every position within the personnel structure should have enough responsibilities and authorities to be able to satisfy the stated goals;
- The consensus structure should enable effective decision-making with a high degree of participation for every stakeholder.

Implementation of a model based on these requirements should be carried out according to the following three points of attention:

- Medical specialists and personnel and the management should have a sense of urgency.
- Medical specialists and personnel should participate in the project.
- The focus of the implementation should be on quick wins caused by small changes. In that case, enthusiasm and involvement of stakeholders will stay at a high level.