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The Leading Edge

How to Enhance Your Hospitality

How long does it take for consumers to make up their minds about a skilled nursing facility? A few days? A week? Longer? Believe it or not, recent data shows that it takes a mere **10 seconds** for individuals to form an opinion. According to a report published by *Skilled Nursing News and Senior Housing News*, most prospects make that decision upon entry, as they encounter staff, look at the lobby, the seating, the art on the walls, etc.

For this reason alone, many SNF experts suggest that operators place a tight focus on first impressions, which includes how their facility looks as well as how welcoming and accommodating their staff is. In a word, there needs to be a significant focus on hospitality.

Indeed, efforts placed on improving and enhancing hospitality can yield significant benefits, including increased business, resident satisfaction, and referrals. Here are some simple, yet effective ways to turn the dial up on hospitality.

- **Take note from fancy hotels.** Take a good look at your entry areas and main lobbies. Are they welcoming and visually appealing? Remember, these are the areas that will host not just residents and prospective residents but also their family members. A cramped, dated, and/or drab lobby can immediately leave a bad impression on prospects and residents. It's critical that your lobby is clean, fresh, and welcoming. Want some inspiration? Visit a luxury hotel (or search for some online—most hotels have pictures of their lobbies on their website). Luxury hotels are all about making their guests feel welcome. Upon entry, you're likely to see abundant greenery and flowers, water fountains, spotless floors, complimentary water and coffee—just for starters. Take note and try to emulate luxury hotels—they're leaders in hospitality.
- **Make it part of your mission.** A genuine culture of hospitality won't likely occur until you make it part and parcel of your organization's everyday values and mission. Hospitality happens when the people you employ understand what hospitality means and how important it is to the organization. It happens when your employees make every person in the building feel welcomed and valued. You can create a culture of hospitality by incorporating it into your company's written mission and value statement. You can also create training and documentation on what hospitality is and how you expect it to be conveyed among staff. Lastly, you can create a *hospitality pledge* that includes components like commitments to empathy, common courtesies, timeliness, and eye contact. Make sure everyone reads and signs the pledge—it will establish common understanding and expectations.
- **Get techy.** The right technology can do wonders when it comes to hospitality. For example, providing designated staff with earbuds can allow front desk personnel to reach out with queries. If a family member comes for a visit, front desk staff can alert staff to locate the resident quickly and discretely. A welcome screen with visitors' names is another way to create customized and welcoming experiences in your facility.

*"Hospitality: making your guests feel like they're at home,
even if you wish they were."
—Justine Vogt*



Employees Matter

Little Things that Make a Big Difference in Your Healthcare Career

There's no doubt about it, doing the little things right every day can make a big difference. Further, when you consistently practice these little things, you'll start to realize *big gains*—whether it's advancing your career, nailing a big project, or just

gaining more overall satisfaction and joy out of your job. Once you start mastering the *little things* every day, you'll find that big dreams can indeed become a reality.

So, what exactly are these little things and how can you start practicing them day in and day out? Below is a simple list to get you started. It's by no means exhaustive but can serve as an effective foundation.

- **Lighten up.** You should take your work very seriously, but you don't always have to take yourself so seriously. Do you laugh at yourself or find the humor in a situation at least once a day? If the answer is no, you should focus on finding that humor and taking some time to lighten up and laugh. After all, it lightens the mood and it makes the tough times bearable. Whether you find a funny clip on YouTube or simply poke fun at yourself, lightening up and laughing can make a big difference when it comes to your mood and how you manage the day.
- **Slow down.** Most people have a tendency to hurry. You may always hurry to beat traffic so you can get to work on time. There's usually urgency to meet deadlines and the demands of work. Whether you realize it or not, all this hurry and rush puts us on edge and creates constant tension. So, take one minute out of every hour to simply slow down and focus on your breathing. Close your eyes and take some deep breaths. This simple, small act can help bring calm to your day and allow you to better tackle the chaos of the day.
- **Crack a smile.** Are you smiling when you meet people in the hallway? Do you let the pressure of the day show on your face? Smiling can make or break a mood. Also, smiling or frowning is contagious. If you smile at someone, chances are they will smile back and then the next person, and so on and so on. So, make a conscious effort to smile at everyone you see.
- **Show some respect and focus.** Do you find yourself multi-tasking throughout the day? Maybe you're checking your phone while a co-worker is trying to talk to you or maybe you're responding to emails while you should be listening to your boss talking to you on the phone. Plain and simple, this type of multi-tasking is not efficient and it's disrespectful to the other person who is trying to communicate with you. Indeed, one of the sincerest forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say. Put your phone down, make eye contact, concentrate and fully listen when someone is speaking to you.
- **Engage and ask questions.** Have you ever found yourself in a team meeting or conference call and absolutely no one has any questions or input into the conversation? It's highly unlikely that no one has questions or anything meaningful to add. It's usually a case of not listening or not caring enough to speak up. But rest assured that leaders notice the individuals who don't listen and/or participate in these conversations. Make an effort to ask questions or provide your opinions and perspective to work conversations. It's a little thing that will get a lot of notice.

