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## Abstract

The growing adoption of hybrid work models has transformed how consulting firms allocate and manage office spaces. This study applies the DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control) framework to optimize workspace allocation for consultants at RSM Puerto Rico. Surveys, observations, and attendance mapping identified inefficiencies in desk utilization and communication. Improvements included structured reservation rules, predefined remote workdays, and installation of desk phones. Although some resistance occurred during adaptation, early results after one week showed significant improvements in desk availability, organization, and satisfaction. These findings confirm that structured systems and clear policies enhance productivity and fairness in hybrid environments.

## Introduction

Hybrid work models offer flexibility but introduce new challenges in maintaining equitable and efficient workspace allocation. At RSM Puerto Rico, fluctuating consultant attendance patterns often resulted in overcrowding, inconsistent desk availability, and informal reservation practices that hindered productivity. This study sought to develop a structured, data-driven system to enhance desk distribution, minimize wasted time, and promote fairness across teams.

## Background

Prior studies show open-space environments encourage collaboration but can increase conflict without structured management. Desk reservation systems and clear hybrid policies improve fairness and productivity. However, limited research exists for consulting firms, where frequent travel and project-based work make attendance unpredictable. This study fills that gap by applying DMAIC to a consulting context.

## Problem

Consultants at RSM Puerto Rico often struggled to find available desks, wasting time and causing dissatisfaction. Informal desk claims, inconsistent communication, and lack of policies worsened these conflicts. The project sought to implement structured solutions for fair, data-driven desk allocation. Figure 1 illustrates the impact that the lack of designated desks has on consultant productivity, showing that most participants reported a negative effect caused by the absence of structured workspace allocation.

