

CASE STUDY:

# THE SURGICAL “TIMEOUT” AS A VALUABLE TEAM PERFORMANCE TOOL



Based on Arena Labs observations in over 300 surgical procedures in a wide range of surgical specialties and catheterization laboratories.





## CASE STUDY:

# THE “TIMEOUT”

## FROM AN “EXERCISE IN OBLIGATION” TO A PERFORMANCE TOOL

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE “TIMEOUT”

In having observed hundreds of surgical and cath lab procedures, our team has seen a wide range of areas where operating room practices can improve performance or impact team culture. One of the areas that we consistently notice requires little effort in exchange for a significant return is that of the “timeout”.

In the fast-paced environment of modern medical operations, time is at a premium. Additional pauses during the day can have a cascading effect on efficiency and delivery of patient care.

Yet that mindset has led to the “timeout” becoming a rushed “exercise in obligation”. Because it is required, the “timeout” is usually completed in under 30 seconds with very little consistency, collective focus, or usefulness. Often times, while a nurse conducts the “timeout”, staff are still occupied with preparing for the case or tending to the patient.

This video was made as part of an ongoing Performance Program at a Heart & Vascular Institute. It describes what it means to “Take 2 Minutes for the Team”, an effort to slow down the “timeout” and use it as a ritual to focus on excellence, the team itself, and the work ahead.



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### RITUALS IN HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

Rituals are at the core of pre-game, pre-mission, or pre-performance preparation. From locker room speeches for elite sports teams to mission pre-briefs that remind a military unit of the sacred nature of their work, these rituals aim to remind a team not only of the technical details, but of the greater purposes embedded in their work.

As Arena Labs works in High Performance Medicine™ as part of The Practice, we regularly seek to identify and build tools and rituals that can be easily integrated into existing workflow.

In this example, moving from a “30 Second” sprint to “Taking 2 Minutes for the Team” is a very simple alteration to existing practices. We are confident that these additional 90 seconds are a simple way to integrate a focus on team, performance, and excellence in every single operation. In order for these tools to have legitimacy and viability, they must have support from key frontline staff leaders and hospital executives.