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How Montreal's Douglas Institute performed a study proving that they are losing an estimated **7.5 million dollars a year** due to their current structural layout.

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- Ronald Sehn, Douglas Institute

Challenge

The Douglas Institute, an international leader in care, research, and teaching in mental health is applying to have a new hospital built to improve the level of care and to make better use of available resources. Currently, the facility is based in 33 pavilions in Montreal, Canada. With so many pavilions it was well known that many hours were being lost daily by staff traveling between buildings, but this had never been quantified. In order to apply for a government grant, the hospital needed accurate and reliable data to back up its assumptions and determine exactly how much time was being wasted.

Solution

"We met with a team that suggested having focus groups, but this didn't make sense to us since we would have to take people on their own estimates," said Ronald Sehn, director of technical services and project lead on the initiative to build a new Institute. Instead, the team chose to have employees log their transit times on customized handheld computers using Laubrass' UmtPlus time study software.

A representative group of 60 staff members was selected to participate in the four-month-long self-sampling time study project. Based on a random rotation each participant was given one of ten handheld devices loaded with UmtPlus software and instructed to document every time they left and arrived at a new pavilion.

"UmtPlus gave us the ability to collect data that was more accurate and provided us with analytical tools as well. Using UmtPlus made the study much easier to manage," noted Mr. Sehn. Furthermore, he explained that being able to quickly train the staff to collect their own data using a tool that was personalized for the Douglas Institute made it easier to explain why they were doing the study.

Results

Their analysis showed that **on average employees were wasting 15% of their time in transit, with the Administrative personnel spending an incredible 33% of their time moving from one building to another.** This data was used to estimate that, based on Douglas' annual payroll, approximately **7,5 million dollars** is being lost each year simply because of the need to move between pavilions.

"While reviewing our results, I found StatUmt to be extremely helpful and liked how easy it was to analyze data by categories. As soon as the data is uploaded you have the numbers you need right there," says Sehn. The analysis has been used as part of a case submitted to the Government to request funding for a new facility for the Institute

With this study complete Douglas is now looking at other ways to use the software to improve productivity and patient care. Mr. Sehn, said, "I have already recommended UmtPlus to several other departments, and would recommend it to anyone looking to do similar studies."