

# POWER2TRANSFORM “HARD WIRES” SUCCESS

## *How P2T Solutions Created the Foundation for **Progress** and **Profit** at Cullman Regional Medical Center*

**CLIENT BACKGROUND** When it opened more than seventy years ago, Cullman Hospital was a little more than a medical clinic. Today, Cullman Regional Medical Center (CRMC) is one of the most well established hospitals in Alabama. The hospital provides services to more than 150,000 residents in a six-county area and makes an annual net revenue of a \$100 million.

**BUSINESS ISSUE** In recent years, CRMC underwent several changes, including new ownership in 2005. This resulted in a lack of alignment between the hospital board, medical staff, and administration, as each of the three groups struggled to communicate effectively with each other. Additionally, the flow of information from top to bottom was unsuccessfully conveyed, leaving the hospital staff in the dark about decisions and issues pertinent to their jobs. More and more, employees from different departments started operating in silos, which resulted in dysfunctional teams, lack of trust, and resistance to change.

Faced with these troublesome issues and a frustrated staff, CRMC attempted to solve their issues by hiring external help. However, after several attempts, it appeared impossible to get through to the staff even when they had access to the right tools. Even the external help was unable to hardwire deliverables for a continuous improvement process. CRMC needed someone that “had the goods to drill down further,” stated Jete Edmisson, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer (COO/CFO). They wanted someone to get to the root of the problem, someone who could identify the underlying issues and clear them up before moving forward with more change.

With some of the other external help falling short of expectations, CRMC sought a better alternative and fortunately, met John Bentley, founder and CEO of

Power2Transform (P2T). Bentley was able to adapt immediately and customize his methodology and training processes perfectly to fit the culture and environment at

*“He really becomes a team member”*

*-Jim Weidner, CEO*

CRMC. As the CEO, Jim Weidner, put it, “He really becomes a team member.” Not only was he able to connect with the staff and integrate

seamlessly into the hospital environment, Bentley was able to break down the barriers between the departments almost instantly.

**P2T SOLUTIONS** Bentley helped staff resolve interpersonal issues by opening up communication lines and developing trust between the different groups. But first, he created trust between CRMC employees and himself. He provided them with a free session where he really listened to the participants and provided them with authentic tools that they felt good about using after leaving the session. After that, he attended regular board meetings as a part of the team to really absorb the culture and understand the real issues.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT** In response to such issues, he and his team created the Leadership Development Institute (LDI), a three-tier leadership development program which focuses on CRMC and industry-relevant issues. This training strengthened cohesiveness between the CEO and the department heads, ensuring that the strategic leaders were all working toward a collective goal. The training also equipped them with better tools for collaboration and taught them how to become more efficient at their work.

The LDI program was created in order to meet joint commission’s leadership standards, integrate

departmental goals, and breakdown communication barriers.

**LEAN HEALTHCARE** After some of the fundamental communication, coordination and leadership issues were addressed, Bentley also suggested introducing some of the principles of Six Sigma into the organization. This was perfect timing, as CRMC staff needed to be more efficient with their work, as patient numbers continued to increase, while still focusing on customer service. In fact, CRMC was faced with a 36 percent increase in patient volumes in the ER alone since the closing of Woodland Medical Center in July of 2009. Along with that, some of the staff became overwhelmed with the amount of time they were required to be on the phone or deal with other timely administrative activities. Therefore, "Team Triage" training was developed. It consisted of four one-day sessions. Its purpose was to reduce wasted time, money and resources.

**LDI RESULTS** The decision to hire P2T paid off! The silos that prevented departments from working together have dissipated.

**ENGAGED EMPLOYEES** As a result of the LDI training, CRMC has developed better managers and leaders who invest themselves and inspire and engage employees daily. The training created and delivered by P2T aligned with the mission and goals of the organization, therefore instilling long-term solutions within the CRMC system and culture. Armed with clear objectives, refined people skills, and open channels of communication, employees now feel engaged and empowered. P2T was instrumental in improving morale and working relationships between staff, resulting in a shared sense of camaraderie between and within departments. Because of these improvements, CRMC became the sole contractor to a nursing home in the area, thereby providing more business to CRMC. The excitement created by the P2T training truly transformed CRMC into a learning organization. This newly developed desire to continuously improve their performance and grow has paved the way for introducing future training initiatives.

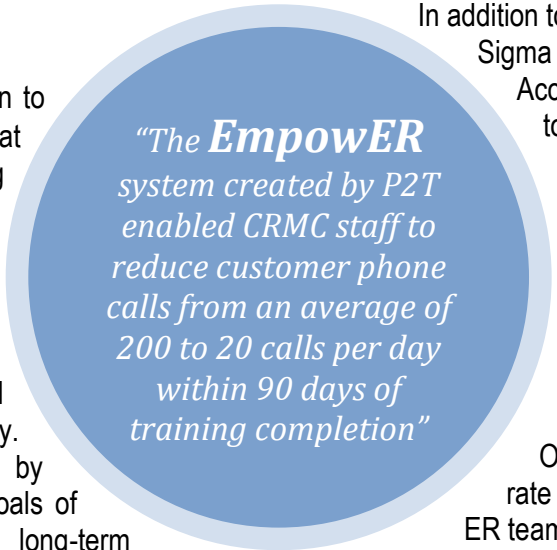
**"TEAM TRIAGE" RESULTS** After laying the foundation through LDI, Bentley turned his

CRMC solutions up a notch by developing specialized Six Sigma training for the hospital. Results were immediately noticeable.

**STREAMLINED PROCESSES** "In less than seven days things were improved. Examples included billing and schedule process streamlining," Dewight Davis, Division Director Surgical & Endoscopy Service noted. P2T's Six Sigma training was responsible for the installation of the new ER electronic patient tracking system, EmpowER, which helps family members keep track of the patient's whereabouts. The EmpowER system created by P2T enabled CRMC staff to reduce customer phone calls from an average of 200 to 20 calls per day within 90 days of training completion. Moreover, the improvements allowed doctors and staff in the ER and OR to better focus on their work, significantly reducing stress levels.

In addition to the new scheduling system, the Six Sigma training produced more results.

According to the CEO, CRMC was able to reduce the number of patients leaving the hospital without being seen by medical staff (i.e., signing in and then leaving before receiving treatment). "For the first six months of 2009, CRMC's emergency room averaged 1.7 percent of patients who left without being seen," the COO/CFO admits. "For the month of October, the 'left without being seen' rate was 0.8 percent. In November, the ER team decreased the rate to .3 percent and December is trending even lower."



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**NATIONAL AWARDS** Power 2 Transform continues to be recognized by its staff and members of the healthcare community. Bentley's training through P2T was credited by the CEO as significantly contributing to attaining prestigious industry awards. CRMC was named one of the TOP 100 Hotwired Hospitals, won 3 American Heart Association Awards in 2009, and placed at 11<sup>th</sup> on the 100 value hospitals by Health Grades.

One of the criteria for these awards included linking technology to core goals. P2T directly developed that when its Six Sigma training taught CRMC staff how to meet their goals using technology. In the words of the CEO, "If we didn't have the platform in what John taught, we could not have achieved those awards."