



A Business Model That Puts the Client First

Paul Gerdes, Managing Partner, Clinical Colleagues, Inc.

Let's face it: regardless of what kind of service a company offers, there is a competitor out there in the marketplace that claims to do it better. The world of anesthesia practice management is no exception, with hospitals across the U.S. having plenty of choices when the time comes to partner with a company that can build, refine and manage their anesthesia operation. Few, however, manage their business like Clinical Colleagues, Inc. (CCI). As owners of this company, Kurt Zumwalt and I are out there in the field every day, working hand-in-hand with our clients, showing each that we are as personally vested in *their* success as we are in our own.

As a privately-owned and operated company, CCI remains completely focused on the needs of our clients, without getting bogged down with internal politics or needing to jump through 100 hoops to get things done. We can make decisions quickly and efficiently. We can negotiate on the fly. When we see a problem, we can identify and implement a solution, today, rather than having to wait three or four months for all of the necessary approvals to be in order. We carefully and selectively choose providers – people who share our vision and perspective and who want to be part of a team that does it right. This helps us gain loyalty from some of the best anesthesia providers available, which translates to excellent clinical quality and long-term stability for the hospitals that partner with CCI. In the process, we as a company are accountable to our clients, and our site leaders and providers are accountable to us. In short, accountability is what separates the groups with excellent client retention from the others.

Additionally, private ownership allows CCI to serve our clients without the competing interest of meeting the ever-increasing ROI expectations of shareholders and venture capital investors. There is a growing trend of acquisitions and consolidation in the anesthesia practice management industry, and larger multi-specialty companies continue to diversify through anesthesia group acquisitions. These large corporate structures seem to breed greater bureaucracy and inefficiency, widening the gap in an anesthesia group's ability to meet service expectations. This model, in essence, is everything that CCI is NOT. As a smaller, privately-held company, we have the ability to meet the dynamic and unique needs of each hospital customer. We are personally engaged and able to meet with surgeons as concerns or issues arise that require resolution. Our regulatory compliance team works proactively rather than reactively, to improve quality and assure compliance at each hospital. All of our national best practices resources remain 100 percent dedicated to improving anesthesia efficiency and quality.

There is a well-known quote by Albert Einstein, where he defines "insanity" as "doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." It's interesting how often we hear from new clients that they manage a process a certain way simply because "that is how it has always been done." When CCI comes to the table, we focus on presenting the alternatives and helping our clients understand how their hospital can benefit from being flexible, adaptable and open minded. We help them see that the clinical side of their operation is not the only important side, and focus on making their anesthesia service function like a business. Over time, a department that was once struggling to stay afloat and was weighing down the organization financially, begins to thrive and boost the bottom line.

This is why Clinical Colleagues was founded. This is why Clinical Colleagues has never had a hospital client terminate a contract. This is why Clinical Colleagues remains privately owned and operated. And this is precisely what sets us apart in the competitive market of anesthesia practice management.

About Paul Gerdes and Clinical Colleagues, Inc.

Paul Gerdes is a Managing Partner for Clinical Colleagues, Inc., responsible for the operational management of the company. He works in collaboration with his team of physicians and healthcare business professionals to provide cost-effective anesthesia management and consulting services at community hospitals nationwide. To learn more about Paul and Clinical Colleagues visit www.CCIanesthesia.com.