

When Should We Re-benchmark?

Healthcare labor benchmarking is a process comparing the staffing, skill mix, labor cost, work-function, and productivity against industry standards and best practices. Labor resources need to expand appropriately with rising volumes, reduce strategically when volumes fall, and account for necessary operational fluctuations. Staffing levels should be reviewed at a minimum each quarter against established benchmarks to ensure alignment between the unit of service and staff. And re-benchmarking should always occur following:

- ◆ **Technology enhancements**
- ◆ **New services/programs being provided**
- ◆ **Significant changes in staffing model and/or skill mix**
- ◆ **New skills added**
- ◆ **Changes in volume statistics**
- ◆ **Dramatic & unexpected shifts in operations (COVID-19)**



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In spring 2020 when COVID-19 forced the suspension of elective surgeries from OR schedules, many clients immediately contacted AMS to review their operating room benchmark ranges and re-forecast their staffing needs for the remainder of the year. AMS continues to work with clients to reevaluate their staffing requirements due to the impact of COVID-19.

Through the development of benchmarks that are customized by work-function, AMS ensures organizations can continue to staff efficiently and avoid the perils of a labor-related financial imbalance.



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Effectively Communicating Organizational Change

Whether due to organizational restructuring or implementation of labor benchmark targets, change generates a sense of unease because it pushes employees out of their familiar and comfortable territory into the new and unexplored. Many employees naturally resist anything but the status quo and leaders often struggle to keep employees engaged during times of organizational change. Properly communicated though, change can be exciting and rewarding. It is all in the way you get the message across. AMS compiled five key change management communication tips for leaders on how to communicate change and, at the same time, keep your employees engaged and on track.

1. **Explain “Why”** Be concise, straightforward, and honest to minimize suspicion that leadership is hiding something.
2. **Discuss “How”** Employees want to know what the change will mean to them personally and professionally. Acknowledge that you appreciate the effort it will take to adjust to the changes. Employees will be anxious about the future, so understand that individual reactions to the change may be emotional.
3. **Describe “What”** Provide the general process changes in terms of what is going to happen, when, and what they need to do. Share what you know, what you do not know yet, and when you expect to fill in the gaps. Let them know what will be expected from them and how they can contribute to the result.
4. **Top-down communication** Any significant change requires leadership’s commitment and involvement. C-Suite management should announce the change followed by two-way discussions with department leadership and their staff.
5. **Circle back communication** The most critical step is to keep employees engaged. Provide question, answer, and input opportunities for staff. This will make employees feel valued and keep them committed to the process.

AMS Stats & Facts: Hospital Performance Before & Amidst COVID-19

Volume Statistic	All Regions	North-East	South	Mid-West	West
	Dec 2020 vs. 2019 ¹	Dec 2020 vs. 2019			
IP	-4.8%	-5.0%	-9.0%	-6.5%	1.1%
Obsv	-22.1%	-24.1%	-22.1%	-16.1%	-26.1%
ER	-21.1%	-20.2%	-22.2%	-24.6%	-17.4%
OP	5.5%	14.6%	0.3%	1.8%	5.1%

¹ 2020 Covid-Era data as compared to March 20, 2019 - November 21, 2019

References: StrataSphere Health Systems - 59 Health Systems Survey