

What You Should Know About Hospital Committees!

We have all heard the jokes about committees. For example: a committee is a group that keeps minutes but loses hours¹ or a committee is a group of the unprepared appointed by the unwilling to do the unnecessary.² While these are humorous, in general they do not apply to healthcare organizations. Within hospitals committees play an important and distinctive role.

If you sell a product, service or solution into a hospital it's not uncommon for you to have to sell to a hospital committee. Here are some facts that may help you be successful.

Committee Types: Within hospitals there are two (2) basic types of committees: standing committees and special committees.

- Standing Committees are those that are required or continuing
- Special committees (often called task forces or ad hoc committees) are designed to address a single topic or issue.

Most Common Hospital Standing Committees: are the following:

Finance Committee	Audit & Compliance Committee
Quality Committee	Strategic Planning Committee
Executive Committee	Physician Relations Committee
Governance & Planning Committee	

Most Common Buying Committees which are also Standing Committees: are the following:

Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee	Technology Assessment or Medical Equipment Committee
Value Analysis Committee	Strategic Sourcing Committee
Capital Planning Committee	Department or Service Line Committees

Committee Size: Many committees work best with 5-7 members. Others that have a broader range of responsibilities are larger.

Meeting Frequency: The frequency of committee meetings depends upon the responsibility of the committee. There should be an annual meeting calendar that lists the dates of each meeting. Savvy sellers know how often the buying committee meets.

Committee Membership: Committees are comprised of key individuals that can contribute to their goals and responsibilities. Savvy sellers should know the names, titles and departments each committee member represents and especially the chairman.

Committee Charter: Each committee has a charter that states their purpose. It is imperative to learn their purpose and areas of focus (think product categories or purchased services). Savvy sellers also learn what projects the committee has successfully completed.

Committee Oversight: if it's a buying committee it is important to understand the process that the committee uses to evaluate a product. What is the criteria used? Once they arrive at a decision is their decision final or do they make a recommendation to someone else? Does the loudest voice sway opinion or is there a formal voting process?

Key MedTech Committees: Please bear in mind that definitions and functions may vary slightly depending on the Health System, or other entity you are dealing with:

- a. **Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee:** This committee is focused on the hospitals formulary and decisions made to add or delete medications.
- b. **Value Analysis Committee:** Usually this type of committee is tasked with creating an organized approach to evaluating and selecting products and services in the context of cost effectiveness, patient safety and quality of care. These committees are designed to bring Clinical and Supply Chain professionals together to fully utilize their combined expertise.
- c. **Capital Planning/Budget Committee:** For our purposes, we are talking about medical capital equipment and the facility/infrastructure changes impacted with the planning and procurement of such items. Usually this type of committee is tasked with gathering a "wish list" of all the capital needs from the various departments and/or Clinicians. Since there is never enough funding to secure everything on the "wish list", the committee is tasked with paring down the list to match available funds. These committees usually have C-Suite, Senior Level Clinicians, Facilities Engineering and Quality Improvement representatives on the committee.
- d. **Technology Assessment Committee or Medical Equipment Committee:** Usually this type of committee is tasked with examining the medical, economic, social and ethical implications of the incremental value, diffusion and use of a medical technology in their Healthcare System (...looking at any and all Technologies (and/or therapies, treatments, drugs, etc.) that could change the status quo and/or create new treatment options or therapies for the health system. These committees usually have C-Suite and Senior Level Clinicians, Risk Management, and Quality Improvement representatives on the committee.
- e. **Strategic Sourcing Committee:** Oftentimes, there are specific buying committees for certain departments (ex. laboratory) or service lines (ex. orthopedic) that are charged with ensuring the institution purchases the right price-value for each product used.
- f. **Department or Service Line Committees:** This committee often focuses on specific purchased services such as ED, laundry, food service etc.

Parting Thoughts- A thorough understanding of hospital committees will increase your likelihood to match your products, services or solutions to their business and clinical requirements and decision making process. A savvy sales representative understands the names and types of committees for each hospital/healthcare system they call on, their committee membership, charter, oversight, meeting schedule and decision making process.

References

1. Milton Berle
2. Fred Allen

Author: Thomas J. Williams

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