

Employee Satisfaction: A Dramatic One Year Turnaround

North Central Baptist Hospital, San Antonio, TX

HealthStream Research recognizes North Central Baptist Hospital (NCBH), located in San Antonio, Texas, for a dramatic turnaround in employee satisfaction. Mark Clayton, CEO and Susan Monahan, VP of Associate Services described the recent transformation in employee satisfaction at NCBH.

North Central Baptist Hospital was purchased by Vanguard Health Systems several years ago, just as Mark Clayton was arriving to become the new CEO. Right off the bat, Mark, along with his senior management team, realized that there were some cultural challenges in the hospital. In a nutshell, Mark reported that employees were “disconnected...basically a collection of people working in the same house without a culture.” The management team at NCBH leapt into action, implementing several plans that have proven highly successful at impacting employee satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty.

Since the hospital had an unhealthy culture, the senior team at NCBH felt it was time to focus on creating a permanent, positive culture, which also required having the “right people on the bus.” Therefore, the management team began determining which associates fell into either A, B, or C categories.

- “**A**” associates as those people who are great team players, highly engaged, always doing good work, and are leaders within the hospital.
- “**B**” associates are those that are good employees, but have potential to be great with just a little work.
- “**C**” associates are troubled, the type of associate that is not dedicated to the organization or their work.

This process of identifying which associates were “on the bus” laid the foundation for the next step in Mark and Susan’s plan: create positive culture through tradition.

North Central Baptist began implementing programs to recognize associates for their accomplishments. One great success was the HERO program, where fellow associates nominate one another and write up a narrative for a heroic act they witnessed. (See the next page for more information on the HERO program.)

The Heroes receive recognition for their great acts at quarterly employee

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Success Story: North Central Baptist Hospital

meetings. NCBH also implemented a series of Associate Forums that provide an opportunity for Mark to share his vision for the hospital, communicate improvements, and chart progress toward goals. During one session a discussion was facilitated to identify “Barriers to Greatness” (those things that prevent NCBH from being a great place to work). The administrative team uses the issues raised in the “Barriers to Greatness” sessions to improve things around the hospital.

“It is no doubt that the ‘Barriers to Greatness’ program has made a huge impact on how we communicate with our associates,” says Mark. Some of NCBH’s communication avenues include:

- Monthly newsletter, created by volunteer associates
- New “Scoreboard” that highlights the facility’s “barriers” and “wins”
- “Awesome Cards” which allow administrators to give on-the-spot recognition to employees

Mark attributes senior team visibility as a “must have” for improving employee satisfaction and engagement. The senior team at NCBH takes the issue of rounding very seriously and holds each other accountable as a team. In fact, the associates are also vocal about rounding as well. “They aren’t afraid to say, ‘Where have you been lately?’ any more,” notes Mark. Communication, culture, and accountability have been key factors in the success North Central Baptist Hospital has had with employee satisfaction.

HERO Recognition Program



Peggy (L) and Francesca (R) get involved in NCBH’s HERO program.

In an effort to improve morale and create a positive culture, North Central Baptist Hospital instituted a HERO recognition program which allows individuals to be nominated who contribute toward making North Central the best place for patients to receive care, associates to work, and physicians to practice.

All Hero nominees are recognized at quarterly luncheons. One such Hero was Peggy, a North Central Baptist associate who works in the Housekeeping department. One day, Peggy was going about her daily duties when she noticed a young boy all alone in the ICU waiting room. The boy’s mother was a patient in the ICU and his father had just returned from serving in the military in Iraq. Peggy surprised the boy with a Sony PlayStation, which she had borrowed from the children’s area of the hospital. After seeing the game, he smiled and said, “How did you know it was my birthday?” With

that, Peggy enlisted the help of the Dietary department and later that day brought him a birthday cake so that he could enjoy his special day although he and his family were going through a difficult time.

This Hero program also provides associates with the opportunity to identify heroic acts. Francesca, who works in the Pediatric department, “caught two heroes in the act.” Francesca, while working one day, noticed a hearing disabled family in the waiting room, unable to hear the TV. She called the maintenance department inquiring about the closed-captioned feature only to discover that the TV did not have that option. Her Heroes, Todd and Daryl from Maintenance, soon appeared in the waiting room and within minutes installed a closed-captioned TV.

North Central Baptist CEO, Mark Clayton, described Peggy, Todd and Daryl as “perfect examples of a HERO . . . people who have done extraordinary things for the people, patients and families at our hospital. Without involved associates like Francesca to catch our Heroes in the act, we might never know about their compassion and caring for our patients and their families.”