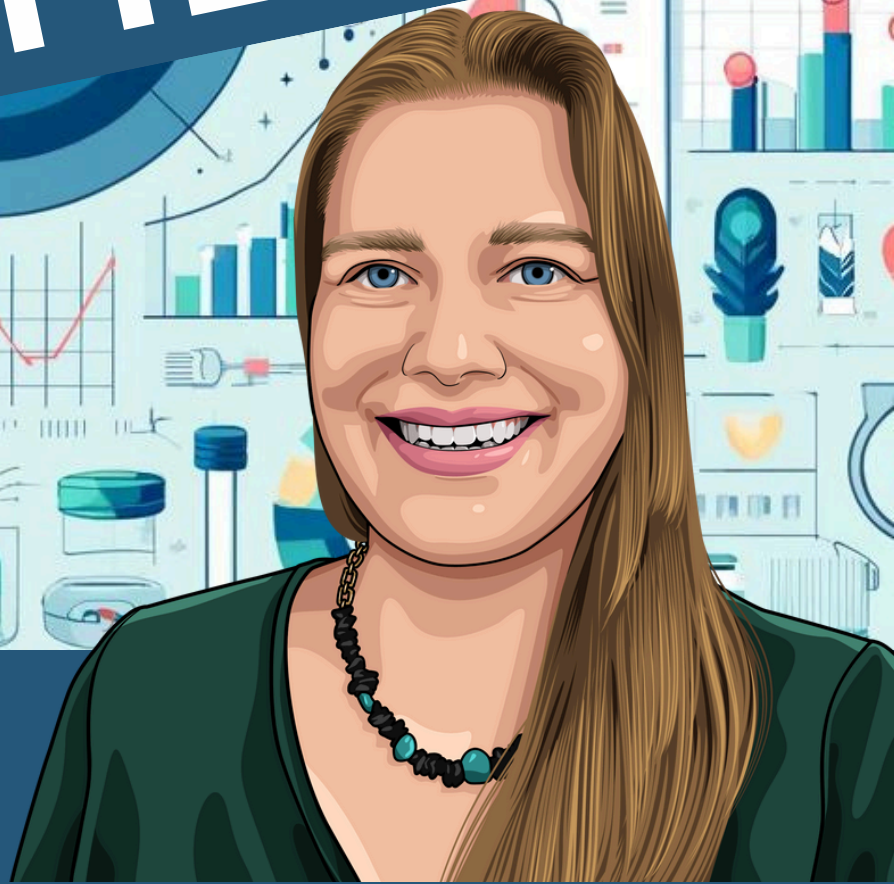


DON'T GAME THE METRIC



SPD DATA EXPERT

BEYOND
CLEAN

Beth Perry

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Beyond Clean SPD Data Expert™:

Don't Game the Metric

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Last month I talked about how metric selection can encourage staff to try to “game the system.” This month, I want to show how managers might try to “game the metric.”

When I was building our analytics platform for Sterile Processing quality, I wanted to find a metric that could help predict a technician's error rate. One hypothesis was that more experienced technicians would make fewer errors. But how to measure experience?

The most obvious answer might seem to measure how long they've worked in the department. However, your intuition probably tells you there are some long-time employees who aren't the best workers. Another problem with this measurement is that it isn't very “actionable.” I can't influence time. I can perhaps incentivize workers to stay at least X years to get more “experienced” workers, but that's all.

Instead, I created a metric to measure a tech's skill set based on the types of trays they assemble each month. New techs tend to have a limited skill set, focusing on general sets with common instrumentation. As they gain experience, their skill set expands to include more specialty trays, and yes, the data shows their error rate also tends to drop.

This metric is actionable, but here's where you must be careful.

Managers, you could game this metric by having everyone assemble a wide variety of trays every month. Your skill set metrics would look amazing, but I doubt your quality would improve. It might even suffer from having non-qualified staff assembling complex trays. The metric is only useful when it is a valid reflection of the tech's true skill set.

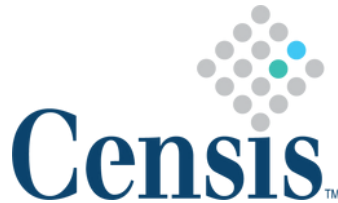
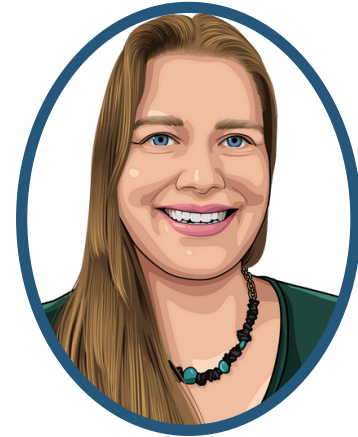
Instead of gaming the metric, look for ways to influence it naturally. For example, grow skills more quickly through training programs designed to accelerate exposure to many kinds of instruments.

Have more questions? Contact Beth at: beth.perry@censis.com

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Beth is a Business Intelligence and Analytics Engineer with Censis Technologies. She has 17 years' experience exploring databases and designing data visualizations. With her educational background in journalism, she strives to find practical ways to communicate insights both clearly and effectively.

Since 2012, Beth has enjoyed building and supporting tray tracking software programs critical to Sterile Processing teams across the United States. Her passion is to create data and analytics tools that drive operational excellence and ensure patient safety. She won an innovation award in 2022 for her work on Censis' analytics platform.

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