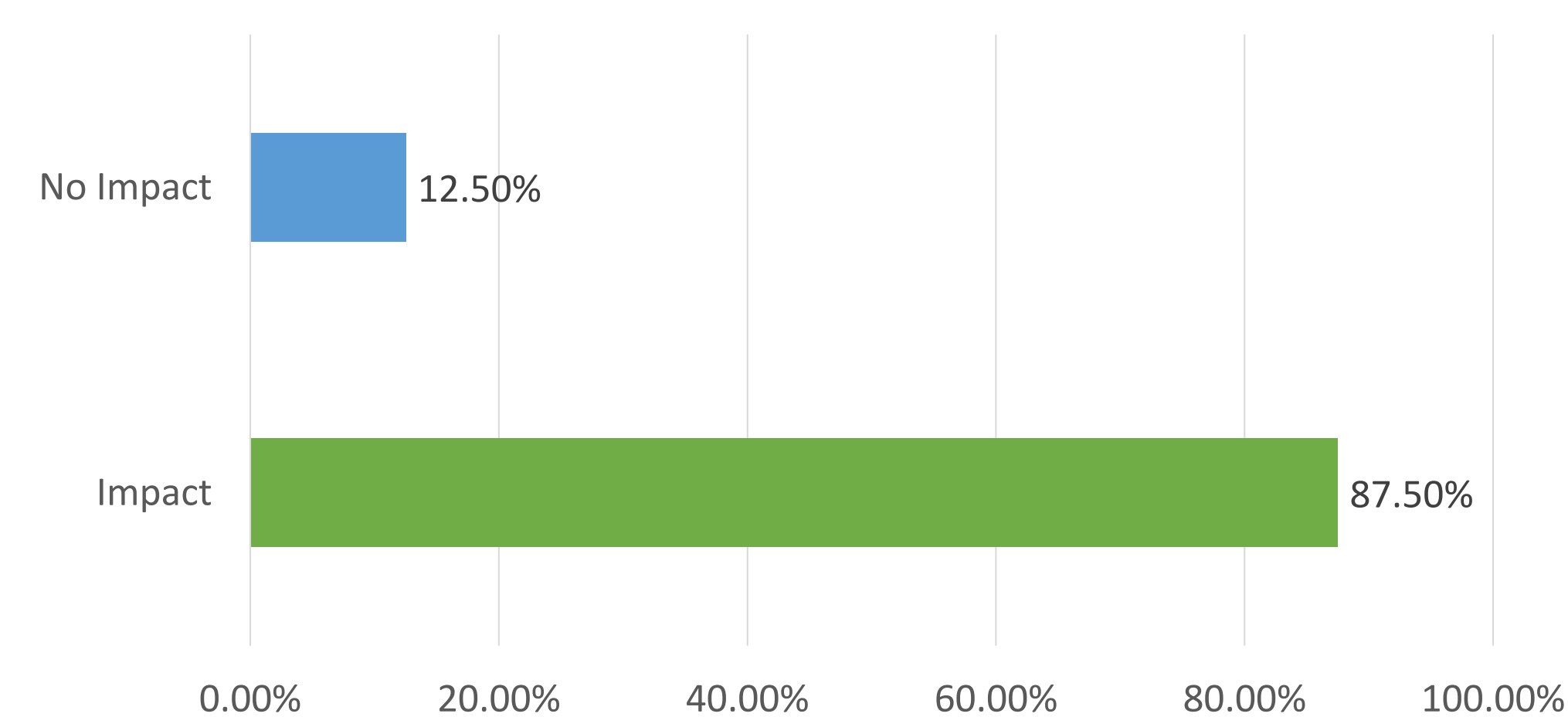


Figure 1

Impact of Open Desk in Consultants Productivity

## Methodology

The DMAIC framework guided the process:

- Define:** Scope established for 40 consultants. Goals: improve fairness, reduce search time, increase satisfaction.
- Measure:** Office layout mapped, and surveys conducted. Baseline data revealed 81% of consultants attended 3–5 days/week.
- Analyze:** Root causes included informal reservations, unclear communication, and uneven attendance.
- Improve:** Introduced desk reservation system, assigned remote workdays, installed desk phones.
- Control:** Defined KPIs for desk utilization ( $\geq 85\%$ ), search time ( $\leq 5$  min), and satisfaction ( $\geq 4.0/5$ ).

Figure 2 presents the current RSM Puerto Rico office layout, highlighting the spatial distribution of shared and private work areas used as the foundation for the workspace optimization analysis.

