

Hospitals Have In-Baskets, Too!

Using Simulation for Scheduling

V. TERRY KLINGENSMITH

It has been said that man needs not so much to be taught anew as to be reminded of what he already knows. This was pointed up to us recently when a group of Head Nurses, in a continuing supervisory training program, requested a session on scheduling. Since these are women who have been actively engaged in scheduling personnel for periods ranging from two to fifteen years, we were a little unnerved when they requested a training session in this function.

Questioning revealed that most of the group understood the mechanics of scheduling quite well. Aside from the nurse's traditional aversion to paper work, the problem seemed to be one of human relations and decision making. Specifically, "How do we deal with special requests?"

However, since the group's request had been for a session on scheduling, we decided to use this as a jumping off place for a session in decision making and human relations, as they concern

special requests.

Part of the first session was devoted to a rundown on the basic principles and the ground rules for scheduling personnel. Copies of this material were distributed to the group.

At this point, we began our variation on the standard In-Basket technique used in military and industrial training, but rarely in hospitals. Though the technique was originally developed as an individual decision-making process, we elected to capitalize on the wealth of knowledge and experience in the group, by setting up our In-Basket exercise as a group project. We divided the large group into sub-groups, arbitrarily mixing seasoned supervisors with the less experienced.

In the sub-groups, each trainee was given a scheduling sheet, and a list of the people working on the hypothetical nursing unit. Enough information about each of these people was provided to make scheduling realistic. For example, we included such information as

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"lives alone in a remote section of Hickory Township." This told the experienced Head Nurse that this nurse would probably prefer not to work a shift which would get her home late at night, but might not mind working the 11 to 7 a.m. shift when needed.

Since special requests would normally be in the hands of the Head Nurse when she began her scheduling, we provided our trainees with three such requests at the start of the exercise. The remaining three messages were placed in the In-Baskets at fifteen-minute intervals.

The sub-group reached agreement on the handling of the special requests and, in the second session, a representative of each group presented a report.

Though the In-Basket problems given each group were identical, no two groups came up with identical schedules, or with identical solutions to problems. Perhaps the most important result of this program was the discovery that though each group had come up with a different schedule, each was completely workable. As one participant put it, "this exercise really demonstrated that there is usually more than one way to handle any situation . . . and rarely a pat way."

In Evaluation, the participants were enthusiastic in their acceptance of this "new" training technique. They liked the simulated work situation, finding it easy to relate knowledge gained in this exercise.

To the Trainer, it seemed that the individual Head Nurses became more readily involved in this session than in a conference situation, and were more willing to voice opinions.

The complete In-Basket exercise on scheduling of nursing personnel follows:

FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED:

1. Providing adequate nursing care twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.
2. Desires of individual members of the nursing care team.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Analyze the work-load on your department according to day and time of day.
 - a. consider the type and number of patients
 - b. consider routine functions that occur at specific time of day
 - c. consider time-element of diagnostic and clinical facilities

2. Compute the number of hours per week available at each level of nursing example:
 - seven (7) graduate nurses
 - four (4) nursing aides

multiply the number of people by the number of hours worked weekly

$$5 \text{ R.N.} \times 40 \text{ hours per week} = 200 \text{ hours}$$

$$2 \text{ R.N.} \times 16 \text{ hours per week} = 32 \text{ hours}$$

$$1 \text{ R.N.} \times 24 \text{ hours per week} = 24 \text{ hours}$$

$$4 \text{ N.A.} \times 40 \text{ hours per week} = 160 \text{ hours}$$

to determine how many hours per day given by each level, divide the total weekly hours by seven (7).

$$\text{R.N. } 256 \div 7 = 36+$$

$$\text{N.A. } 160 \div 7 = 23+$$

to find the number to assign daily, divide the number of daily hours by the hours in the work day (8).

$$\text{R.N.: } 36 \div 8 = 4+ \text{ per day}$$

$$\text{N.A.: } 23 \div 8 = 3- \text{ per day}$$

3. Undesirable hours
 - a. assign to those who prefer them
 - b. rotate fairly
4. Try to give time off as requested whenever possible.
5. Make sure all personnel understand that time schedule will be changed to meet emergencies.

You are MISS RENNER, Head Nurse on a 26-bed Women's Surgical Unit.

On your permanent staff are:

SEVEN FULLTIME GRADUATE NURSES.

ROBERTA JONES R.N. has been on your unit for four years, is 34 years old, married, and has three children. Serves as Head Nurse in your absence.

BETTY SMITH R.N. is 52, returned to work three months ago after an 18-year "retirement". She is married, has three grown children, living in other states. Her husband is an attorney.

JOAN PAINTER is not yet registered, graduated from our School of Nursing two months ago. She is single, engaged to a young man in Dental School, lives at home with her parents.

LOIS GREEN R.N., is 23, married six months. Her husband is overseas. She lives alone in a nearby apartment house.

SARAH BLACK R.N., is 45, and was widowed two months ago. She has no children. Mrs. Black has worked part time in our hospital for many years. She went fulltime right after her husband's death. She lives alone in a new home about a mile off the main road in a remote section of Hickory Township.

PATRICIA MINEO R.N. is 38 years old, has five school age children, the eldest, 16. Her husband is a mill worker, with few free weekends. She works steady 11 to 7.