The more you fill your days with these small things, the more likely you are to see big (*positive!*) things happen more naturally. Try focusing on one or two of the items above. You'll see that with a little effort, the small things really do make a big

difference.

"What we dwell on is who we become."

—Oprah Winfrey



News You Can Use

Review of Bundling Program Reveals Negative Impact on Nursing Homes

The journal *Health Affairs* recently reported on two key studies that reviewed the savings from Medicare's bundled-payment program. After the review, *Health Affairs* cites that there are negative effects of the payment model on nursing homes and post-acute care players.

Although the two studies show savings, the negative impacts on nursing homes and post-acute facilities remain. For example, one study found that bundling for hip and knee replacements reduced spending by 1.6% from 2013 to 2016 with no overall change in quality. The second study determined that lower extremity joint replacement is the only type of clinical episode in Medicare bundled-payment programs that has produced savings so far. While the savings may be a positive sign for healthcare as a whole, the bundling model may be hurting nursing homes because hospitals, which typically control the bundles, are *pushing down* on post-acute providers. That is, hospitals are steering patients to lower-intensity settings, such as home health, and limiting utilization in post-acute settings, as in reducing length of stay.

Bundling may be a way to pull dollars out of the healthcare system but may not be good for long-term care or the post-acute care system. In most cases, the convener, or the entity managing the payment, is profiting, and typically the convener is the hospital. Skilled nursing facilities just appear to be *along for the ride*.

"Never follow anyone else's path.

Unless you're in the woods and you're lost and you see a path.

Then by all means follow that path."

—Ellen DeGeneres



Just For Fun

You Said What?!

Taking the Initiative

My boss told me to have a good day... so I went home.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Interviewer: Would you call yourself a hard worker?

Candidate: Absolutely. I make almost everything harder than it has to be.

Thanks?

Recently, when I greeted my co-worker, she said, "You look so gorgeous, I didn't recognize you."

Your nursing members need this program!



Nurse Leadership Training

- Do you feel like you are chasing your tail?
- Do you feel like you are treading water and about to go under?
- Do you wake up to "Groundhog Day" everyday?
- Do sticky notes with problems from yesterday greet you at the door?
- Does it feel like someone put Miracle Grow on your to-do list?

If you have answered yes to three or more of the above questions, then ***this session is perfect for you!***

As a former C.N.A., Charge Nurse, Director of Nursing, and currently as an experienced Consultant in skilled nursing, Cheryl Boldt RN, LNHA, has "been there, done that", and

learned the importance of **Executive Nursing Leadership!** Join her for a fun 3 days (can be customized to 2 days) of growth in your nursing leadership role!

This session is intended to give Nursing Leaders in long term care the personal and professional leadership guidance needed to support them in their roles as Directors of Nursing, Assistant Directors of Nursing, MDS /Case Managers, Unit Managers, Shift Supervisors, and Charge Nurses. This includes the methodology and personal skill growth needed to positively influence staff in all departments and roles. Nurses have a 24/7 leadership presence in skilled nursing, and make a significant difference in the lives of those we serve.

After completion of this training program, the participant/learner will be able to:

- Differentiate and delineate Nursing Department roles and responsibilities
- Evaluate Nursing Leadership and Frontline Staffing Models for effectiveness
- Implement an Action Plan for improving Personal Leadership Skills
- Implement team-based Recruitment and Retention Strategies
- Identify and take action to eliminate time-wasters
- Teach Staff in all departments and all roles to effectively take on customer concerns
- Take Steps to improve the financial viability of the organization
- Implement strategies to prevent Return-to-Hospital and hospitalizations of all types
- Implement team-based communication and teaming systems
- Implement team-based strategies to manage and mitigate clinical risk
- Take a leading role in the implementation of a team-based Marketing and Sales effort to drive revenue
- Collaborate effectively with all facility disciplines to sustain regulatory compliance



Cheryl Boldt, RN, LNHA

Cheryl Boldt is an RN and Licensed Nursing Home Administrator who offers more than 45 years of nursing and healthcare leadership experience. She is an accomplished professional speaker and consultant with credibility in a variety of areas including Long Term Care, Post-Acute Care/Service in the SNF setting, staff recruitment and retention, customer satisfaction, compliance, team-based improvement, and leadership in all healthcare roles.

[Learn more about Cheryl!](#)



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