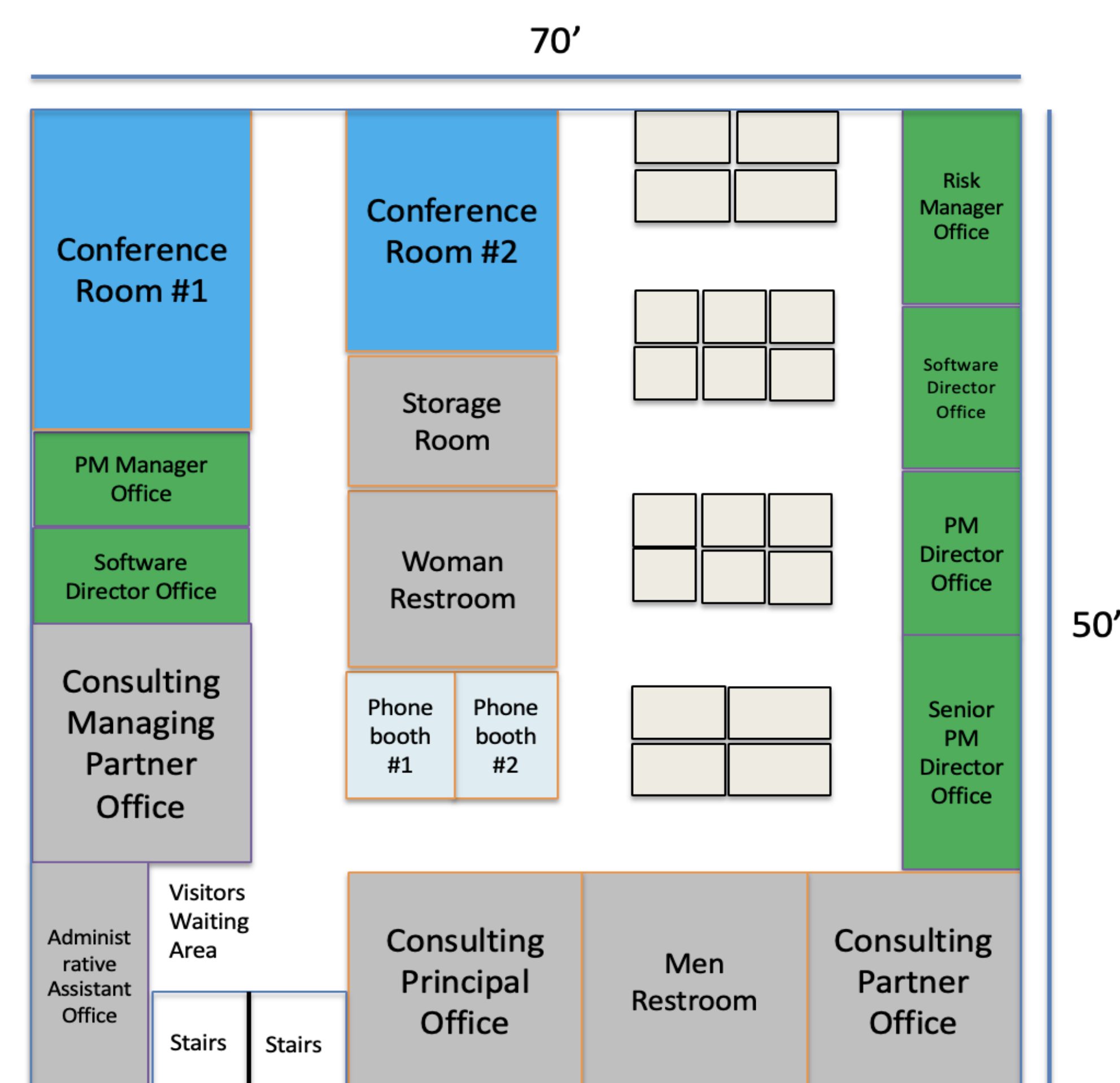


Figure 2

Current RSM Office Layout

Figure 3 displays the frequency of office visits among consultants, which provides insight into attendance patterns and helps identify the peak occupancy days that drive workspace demand.

