

## Leadership Opportunities

### Executive Summary:

- Effective leaders help their businesses grow and increase customer loyalty
- Effective leaders are very conscious of the abilities of the team members
- Effective leaders get all team members to participate
- Team STEPPS online shows several ways leaders can demonstrate effective leadership in clinical settings

~~~~~

There are many opportunities to lead effective teams in healthcare and business settings. Teams with effective leaders help reach the goals at the healthcare provider setting and at small businesses. Effective team leaders help improve patient and client satisfaction, which drives the success of any business.

In healthcare settings, leaders are often physicians, but not exclusively so. In December, 2016, the *Harvard Business Review* in an article titled *Why the Best Hospitals Are Managed by Doctors* noted that the best quality hospitals are led by physicians. But physicians do not lead every team at a provider site. For instance, a lead administrator may lead teams that focus on mainly administrative processes and problems. The Medical Group Management Association points out that effective outpatient clinics often have dual leaders—physician and administrator. This dual leadership model leads to effective outcomes for the business and the patients.

### Effective leaders share several characteristics:

- Model good behavior and respect for all team members
- Elicit participation by all members
- Brings together team members to develop solutions and create better processes
- Do not hand out solutions without significant input from others
- Recognize the value of ideas from those nearest the problem
- Understand that effective leadership is not based upon ‘being powerful’

Let me share a story about the impact of effective leadership. I know a former owner of six auto parts manufacturing plant with whom I network. Five of his plants were in West Michigan and one in Mexico. He did not have to locate in China as his plants were very efficient. He was very successful, even in the economic downturn in 2008. He possessed the best qualities of leadership—he valued and understood the skills of his employees. He adroitly employed the principles of Lean manufacturing. A few years ago he sold the plants as he was ready to retire. The new owner was a ‘top down’ employer. He did not listen to employees or value their input. Solutions for problems came from the owner. Now the company is about to declare bankruptcy. Sadly, the new owner’s lack of good leadership skills led to the demise of a once successful enterprise.

The Team STEPPS online training module describes several opportunities for leaders to demonstrate effective skills in team leadership in outpatient setting—planning, problem solving and continuous improvement, all of which are disciplines of Lean healthcare.

Planning can focus on a wide range of timelines, from planning a day's work to strategic planning for the goals of a site for a year. A team made of clinicians and possibly of front office personnel at an outpatient site may begin the day with a team huddle to address the needs of the patients that will be seen that day. This can include any special needed supplies, reminders to segregate patients who may have the flu and having them wear a mask and such. This may also include a quick review of any processes that have been recently improved by staff, such as the sharing of information between a medical assistant and physician after the MA has seen the patient in the examining room. Typically, this team setting is led by a physician with input from the staff.

Problem solving teams are formed from both clinical staff and administrative staff, depending on the nature of the problem to be addressed. Problems are unexpected events that cause a disruption to established processes. These can be minor or major. For instance, I was recently reading a posting on a MGMA chat board about a practice that had been notified that their billing company was downsizing and would not service the site's needs in 90 days. This has the potential to be very disruptive. It will take an administration team with an effective leader to address this problem. Some of the issues that the chat board identified that the team must address are:

- Length of time to assess, interview and choose new company
- How fast the new company can set up a database to service the provider's needs
- IT needs—hardware, software, new connectivity

Obviously, this is a difficult problem that will take some nimble teamwork to address. An effective leader can assign team members to address various aspects of the problem and make sure that there is effective communication among the team members so that the solution can evolve quickly and efficiently.

Effective leaders of continuous improvement teams can help a business better address the needs of their patients or clients. There are many processes involved in the providing of a business service or healthcare. Providers and businesses should be constantly looking for ways to improve these processes. Doing so will please the customer or patient and improve customer loyalty and referrals. There are many ways to find opportunities for improvement. Leaders can make sure that team members are encouraged to share ideas about improvements and that the good ideas are acted upon. Suggestions for improvement can also come from surveys. I work with an effective leader at Calvin College Rehabilitation Center, Steve Vanderkamp. The center provides an eight-week class on preventing falls of seniors. At the end of the series of classes, participants are asked to fill out a short survey about their experience. I analyze the data and report the results to our team members. So far, the feedback has been very positive about our efforts. We found opportunities for improvement and have made changes that have had a positive impact on both client and staff.

As you can see, effective leaders make a huge difference in the outcomes for any business, whether it is a healthcare provider or other service business. Effective leaders help teams address problems, create effective plans for the near term or longer future and continuously improve the processes involved in delivering services.

~~~~~

Bryant's is skilled at training in the areas of population level health management, business process management, risk assessment and continuous quality improvement. Contact Bryant's to find out about more about onsite training for your group. Please contact Bryant's at 616-826-1699 or email at [t.bryant@alumni.utexas.net](mailto:t.bryant@alumni.utexas.net) . Visit [www.bryantsstatisticalconsulting.com](http://www.bryantsstatisticalconsulting.com) to learn more about Bryant's services.

~~~~~

Mr. Bryant is certified by the University of Michigan as a Lean Healthcare facilitator and is a member of the Medical Group Management Association.

~~~~~

You may copy this newsletter and use it for your own publication. Just be sure to include that I am the author and how to reach me: "Donald Bryant is the author of this article. He helps healthcare providers meet their challenges. Go to Bryant's Healthcare Solutions website, [www.bryantsstatisticalconsulting.com](http://www.bryantsstatisticalconsulting.com), to get a free article—7 Challenges in Healthcare and How to Solve Them. You may also contact Mr. Bryant directly at 616-826-1699." Be sure the link is live.