

## 8 Leadership Competencies to Win During Uncertain Times...The Reform Unknown!!!

Whether we like it or not, health care reform is going to be part of our lives over the next decade. The one thing that will determine your organizational success is leadership, not reform, not better reimbursement, not a better payor mix....you have what you have, leadership is the answer.

I have talked with 100s if not thousands of healthcare leaders over the last five years, and what we know from the best in this business, is they all demonstrate some or all 8 competencies.

Here they are and we all know these things, but let's talk about them in more detail.

- Communication
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Relationships
- Task Management
- Production
- Development of Others
- Personal Development

More than any other skill, communication will determine our success, all are important, but if you can't communicate your vision, goals or whatever the message, you will never have influence on others nor be able to gain their support. **Communication** involves *listening to others* and encouraging them to share their viewpoints, *processing information* and evaluating the pros and cons and *delivering the message clearly* through effective and skilled communication.

What is **Leadership**? Author John Maxwell says it is influence, nothing more and nothing less. But how do we lead? First we have to *instill trust*, which means keep our promises, deal with people in a high level of integrity and have high personal ethical standards. Further leadership requires *providing direction*; it is not enough to say go meet this target. How do you want them to succeed, what is the vision? We must outline very clear expectations to keep a focus on the big picture. Finally, under the leadership competency we must *delegate responsibly*. Know when and what, to the right people and then empower them to succeed, but never leaving them to fail checking in from time to time.

Are you **adaptable**? What does this mean to you? To lead others we must *adjusts to circumstances* and remain flexible to other ideas, and diverse backgrounds. We are all wired differently and as a leader it is our role to move toward our followers in order to have them follow us in return. We also must be able to *think creatively*, take bold risk and inspire others to be innovative.

We are only as strong as the **relationships** we develop with others. In today's world of do more with less, it is necessary to *build personal relationships* with your peers and your staff in order to accomplish all of the goals you set personally and professionally. We must show consideration for others and deliver criticism tactfully and constructively. You will gain respect and build stronger relationships if you follow this rule. Relationships are required if we want to *facilitate team success*. We must resolve conflicts, building consensus when possible and bringing capable people together will provide you with a maximum advantage over your peers.

**Task management** is another required competency to be a superior leader. We must be able to apply current technology to *work efficiently* and set priorities for ourselves and our staff. *Working competently* and learning the skills required to lead, or apply new fundamentals under our areas of responsibility is a must, we can't rely on our staff to teach us how to do our job, and we have to be skilled at learning and applying new information quickly.

Profits and **productivity** are the two things we are looking for the most when we look at our monthly reports. Production is the driver of profits, and we must *take action*, knowing when to stop planning and start implementing. Taking an initiative to make things happen and make clear and timely decision. If you do these things you will *achieve results* that show up on the bottom-line and with your staff in their engagement and feedback on your reviews.

Our final two competencies are tied to one another. **Development of others and personal development.** If we want to be successful and continue to move along in our own careers we must do these 2 things. The previous 6 competencies will happen if we will *seek improvement* and *display a commitment* to our own personal growth. If we aren't growing ourselves we cannot be an effective coach and mentor to our followers thus we will not *cultivate their individual talents* or *motivate them successfully*. Learn to work on **you...the LEADER** and not just your technical skills as healthcare executive, CFO, CEO or whatever your title.

Remember that leadership is more about influence than control. Control is a myth in business and if anyone tells you that you should control other people like your staff and physicians, then they probably don't have many loyal followers or partners and probably don't even have any loyal friends if they think of people like this. Leverage these principles to your advantage and see how easy it is to lead your organization through the process of reform and change which ultimately benefits us all.

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