

## Operating under pressure: Alleviating hospital tensions through Service Design

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### Abstract

With surgical drapes being purchased and sold as a commodity, our client knew they had to innovate to create market value. Cardinal Health, a Fortune 50 healthcare services and products company, challenged our team to understand how users are interacting with surgical drapes and propose design solutions that mitigate pain points in the operating room. Using customer research and service design methodologies, we saw that surgical drape failures often lead to breakdowns in team performance, ultimately creating tension during procedures. These tensions eroded the relationships between surgeons, nurses, and surgical scrub technologists (scrub techs), ultimately affecting patient outcomes.

Scrub techs' primary responsibility is to maintain sterility during a surgical procedure. The surgical drape, scrub techs' primary tool, is a simple piece of paper-like fabric. It also has the power to destroy relationships in the operating room. Despite being the primary user of drapes, the current operating model for hospitals does not consider scrub techs' preferences or capitalize on their knowledge because they are not involved in purchasing decisions. We advocated for the inclusion of scrub techs while proving they were an invaluable stakeholder.

Our project resulted in a service offering that would provide certification in drape modification and add a new role in the operating room to monitor and prevent drape issues on the fly. It would also create a feedback loop—collecting and documenting problems or new equipment interactions, allowing our client to stay at the forefront of innovation while capitalizing on scrub techs' expertise.

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