



Leadership Strategies

International

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Greetings!

In this issue of Integro Directions we are focusing on the impact the leaders in an organization have on employee engagement and organizational results.

Although our focus is going to be primarily on the front line leaders in the organization and the skills they need to get the best performance out of every employee, these same skills are just as important in the executive suite.

Look for the article *What Kind of Leadership do You Need?*

But first in this issue we visit with Unity Health Center in Shawnee Oklahoma, an 800 employee hospital operating from two facilities whose core purpose is **Positively impacting human life through exceptional healthcare.**

The healthcare industry has for some time been dealing with a critical shortage of nursing staff... one estimate indicating a nationwide shortage of 126,000 nurses in hospitals alone.

According to this same source the average age of nurses today is 46, and 30% of nurses under age 30 say they plan to quit within the next year.

Are we addressing the right issues? People join organizations or professions, but they leave managers. Yes the crisis in healthcare is a complex issue, much of which may be out of the control of the hospital administrators. But the leadership that nursing staff receive is totally within the control of the organization.

Unity Health Center was experiencing their own crisis in 2002 with close to 50 positions they could not fill and along with that, declining patient satisfaction. Three years later



Chuck Skillings
CEO, Unity Health Center

employees needed, the situation is much healthier, both in terms of vacancies and patient satisfaction.

Read on to get the full story of how the leadership team succeeded in turning things around. And thank you for joining us again this month.

Laura Hauser
Dave Hauser

Leadership is the Key to Reduced Staff Turnover at Unity Health Center

The Symptoms

Like many hospitals across the country, Unity Health Center in Shawnee Oklahoma was experiencing a high level of turnover, and great difficulty in filling the jobs that had been vacated. During 2002 there were on average 6 to 8 vacancies in each of the six operating divisions of the hospital that could not be filled. So at any one time, the hospital was short staffed by between 40 and 50 people... most of these being nursing and support staff.

Just months earlier Unity Health had been created through the merger of two competing hospitals in Shawnee with the primary goal of convincing local residents that they did not need to travel to Oklahoma City to get quality health care.

Still operating from two separate facilities, the merger required the integration of two senior management teams and as CEO Chuck Skillings said:

"...we needed to cease being competitors and become collaborators - united in our mission and vision. The name Unity Health Center is a reflection of the spirit of unification that happens every day in a hospital when groups of individuals, such as doctors and nurses, combine talents, abilities and training to help others. We are committed to bringing technology and compassion together while making a positive difference in the lives and health of those we serve."

The Diagnosis

The first priority in creating a culture that would support

team functioning as a team. Linda Brown, VP of Clinical and Support Services contacted a Tulsa based consultant, part of the Integro Leadership Institute group to work with the new senior team. The primary objectives were to help the senior staff from both hospitals to build trust with each other, and to gain buy in from the group to the organization's Core Purpose and Values.

The two day session that followed included a number of experiential activities that required members to operate as a team. A few months later we were asked to return for another session... this time it was partly celebration, partly to integrate new team members, and partly to go deeper into the DiSC Behavioral Model which team members had found really valuable.

Later in 2002, the hospital completed internal and external surveys to measure both employee and patient satisfaction. These surveys identified a number of areas that were of great concern to the management team. Direction, leadership, patient satisfaction and communication with employees were perceived to be poor; and there was a lack of understanding of purpose and values, despite a significant effort to instill these into the culture.

The Prescription

The senior team realized that if these results were to change, it had to start with the leaders in the organization. So in April 2003 Unity Health embarked on Integro's leadership development process with two groups of 16 Managers, including the CEO, all Vice-Presidents and Directors of all departments in the hospital participating.

One of the key aspects of the Integro process that was important for this situation was that participating managers were required to apply what they have learned by taking their team members or direct reports through a series of application exercises or discussions. This meant that all 800 hospital employees were impacted by the process so they could gain an understanding of how what they do impacts on the organization's ability to operate by its purpose and values.

"Test" Results

The CEO and entire Executive Team are delighted with the results they are achieving. Staff vacancies have dropped dramatically from a consistent 40 to 50 three years ago to



***Linda Brown
Vice President of
Clinical and Support
Services
Unity Health Center***

benchmark survey conducted in late 2002 showed significant improvement. Patient Satisfaction increased and in the internal staff survey, it was very positive to note that 10 of 18 attributes measured are significantly higher than their respective database averages for other healthcare organizations. More importantly ALL 18 attributes scored significantly higher than the 2002 benchmark study. Considering Leadership and Direction were two areas which scored poorly in 2002, it was a major turnaround to find among the greatest strengths reported by the study were the following items:

- My manager shares all the information my co-workers and I need in order to feel part of the health center team.
- I feel completely free to express my views to my manager.
- My manager holds everyone in our department accountable for their work.
- My manager gives me measurable goals to achieve.
- My manager does a good job of recognizing employee contributions.
- My manager is fair to all employees.

Members of the Executive Team are noticing differences in the way people are interacting in the hospitals. To quote Linda Brown, VP of Clinical and Support Services:

"We are using the language we learn in the sessions. It's great to hear people talking about what we are learning back in the hospital. I am hearing this is the best education we have ever provided."

We have also received a number of unsolicited emails from members of the Senior Team passing on feedback from themselves and others. Here are some of their comments:

From the VP Finance: *"Several Directors have spoken to me and state that this is the best education we have ever provided for them."*

From the VP Nursing: *"Just knowing and understanding what makes me and others "tick" is helping us work together better and respond to each other differently."*

Director of Diagnostic Imaging: *"The Leadership Development Process has truly changed the way I perform and communicate with my team. It has left a positive imprint on my personal life, as well as with the staff I interact with on a daily basis. Each session is jam-packed*

to day team interactions. I no longer light a fire under my staff... I light a fire in them... and it truly has made all the difference in the world!"

