

## When You Are at the Top, What Is There to Do and Where Is There to Go?

Deborah Heart and Lung Center, Browns Mills, New Jersey

Deborah Heart and Lung Center is not just your normal success story. They have been performing Patient *Insights* survey research with HealthStream Research for two years and an Employee *Insights* Survey for the last year, and they have consistently ranked among the best. “This isn’t about going from the lowest percentile to the top—we were already at the top. Our struggle was fighting the tides of complacency,” said Tom Campbell, Director of Marketing and Managed Care. “HealthStream Research’s Employee Insights Survey and their Patient Insights Survey were amazing tools for maintaining success. They really kept us on track.”

So, in 2002, Deborah Heart and Lung Center decided to go from very good to excellent, and their journey covers an encyclopedia of quality improvement tips. Since then, here’s a sampling of the quality initiatives that have kept them at the top:

**“It is impossible to maintain a loyal customer base without a base of loyal employees.”**  
Reichheld, F.E. *The Loyalty Effect*

### HealthStream Research

HealthStream Research is a national leader in the measurement of physician, employee, patient, and community satisfaction for healthcare organizations. We currently work with more than 1,100 facilities nationwide, including many of the nation’s largest for-profit and not-for-profit health systems and specialty healthcare companies.

- **Department of the Quarter:** To spread the culture of excellence and improve staff recognition, they established a truly meaningful award to the highest performing department. “Even though there is a detailed process to participate in this program, the departments began scrambling to win it. This really energized our organization, and the research from HealthStream Research helps us tie recognition to results,” said Tom Campbell.
- **Manager of the Quarter:** This award isn’t just about numbers—it’s about recognizing the managers that do an excellent job recognizing their employees.
- **Improved interviewing and orientation process:** Deborah launched an aggressive new orientation program. All employees get a taste of the Deborah culture, and they also added additional sessions for nurses.

## Success Story: Deborah Heart and Lung Center

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- **“It’s My Job Too” Video:** “We involved the employees in producing a video on customer service. This was very successful in getting the staff involved in building a culture of excellence,” said Tom Campbell. The video is shown to all new employees.
- **Nurse involvement:** “One of the most effective ways we were able to improve staff buy-in was HealthStream Research’s ability to provide online results for patient satisfaction that the nurses could see at any time.” Nurse Managers check the online data constantly.
- **Values:** “We set Customer Service, Quality, and Financial Viability as our values, and the ‘completely satisfied’ patients are our flag bearers, carrying the Deborah name far and wide.”
- **Display excellence everywhere:** “Customer service panels are in the elevators, there is a customer service display case, and we established a new position—Coordinator of Customer Service. We put patient letters on display, both on the web and in our halls. Employees are given copies of patient comments when they are commended in HealthStream Research survey. Our results from HealthStream Research are online. Our patients and staff are surrounded by excellence.”
- **Inservices:** Each employee must participate in several inservices each year specifically centered on customer service.
- **Newsletter:** “A monthly newsletter is essential for building a culture of excellence. In each issue, we recognize the best employees and departments, and report patient feedback.”
- **Comfort Kits:** “Quality care is not just clinical. For our patients and their families that have an unexpected overnight stay, we give them Comfort Kits to make the situation as caring and comfortable as possible. In return, we have achieved and maintained incredibly high patient satisfaction scores.”

“We never stop looking for ways to celebrate our successes and to satisfy our patients and staff. By getting the staff involved, they have become our greatest resource improving and maintaining quality. We’ve got a Father’s Day and Mother’s Day card program, Stars of the Month, Menu Suggestion Committee, You’re a Star ribbons, employee picnics—the list never stops growing,” said Tom Campbell.

Success isn’t about improving one thing by a thousand percent—it’s more about improving a thousand things by one percent. The successes of Deborah Heart & Lung Center can’t be tied to any one program or initiative. Each strand of excellence comes together to form a sturdy rope of quality. “Most importantly, our culture of excellence is always looking for ways to improve. HealthStream Research has helped us identify where our opportunities for improvement exist, and our employees stepped up to the plate and delivered,” said Tom Campbell.