

The Leadership Forum

a publication from the Association of Chiefs and Leaders in General Internal Medicine (ACLGIM)

From the Editor

This issue of the Leadership Forum features articles by three ACLGIM LEAD Program speakers who will all hold workshops during the upcoming May 2016 SGIM annual meeting in Hollywood, Florida. In the first article, Nancy Proffitt, MBA, gives words of wisdom regarding workforce engagement. Her full workshop titled *Leadership Communication—Skills You Need*, will be held at the annual meeting on Thursday, May 12, at 1:30 p.m..

Our second article is by Chester Schriesheim, PhD. Dr. Schriesheim offers advice on nonfinancial motivation

of employees. His workshop titled *Become a Charismatic and Transformational Physician Leader*, will be on Friday, May 13, at 1:15 p.m.

Our third article is from Nathan Hiller, PhD, also an upcoming ACLGIM LEAD speaker. Dr. Hiller offers insight into using narratives in leadership. His workshop titled *Why Should People Buy into Your Leadership* will be on Friday, May 13, at 4:15 p.m. as part of the SGIM annual meeting.

Each spring, ACLGIM hosts the Leon Hess Management Training and Leadership Institute (aka Hess Insti-

tute) prior to the SGIM annual meeting. This year, the Hess Institute will be held on May 11, 2016, in Hollywood, Florida, one day prior to the start of the annual meeting. You don't need to be a chief to attend; registration is open to all SGIM members. We encourage everyone interested in leadership and management to register and attend the Hess Institute for a guaranteed valuable learning experience.

As always, we both welcome and encourage your contributions to the *Leadership Forum*. Correspondence may be sent to afitzg10@jhmi.edu.



April Fitzgerald

Words of Wisdom

Employee Engagement: Running on One-Third People Power

Nancy Proffitt, MBA, CEO Proffitt Management Solutions, West Palm Beach, Florida. She is on the faculty of Florida Atlantic University College of Business Leadership Boot Camp in Boca Raton, Florida. Nancy@ProffittManagement.com.

There is an old joke in which a business owner is asked how many people work in his company and he responds, "About half of them." The statistics on workforce engagement are even worse; they indicate that only 29 percent of employees are motivated and energized.

Workers can generally be grouped into three categories of commitment: engaged, not-engaged, and disengaged. Engaged workers are the ones with passion who feel a profound connection to their workplace. They drive innovation and can move an organization forward. Engaged workers

produce more, make more money for their institution, and create emotional engagement and loyal customers. They contribute to good working environments where people are productive, ethical, and accountable. They stay with the organization longer and

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Nancy Proffitt



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are more committed to quality and growth. However, workplace studies show that only 29% of employees fall into this category.

Not-engaged workers are those who are essentially “checked out.” They’re sleepwalking through their workday, putting in time but not energy or passion. Over half (54%) of employees usually fall into this category.

Actively disengaged workers aren’t just unhappy at work; they’re busy acting out their unhappiness.

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Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish. It is estimated that actively disengaged employees—the least productive—make up 17% of employees and cost the American economy up to \$350 billion per year in lost productivity. For those who become disengaged, the opportunity to become part of a solution may help. Unfortunately, for those who remain negative or will not help with a solution, terminating their employment should be seriously considered in order to avoid further damage to staff morale and organizational progress.

Most people join an organization with some level of engagement. Everyone will have moments of negativity; that’s normal. But why do people become not-engaged or disengaged? The possible reasons are many. Some organizations offer too little feedback, guidance, or opportunities to discuss problems. There could be too much pressure to perform more with less, not enough resources to solve problems or do a job well, or lack of opportunity to pro-

vide ideas and input. There could be a lack of recognition, limited space to develop one’s potential, or interpersonal conflicts left unresolved. A setup for disengagement is when there is little opportunity for social engagement with colleagues, little humor or joy displayed except in gossip or cynicism, and inflexibility for balancing work against personal or family needs.

The leader’s role is to look at employee engagement and motivation to see how he or she can provide what is needed to change the environment and make it one in which all employees can engage and succeed. Employees need clear communication, a clear path for achievement, and strong bonding with colleagues and coworkers. They must feel like they are a part of something bigger so they will take risks and stretch for excellence. Often, a leader’s best first step is to get out there and talk to employees to find out what their stresses, wants, and needs are; find out what is important to them, and engage everyone as part of the solution.

Words of Wisdom
Motivating Employee Excellence Through the Use of Nonfinancial Rewards

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Chester Schriesheim

Physicians in leadership positions—like nonphysicians in other settings—often assume that employees need no special care and handling beyond the compensation, benefits, and inherent self-satisfaction that comes from their work. But, in fact, the opposite is true. Studies show that financial rewards have very limited effect on employee morale. An increase in pay or news of a bonus will raise job satisfaction for approximately 20 minutes, after which job satisfaction will return to its previous level. And, although the health profession may hold inherent the self-satisfaction in

the healing of others, recent studies show a persistently high and possibly increasing burnout rate among physicians. How, then, can physician leaders motivate their followers and keep them motivated for excellence with nonfinancial rewards?

