

Building a new Operating Room? A Chance for Clinical Engineering to Shine

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The design, planning, building, and equipping of a multi-million dollar operating room is a complex, resource intensive, and daunting task. It is the ideal opportunity for Biomedical Engineering (BME) to showcase their knowledge, expertise, organizational abilities, creativity, and solidify their status as a key participant on the patient care team. The Biomedical Engineering team at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, Ottawa, Canada seized the opportunity of leading the construction, preparation, and furnishing of 2 state-of-the-art cardiovascular operating rooms. Traditional project management including mission and objectives, resource and budget planning, logistics, and scheduling, are vital for a successful venture. However, in order to maximize the increase of prominence and reputation of BME within an organization several steps are suggested. BME should commit to owning the technology budget. Technology budgeting should be conservative to allow maximum flexibility towards the conclusion of the project. Extensive knowledge of the space and technology requirements, managing expectations of all interested parties, fostering relationships with all project team members, frequent and optimistic communication with senior organizational leaders will help to provide a sense of trust and reliance on the capabilities of BME. Time should be taken to frequently monitor construction progress to avoid costly change orders. Upon conclusion of the project, BME should “present” the new areas to clinical staff thereby conveying their connection and sense of ownership to the project. A summary document should be presented to senior management members on both successes and failures of the project. Large scale patient environment projects are a perfect chance for BME to connect with both clinical and administrative staff and increase their stature as a key participant in patient care.