GERTRUDE LADIO R.N. is 23, single, engaged to a young man who works 3 to 11 shift in a local plant and has a different day off each week. Miss Ladio works steady 3 to 11.

THREE PART TIME GRADUATES

PAULINE STANFORD R.N. is 45 years old, worked fulltime until a year ago, when her aged mother, with whom she lives, became bedfast. She prefers 3 to 11, since another member of the family can stay with her mother during those hours. However, she is willing to work when needed, if given enough notice to arrange for "sitters". She works 16 hours a week, will work more if needed badly.

BETTY BELL R.N. is 38, has six children, two of them not yet in school. She pre-

fers to work weekends when her husband is at home with the children, and she prefers the 3 to 11 shift. However, she will arrange for sitters, and work any shift if notified a few days ahead of time. She works 16 hours a week.

XENIA TERRY R.N. is 48, and has two sons in college, a daughter in high school. She works 24 hours a week, prefers to work days, but will work anytime.

LILA MORRIS, 30 years old, a trained aide, employed here for eight years. She is married, has two children of elementary school age. Her husband is a mill worker, unemployed at the present time. She works steady 11 to 7, by choice.

EMMA McKNIGHT, 26, a trained aide, married six months. She has been employed here for three years, works 3 to 11 by choice. Her husband is manager of a filling station.

SANDRA ROSE, 19, just finished aide training program. Single, lives at home. Works days and relief. Has a busy social life.

ROSIE PEDEN, 22, just finished aide training program. Single, lives at home. Works days and relief. Has a busy social life.

NO. 1 NOTE

TO: Miss Renner, Head Nurse

FROM: G. Ladio R.N.

Miss Renner:

May I please have the weekend of October 19, 20 and 21? Jim's parents have invited us to go to South Bend, Indiana for the Notre Dame game.

Thank you,

G. Ladio R.N.

NO. 2 NOTE

TO: Miss Renner, Head Nurse

FROM: Miss S. Rose, Aide

Dear Miss Renner:

I know I just had a weekend off, but I didn't know then that I was going to get asked to this big Military Ball at Youngstown U. on Saturday, the 13th (so has Rosie, and we're double-dating). I *could* work on Saturday, I guess, but then, when would I get my hair done? I know we'll be out all night and I'll never be able to work Sunday. I know Rosie will be asking for Sunday off, too, and that will be hard for you, but you've always

been such a *doll* that I just know you'll let us off *somehow!*

Thanks so much!
Sandy

NO. 3 NOTE

TO: Miss Renner, Head Nurse
FROM: Miss R. Peden, Aide
Miss Renner:

I would like to request Saturday, October 13, and Sunday, October 14, as my days off. If this is not possible, may I be off Saturday,

and work 3 to 11 on Sunday?

I am going to a Military Ball Saturday night and will appreciate anything you can conveniently arrange.

Thank you,
R. Peden

NO. 4 TELEPHONE

TO: Miss Renner, Head Nurse
FROM: Joan Painter

I just called to remind you that I am scheduled for State Boards in Harrisburg on Octo-

UNIT SCHEDULE DATE

NAME	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
<i>Head Nurse</i>							
R. Jones							
B. Smith							
J. Painter							
L. Green							
S. Black							
P. Mineo							
G. Ladio							
P. Stanford							
B. Bell							
X. Terry							
<i>Aides</i>							
L. Morris							
E. McKnight							
S. Rose							
R. Peden							
TOTALS	G-A	G-A	G-A	G-A	G-A	G-A	G-A
7-3:30							
3-11							
11-7							

ber 16th and 17th. That means we'll be leaving early on the 15th, and traveling home on the 18th.

NO. 5 TELEPHONE CALL

TO: Miss Renner, Head Nurse

FROM: Nursing Service Secretary

Mrs. Betty Bell reported off duty for tomorrow. Her eight-year old son has the nine-day measles, and is quite miserable. She thinks he will probably be fine by next week, but since neither of her two younger children have had the measles, anything could happen.

NO. 6 VERBAL INTERRUPTION

TO: Miss Renner, Head Nurse

FROM: Lois Green R.N.

I had a letter from Joe yesterday, and he'll be on his way home within the next few days. I'd like to go to New York to meet him, but I can't tell you just when. He'll send me a cable as soon as he knows, and then I'll let you know. I have some vacation time coming, and I'd like to take at least a week of it, since I'll be driving up and back, and we want to spend a couple of days in New York. Sorry I can't be definite about the time, but it will be within the next three weeks, for sure.



MANAGEMENT CONGRESS OFFICIALS

Montreux, Switzerland—Dr. Dwayne Orton (standing), Editor of IBM Corporation's THINK magazine and official representative of the Council for International Progress in Management to the International Committee for Scientific Management (CIOS), points out highlights of the program for the 13th CIOS International Management Congress to CIOS officials at their recent meeting. Seated left to right are Albrecht M. Lederer, President of CIOS, Mr. Toshio Noguchi, Secretary General of the International Management Association of Japan, and Count Pierre Baruzi, Honorary President of CIOS, from France. The International Management Congress will be held in New York City September 16th-20th. Between 3,000 and 4,000 leading managers from business and government are expected to meet with authorities in management education in the eight general sessions and 53 symposium discussion groups. Subjects to be considered at the Congress include all major areas of management concern. CIOS members are management institutions in 41 countries.