The importance of the role of the leaders at all levels in "*lighting that fire within people*" is not well understood. The leader makes all the difference in how people feel about coming to work, how well they perform while they're there and whether they stay or leave.

Fortunately the leadership team at Unity Health Center understood this and are now reaping the rewards of their investment.

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What Kind of Leaders Do You Need?

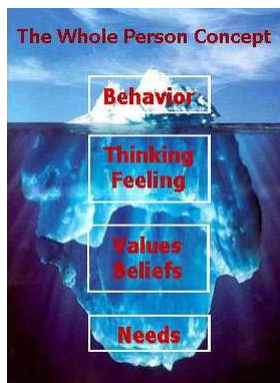
So much has been written on the subject of leadership. In fact a search on Amazon.com resulted in over 16,000 books with the word leadership in the title... so by now we should know everything there is to know on the subject, and everyone in leadership role is doing a fantastic job, right?

If that was true, Gallup research would be showing a lot more than 29% of the US workforce as engaged, because isn't that what great leaders do... they get people to be excited about and committed to their organization's vision. And one thing we need to understand about the role of the leader in employee engagement... your leaders are either increasing engagement, or they are decreasing it. There is no middle ground. Everything a leader does that impacts on employees either increases or diminishes engagement.

The Truly Engaged Employee

Rather than start by looking at what kind of leaders you need, I suggest we should get really clear on what it means to be a truly engaged employee... then we can better understand the kind of leadership we need to provide.

When looking at human motivation, I think it is helpful to do it in the context of *The Whole Person Concept* or Iceberg Model that I described in a recent Leadership Update. The underlying principle in this model is that all



motivation comes from within the person. More specifically, motivation comes from the Needs or Values levels of our model. In other words, people do what they do either to satisfy a need, or because they believe they should... it is consistent with their values. *Full Engagement* rarely comes from just satisfying employees needs. Receiving a pay rise or bonus, extra benefits or even a promotion can have a temporary impact on engagement, but it doesn't last long. The fully engaged employee is one whose needs and values are *aligned* with their work and their organization.

Five Leadership Skills that Increase Engagement

After almost 30 years of research I have determined that there are five essential skills that leaders must have if they are going to succeed in increasing employee engagement. They are:

1. **Building Trust.** Trust is an essential increasing engagement. The first thing leaders need to know about building trust is that it does not happen just because you are trustworthy. People do not know how trustworthy you are until you demonstrate it by using trust building behaviors, and the most important of these behaviors is to trust others. We build trust by trusting others. This requires a basic belief in people... a belief that people are essentially trustworthy. After all, if you have untrustworthy employees, why did you hire them and why are they still there?
2. **Mentoring.** The relationship between the employee and his or her immediate manager is a critical factor in how engaged the employee will be. We have to get away from the idea that Managers cannot mentor the people who report to them. The Gallup research is very clear on this point. Employees need feedback... they need to know how they are performing, not just once a year at review time, and be able to discuss their needs for growth and development with a Manager who cares about them. This is a must have skill for effective leaders... to give and receive feedback, and to coach and counsel employees in a way that increases engagement and commitment.
3. **Inclusion.** Whether employees feel like an insider or an outsider also impacts on their level of engagement. Effective leaders know that everyone on their team has strengths the team needs to be

successful, and they know how to get the best out of each person regardless of their ethnic background, gender, age or sexual orientation. They understand that people with different personal values can work together effectively when they commit to the same values about trustworthiness and standards of work performance.

4. **Alignment.** Engaged employees feel aligned with their organizations Purpose, Values and Vision. Their work is meaningful to them because their leader helps them see the connection between what they do and the success of the organization. The effective leader also understands that gaining their team's commitment to the organization's values increases the team's performance standards as well as their engagement.
5. **Team Development.** Effective leaders understand the potential for significant increases in performance through high performing teams. They make sure that all team members understand the strengths they and other team members bring to the team, and work at developing a process that capitalizes on all of these strengths. The leaders focus is on developing the leadership potential of each team member, and ultimately implementing a shared leadership approach to continuously improving performance that is owned by the team.

All of these skills are needed to fully engage employees... if any of them are missing, engagement will be diminished. The challenge in developing these skills is that they are dependent on each other. That is, you have to build trust before you can be effective at mentoring, and you will need your mentoring skills to be effective at inclusion and alignment. You won't have much success at getting all employees aligned unless they feel they are an insider, and to build a high performing team, the leader needs all of the above skills.

The reality is that these skills don't come naturally to many managers, and yet they can be learned. But extensive research by Daniel Goleman (author of *Primal Leadership*) on leadership learning has established that they cannot be learned during a single training event. Developing these skills will for many managers require the unlearning of old habits, often habits of a lifetime, and the learning of new habits. It takes time, reinforcement and practice... and a serious commitment from both the

organization and the managers involved.

With all the evidence we now have about the significant increases in organizational performance as employee engagement increases, can you afford not to make the effort?

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If you would like more information about how Integro's programs for increasing employee engagement and commitment could apply to your organization, please contact me using the phone number or email address below.

Sincerely,

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This message contains confidential and/or legally privileged information and is intended for use by the indicated addressee.

[View Integro's Leadership Development Process](#)