

## **Transformational Leadership and the Future of Health Care**

**One thing that is clear in the world of health care is that it's in the midst of** incredible change that shows no signs of abating for at least the next 20 years. How do you survive and thrive in this environment? With laser-focused targets, clarity and alignment from the top to **the bottom of the organization, overarching goals of "Patient First" to which all** subordinates goals connect, superior leadership skills in change management, and a deep bench of successor managers whose own development must be accelerated.

**If this is the formula for success, who is winning out there? It doesn't** appear that we have any winners yet, as we are in the first quarter of this four-quarter game. There are **health care organizations that are positioning themselves to execute this formula but I'm not aware** of any who have these concepts in place and are executing them well.

I am working with an organization, the Order of St. Francis HealthCare system in Peoria, Illinois, that has a good start on this journey. OSF is an integrated health care network with more than 17,000 employees and 11 acute care facilities in Illinois and Michigan. It is a spiritually based organization that is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who founded the Franciscan order. This framework guides the **organization's approach to work and its** interactions with employees and patients.

OSF is a year into a training and certification program for all employees known as **"IC2it."** IC2it calls all employees to focus on shared goals, key results and mutual **accountability. "Patient First" is foremost.** Additionally:

- All employees are trained in focused feedback and recognition.
- Leaders demonstrate IC2it skills in employee gatherings and in their day-to-day interactions. All employees are expected to do the same.
- **"You see it, you own it" has become a mindset** promoting accountability.

My firm, E·A·S·I·Consult®, has been working with this client for more than nine months. We are working with leaders across the organization in collaboration with the internal organization development staff and have been focusing on: 1) the executive committee in the role of sponsor; 2) physician leaders (its physician population is about 700); and 3) identified high-potential leaders across the organization.

Our work has been centered on the environment or climate created by **OSF's leaders. We use** a tool to measure climate along six dimensions. The tool can be used at the work-team level

all the way up the organization as a whole. There are data to support that a better climate results in higher performance, which affects bottom-line results.

**We use another tool to measure the leader's style of leading. Again, there is research to support the fact that a leader's style has the single greatest impact on a group's climate.** We work with leaders on analyzing the people, tasks and situations they work with and are facing, encouraging them to be intentional about the leadership style or styles appropriate for their situation. OSF identified a set of transformational competencies used by its best performers that, if employed by all leaders, would help the organization navigate the seas of change. Leaders get feedback on their capabilities related to change, leadership style and organization climate and use this as a strategy to attack existing challenges in their current roles.

The physician leadership group is concentrating on organizational climate at both the individual and organizational levels. Its members are addressing what is not working effectively today while creating a vision for OSF in five years. This translates into working on **the "hard stuff" which is done through improving "soft skills."** Said another way, insights from the organizational climate feedback is causing leadership to re-examine the **"job-person" fit in today's key roles. Leaders are considering what they** need to do differently to prepare employees to succeed. They are identifying where the bar needs to be raised in terms of employee fit and performance standards going forward. These efforts will be supported through the use of leader coaching services.

OSF is a work in progress but seems to be on the right course. Todd Van Nest, Ph.D., executive director of the Ministry Leadership Foundation Program, offered some thoughts on **OSF's journey. He said that OSF was one of 32 pioneer Accountable Care Organizations** (ACOs) formed in response to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). OSF is among the 50 percent that remain in the ACO structure and one of a handful who are successfully adjusting to the financial challenges that come to being first to adopt a new industry model.

An appetite for change and a willingness to get as far to the front of the storm as possible will determine the winners in this challenging industry.

### About the Author

*Dave Hoff is the chief operation officer and executive vice president for leadership development at E·A·S·I·Consult®. E·A·S·I·Consult works with Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and mid-sized corporations to provide customized Talent Management solutions. E·A·S·I·Consult specialties include individual assessment, online employment testing, survey research, competency modeling,*

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