Happy Staff
Happy Patients

Using Patient and Staff Feedback to drive improvement

John Flynn Private Hospital
providing acute care cardiac, medical & surgical services to the Gold Coast, Tweed & Northern Rivers community

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Because good ideas should be recognised

Press Ganey's Success Stories and testimonials acknowledge and reward the innovative efforts of our clients who integrate their patient experience data and Press Ganey's solutions support to produce outstanding clinical outcomes, improvements in patient perceptions, staff morale, operational efficiencies and financial performance.

We hope these experiences will enlighten and motivate individuals in all types of health care organisations.
In April/May 2014 our hospital engaged Press Ganey to conduct a patient experience survey and staff engagement survey.

Our patient experience survey results had been trending in a negative direction and in 2010 the results levelled out. Our 2012 results were disappointing as they had returned to the downward trend.

Our staff survey results in 2012, showed a positive improvement against the previous results, but not spectacular.

Consequently decisions were made and strategies adopted to arrest the slide in our patients’ experience.

The impact of these strategies was clearly evidenced through outstanding improvement between 2012 and 2014 for both surveys, including:

- “Personal Best” for both staff and patients’ experience
- Increased mean score percentile rankings by over thirty positions for the ‘All Facilities’ and ‘Private Hospitals’ benchmarks for both staff and patients.
- Took the lead position at the 99th percentile in our own bed size peer group also for both staff and patients.
Describing the situation or challenge our organisation faced. What prompted us to implement this project or initiative

The challenge for us was clear from the 2012 patient experience survey; to make significant improvement and arrest the slide that had re-emerged. But how? We considered that physically the hospital had all the attributes conducive to a positive patient experience; attractive physical environment, internal and external; well-equipped and well supported by medical staff.

We made the conscious decision to concentrate on where we considered the greatest impact could be made. Armed with the commitment and the belief that happier staff will translate into happier patients, we embarked on a campaign to improve staff satisfaction and engagement which would in turn improve our flagging patient experience levels.

Through the staff satisfaction survey, the staff was telling us that we needed to improve on communication with and from them. This would empower them with a greater overall knowledge and understanding of the hospital, including its operation and direction. Most importantly, it needed to include how vital their role in caring for our patients is to the hospital and give recognition for it.

Describing our primary strategy. What people, process and data were used to drive change and improvement. The key steps and unique aspects of the approach

The premise behind the strategy was: happier staff, happier patients. The primary strategy was to concentrate on improving the level of staff satisfaction and engagement through two main initiatives; enhanced communication with them and increasing involvement from them.

We also introduced initiatives dedicated to addressing identified issues specific to patients, e.g. customer service training, communication, meals etc. Key initiatives included staff rounding from all levels of management, increased face to face communication with staff by the CEO supported by a number of introduced information mediums, e.g. information screens.

The executive team were the drivers of the strategy either directly or indirectly however the contribution from the departmental managers was vital. They were required to develop action plans relating specifically to their department.

They were to focus on the Press Ganey metrics from 2012 addressing the issues already identified and risk rated for them. Part of their plan incorporated strategies that would have the most impact on staff satisfaction such as reducing the incidence of “bullying.”

Highlighting barriers and specific issues we encountered and how we were able to overcome them.

A key barrier encountered included access to staff. Whilst staff rounding was implemented many hospital staff work in areas of the hospital that are not conducive to regular face to face contact between executives and staff.
It is not as easy to communicate with theatre staff as it is with ward staff. It is difficult for many to leave theatre to attend an information forum so information dissemination is often difficult. As a result theatre staff can feel isolated and almost forgotten and their morale can be impacted negatively.

This is exacerbated because the group can form their own collective and often negative opinions of the hospital and its management who they seldom see. A combination of introducing an information screen into the theatre lunch room which continuously feeds information to staff about the hospital, developments, social events, new staff/doctors etc., concentrated staff rounding and the CEO taking the information forums into theatre on a regular basis proved to be major factors in improving staff satisfaction in theatres and other departments where access issues exist.

**Measurable outcomes or ROI that can be attributed to our improvement program or initiative**

Both staff satisfaction and patients experience surveys in 2014 achieved highest percentile ever achieved. Percentile rankings improved by over thirty positions within the Press Ganey ‘All Facilities’ and ‘Private Hospitals’ peer group for both staff satisfaction and patient experience achieving the 99th percentile, or the best in our peer group for both surveys.

Our staff retention index outcome improved from 11.2 in 2012 to 8 in 2014, meaning that the hospital will have limited unplanned staff turnover in twelve months time.

**The primary tactic that worked**

Staff Rounding at all management levels engendering greater communication, approachability, relationship building, appreciation etc. The rounding process increased the opportunity for more staff to be recognised and rewarded both individually or as a department. Feedback to management enabled decisions to be made and communicated back to the staff, consequently enhancing their feeling of involvement in the hospital and engendering pride in the place in which they work and this in turn improved the patient experience.

**The creative, innovative or unique aspects of our improvement program or initiative**

- We instigated interactive CEO forums as is: “took it to the people” as they were conducted not only in the auditorium, but also in theatre staff, cath lab, catering, CSSD etc.
- Staff rounding provided a great source of employee feedback and opportunity for leader/staff engagement.
- We instituted 30 & 90 day interviews with our new recruits following commencement. This allowed us to re-recruit these staff for better engagement.
- Each department/unit presented a PPP with individual results. All staff was involved in developing improvement action plans based on their feedback.
- Staff had Intranet access to “Stoplight” improvements. Green-achieved, amber-in progress, Red- Explanation as to why it can’t happen.
- Information screens were set up in staff lunch rooms showing updates, social events, new staff/doctors, development progress etc.
- Regular CEO forums were instigated to all staff groups.
- Updates were incorporated into the Hospital Newsletter.
- Staff wellness Expos.
- Staff Appreciation Nights.
- Employee of the Month, Employee and Department of the Year awards taken from the staff rounding data base.