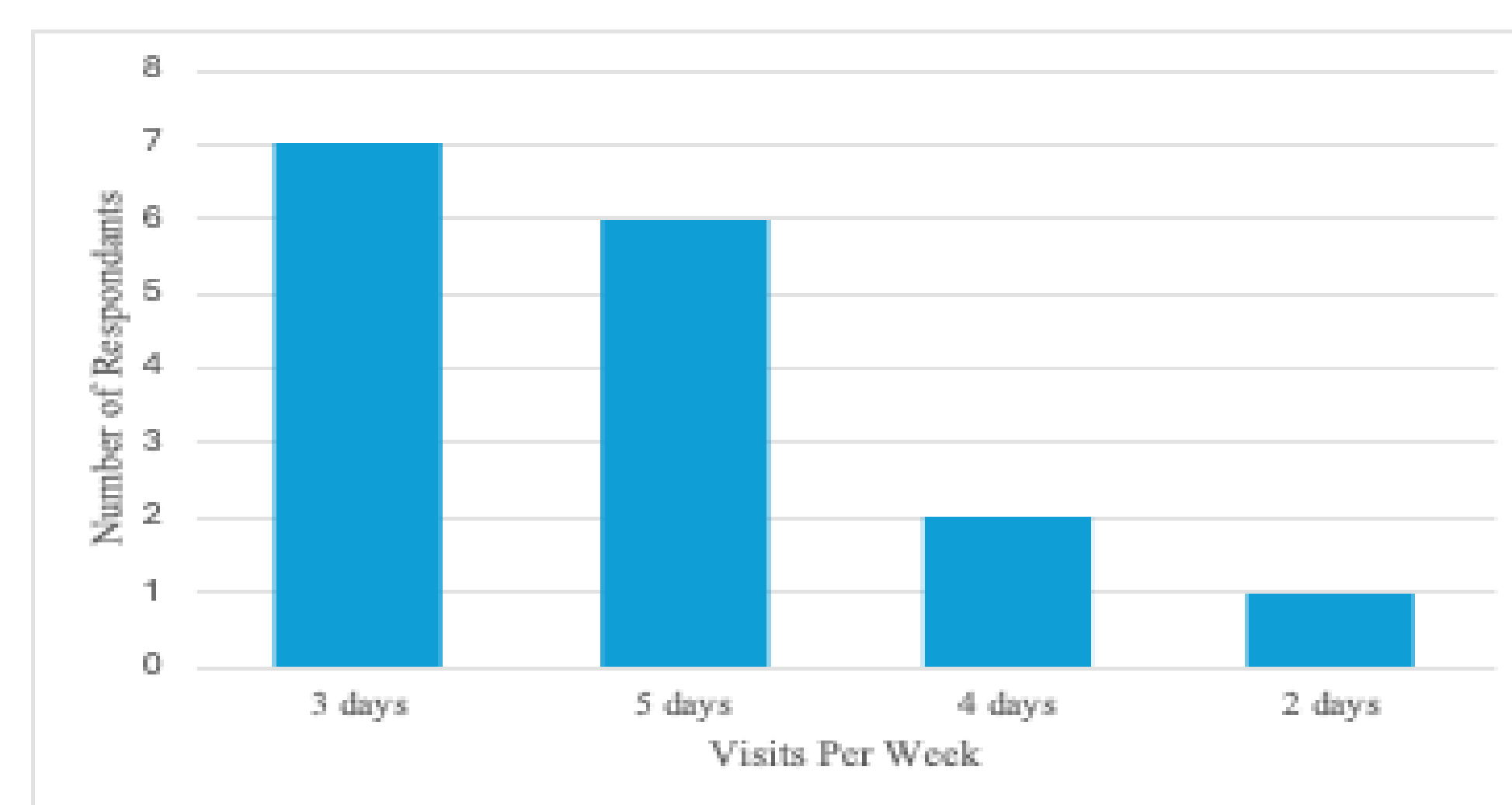


Figure 3

Frequency of Office Visits Among Respondents

## Results and Discussion

The analysis and implementation phases revealed measurable improvements in workspace management within just one week of pilot testing. Before the intervention, consultants reported difficulty finding available desks, averaging 14 minutes per day searching for space, and frequent overcrowding during midweek peaks. After introducing predefined remote workdays and new communication rules, these inefficiencies were largely eliminated.

Table 1 summarizes the classification of office spaces by type and accessibility, serving as a baseline for understanding how resources are currently allocated within the consulting division.

Table 1  
Classification of Office Spaces by Type and Accessibility at RSM Puerto Rico

Number of Spaces	Description	Allocation Type
2	Conference	Reserved
2	Phonebooth	First-come First-serve
6	Private Office for Managers	Shared Office
20	Shared Open Desk	Shared Desk
3	Consulting Partner Offices	Non-shared areas
2	Bathrooms	Non-shared areas
1	Administrative Office	Non-shared areas
1	Storage Area	Non-shared areas

Early results after one week of implementation:

- 0 desk shortages during peak days.
- Noticeable improvement in organization and satisfaction.
- Reduced conflicts and more equitable distribution of space.
- Minor resistance observed due to space limitations and fixed remote days, considered normal in adaptation.

While some employees expressed minor concerns about desk space limitations due to the installation of desk phones, overall feedback emphasized improved organization, easier coordination, and better visibility of available spaces. Upper management confirmed that the Consulting Division operated more efficiently and equitably during the test period.

However, due to delays in the installation of desk phones, the Tactic Workspace Solution—the software platform intended for desk reservations—could not be implemented at this stage. The integration of this system will take place in the next phase of the project, providing real-time visibility of workspace usage and further enhancing transparency and efficiency in the hybrid work model.

Overall, the early outcomes confirm that the implemented measures successfully addressed the most critical issues affecting workspace allocation. The combination of structured scheduling, improved communication, and clear desk usage rules led to immediate gains in efficiency and employee satisfaction.

## Conclusions

The implementation of structured desk management policies significantly improved workspace utilization and consultant satisfaction within RSM Puerto Rico's hybrid environment. After only one week of applying the new processes, there were no desk shortages, a reduction in conflicts, and a 50% improvement in overall satisfaction. These results demonstrate that small, data-driven interventions—such as standardized remote workdays and clear desk reservation rules—can generate measurable organizational impact. The study also confirmed that change management and transparent communication are key factors for successful adaptation to hybrid models. The outcomes validate that using the DMAIC framework is an effective approach for optimizing workspace allocation in consulting environments.

Figure 4 compares the main performance indicators before and after the implementation of the proposed changes, revealing measurable improvements in desk utilization, conflict reduction, and consultant satisfaction.