Abundant evidence from more than a century of research clearly shows that employee behavior is a function of consequences, $B = f(C)$. People do what brings praise and recognition, and they avoid what doesn’t. There is a timeless consequence that is proven to be effective and within every organization’s budget. It

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is the power of praise and positive reinforcement, a limitless resource that's available even when time and budgets are tight. Few employees, high performing or not, ever get enough of this all-important and effective tool for garnering and maintaining motivation. Why? When time is short, it is easy to fall into management by exception—"If you don't hear from me, you know you are doing fine." We sometimes focus on what employees are doing wrong or assume that verbal praise and recognition are just not necessary to maintain employees' intrinsic motivation. Leaders must overcome this common tendency, particularly when dealing with high-performing, valuable employees.

The top fifth of performers in any organization make a disproportionately large contribution to the organization's success. These are the

employees who are consistently enthusiastic and hardworking. Psychological studies of motivation show that highly productive people desire recognition for their efforts to a greater extent than other workers. Valuable employees typically crave and often expect feedback and recognition about their job performance. However, research also shows a general shortage of timely praise for high performers in most organizational settings. Since high performers have a reputation for success and have strong potential to be successful in other settings, they also have a high potential for mobility. They recognize their own value and are often willing to leave if they're dissatisfied, knowing they will be able to find good jobs elsewhere. To keep valuable employees motivated and on your team may require giving them more positive feedback.

Some tips for giving feedback include making it specific, timely, genuine, and tailored to the individual. Demonstrating impact on the organization can amplify the praise. For example, "You did a great job!" is always nice to hear, but "You made me proud" or "You represented our institution well" can have an even greater impact.

A final word of praise and caution for praise: Praise is a limitless resource that does not drain the budget, and unlike monetary compensation, if performance slips, you can easily reduce or eliminate it. However, on a note of caution, research shows that high performers are more sensitive to "reward omission," the cessation of praise and positive feedback, than other employees. So, use praise frequently and consistently, careful not to unintentionally omit the positive feedback. It's a nonfinancial motivator that keeps employees energized.



Nathan Hiller

Words of Wisdom

The Importance of Narratives in Leadership

Nathan Hiller, PhD, Academic Director, FIU Center for Leadership, Department of Management & International Business, College of Business, Florida International University, Miami, Florida.
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Two connected questions confront most people in managerial and leadership roles at some point. How do you get the most out of your team? And, why should people show up and be dedicated to something that you are leading?

Perhaps people show up to work and do a reasonable job simply because it's their job. The "because it's their job" line of reasoning can be moderately effective for individuals with high internal drive. Yet, we often need or expect them to go beyond. We expect them to be as motivated as we are, to get it as much as we do, but they don't, and then we become disappointed at the outcome.

But why should others push through problems and obstacles for you when the work is often mundane, the rewards few, and the politi-

One of the key mechanisms that has received growing research validation is the importance of leaders and managers at all levels (and in any kind of setting) being clear about purpose and vision.

cal level high? Even if the work environment is ideal in a number of ways, you are probably still not getting the most out of your team.

One of the key mechanisms that has received growing research validation in organizational research is the importance of leaders and managers at all levels (and in any kind of setting) being clear about purpose and vision. This idea is not about fake vi-

sion statements or platitudes, or trying to be charismatic. This is about leaders honestly wrestling with and constructing a narrative that is honest and accurate, open to criticism and change, and one that helps individuals and the team truly understand, frame, and possess a collective narrative for what they do, why they do it, where they are going, and roughly how they're going to get there.

It is easy to eschew this idea or pass this role onto the top people in your organization. But the most effective leaders at all levels (even those who are introverts and may shudder at what they're reading) think carefully and practice proven and learnable techniques in creating a narrative. They do so in a way that is authentic and true to them, certainly, and they

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are purposeful in communicating and repeating it.

Carefully crafting a vision narrative doesn't come easily, but it does pay off in both individual and team performance. In our small organization at the FIU Center for Leadership, we are passionate about helping leaders find and create narratives, so we regularly discuss and calibrate on what we stand for, why we exist, how each person plays a role, what success looks like, and what our vision is of the future. We ask each employee to tell us, in their own words, what that looks like for them and for us collectively. Do we mandate that people

buy in? Absolutely not. But we give them an opportunity and reason to buy in to a shared vision that they have helped create. This can help get us through times when we need everyone to be at their best. It takes work, for certain, but the results have been undeniable.

Two bricklayers working on identical projects in nearby towns were asked about their work. The first replied "Why it's obvious what I'm doing - I'm laying bricks. This is what bricklayers do". The second bricklayer was asked about his work, and replied with a smile on his face, "I'm building a cathedral in which thousands of people will find community and purpose." Two people, with an entirely

different approach to their work, and we can quite easily guess which one is more passionate about his job, whose work is superior, and who will be more committed to overcome obstacles in getting the job done.

Individuals and teams are far more effective if you help people understand the big picture. This approach claws back the notion of "vision" as being a fancy-worded statement, and instead suggests that effective leaders help to create the lens through which people understand their work by using learnable and proven principles. Have you clearly developed and articulated the narrative when managing and leading? It has a chance of paying off more than you might think.



ACLGIM
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of General Internal Medicine

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HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA
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