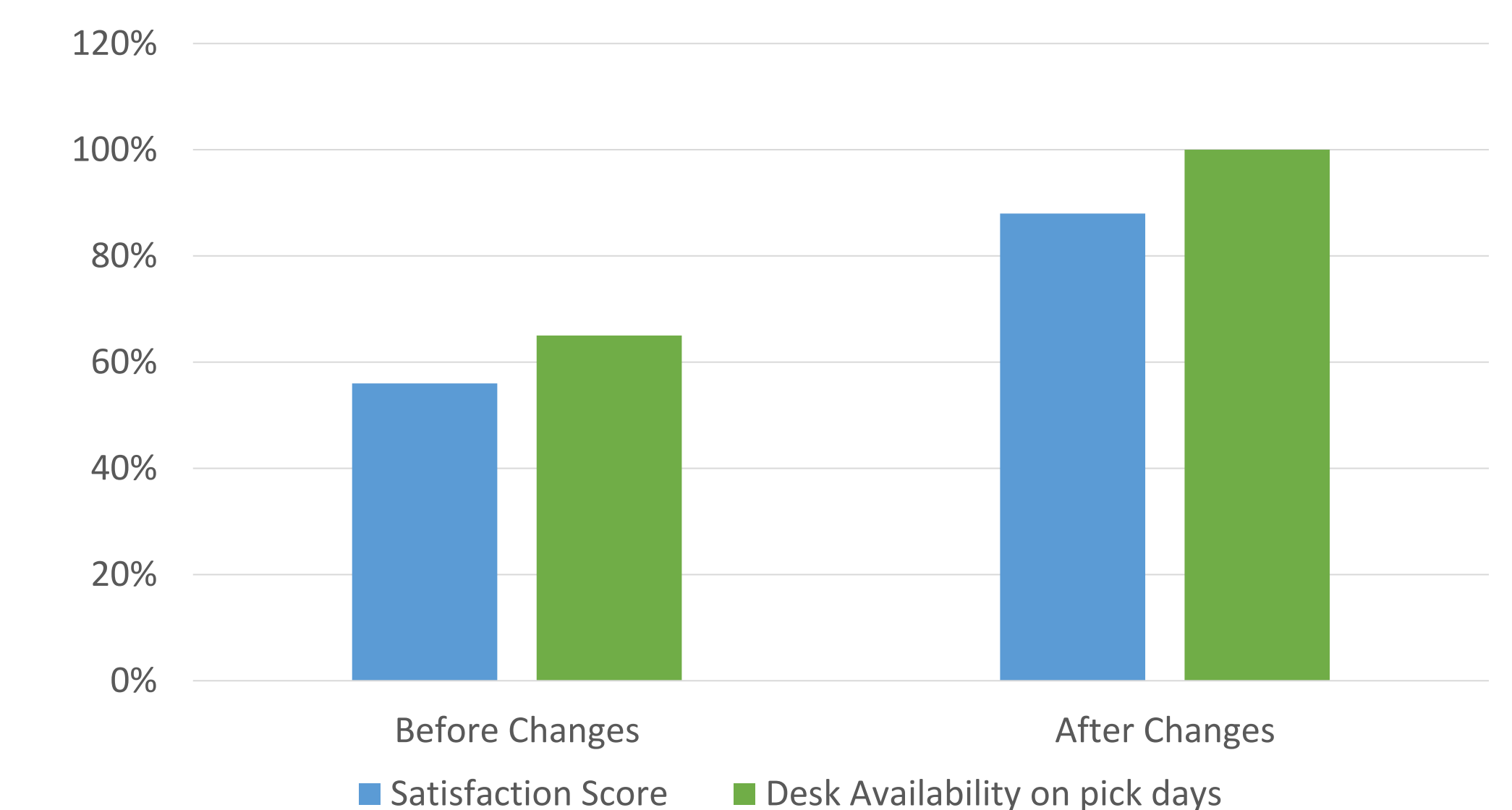


Figure 4

Improvement After Changes in Consulting Division

## Future Work

The next phase of this project will focus on fully deploying the Tactic reservation platform to automate desk management and integrate attendance analytics. Once implemented, this system will enhance visibility of workspace use and provide continuous monitoring through real-time dashboards.

## Acknowledgements

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