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Change and Culture Case Study I

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Introduction

Healthcare facilities may merge with other facilities for many different reasons. Facilities may be facing financial instability, difficulty keeping up with the healthcare demands, reimbursement decrease, and challenges with the shortage of employees. Along with financial demands, technology is another challenge that encourages mergers with other organizations. While a merger occurs in a healthcare organization, many things will change in the everyday process, from the cafeteria to the boardroom. The impact of combining two competitive facilities with different ways of performance and values could have a rocky effect on all employees in the combined facility. In the following paragraphs, the impact the merger has on the culture of the combined organization, what the middle manager can do to ensure a happy productive staff, that will work together effectively, focusing on quality patient care, and what the organization looks like, such as its systems and shape, will be discussed.

Effects on Culture of the Organization

Many challenges occur when a merger occurs, especially when it occurs among competitors. Merging two different organizations into one facility disrupts the operation and functionality on all levels involved within the organization. The merger can cause stress on employees and patients, and force difficult challenges to maintain positive results during the merging period and possibly beyond. But employees of both facilities do not realize during a merger that many positives can occur. Examples of positives may include an opportunity to combine many knowledgeable individuals, introduce new styles of performing tasks, and introduce different styles of performance. Changes incurred during a merger will bring managers an uncertainty, a feeling of losing control over the many new faces in his or her department. The merger can cause stress, uncertainty, and possibly negative effects on all employees from upper management to employees working in the snack shops. The employees who are transferring to the other facility may feel unwanted, and neglected. Managers need to implement plans to focus on making a merger work for the organization as a whole.

Middle Management Ensuring Quality Care

A middle manager does not have an easy job during the transition of a merger. He or she has to learn how to balance and maintain different personnel with different personalities, and work with upper management in order to ensure that all is well in the organization. Managers should focus on the departments that are within their realm of control, especially if they want to ensure a successful merger. With a merger, effective implementation of all procedures and policies is very important. Managers need to consider different ideas to assist the recently merged employees to understand, adhere, and work together with others to ensure a successful transition. Mergers can be an exciting yet challenging event, full of new experiences. A merger can be a rebirth, so-to-speak, of an organization, and a new culture. The merger should be viewed as the best of both organizations creating a brand new world with many new adventures. The best of the organizations should be a main focus of the design, culture of the organization, and ideas on how to keep the employees motivated. A manager must be effective in order to gain trust and encourage communication within the departments. He or she must communicate properly and be supportive of all individuals involved with the transition to avoid instilling fear and confusion. A manager should be consistent and find ways to boost morale and maintain commitment to the change, giving the employees a chance to voice their opinions. Knowing that he or she has been heard will assist the employees to comply with all policy and procedures. They will feel they own part of the changes within the organization. The manager should consider the appreciative inquiry approach (AI).

New Organization’s System and Shape

According to Cooperrider (2010), the appreciative inquiry approach (AI) is a very significant morale booster. AI is an idea formed by David Cooperrider in the mid 1980’s. It is a positive revolution that searches for the best in individuals, and seeks to build union and positive change. AI focuses on just the care delivered, not events that happened, which encourages problems to vanish through something positive or problem-free environments. AI's impact will encourage an organization that is committed to sharing visions and knowledge. AI encourages a positive sharing of the newly created organizational ideas, routines, rules and procedures. AI urges the two entities to share visions to house an efficient organization- voicing issues, appreciating the organization, seeing what is good with the merger of the organizations, and realizing that problems or mistakes can be an opportunity to encourage innovation and growth of the new organization. A manager in encompassed with many challenges in an organization, and will face more difficulties with a merger. A manager’s challenge is getting the merged employees to share each other’s visions. There are many departments such as finance, nursing, surgical and more and these departments have multiple ideas on how their departments are or have been run. The finance department needs to organize a way to maintain the records of the organizations finances, such as ledgers. The nursing department can share visions on patient care improvement. Ideas from two different facilities can bring a fresh new way to ensure efficiency, comfort, and learning opportunities (Cooperrider, 2010). The merged surgical departments can deliver timely services, ensure patient safety before, during, and after surgical procedures, and also may bring new innovative procedures to save the surgical department time and money. Managers need to decide on an approach to ensure a smooth transition of the newly combined employees. Suggested is a comprehensive approach. Managers should understand his or her own strengths and weaknesses, and encourage employees to open up and share new innovative ideas, moving the employees through inspiration, motivation, and inspiring them to add insight to the organization (Jennings, 2008).

The organizations new systems and shape is focused around the AI system. AI is the planning process to keep the organization out of a competitive stance. The AI process assists in diffusing conflict because it will bring the best of both organizations together. The individuals and departments will strengthen employee’s participation. The AI system can assist the employees in understanding his or her fear of the unknown and replace it with thoughts of success. AI allows the individuals to focus on experiences that were successful in the past, and assist the individuals who were affected with disruptive change to calm and be encouraged to focus on a successful future within the organization. Individuals will be encouraged reflecting on his or her potential strengths and weaknesses in the organization and being able to work on strengthening the group’s ability to cope and succeed. Employees fear will subside and they can focus on the newfound energy, move forward, and allow the organization to flourish and become one great facility (Mindtools, n.d.).

AI is usually worked out in a 4-D cycle process- discovery, dream, design, and delivery (Serret, 2008). Implementing, evaluating and monitoring the new changes are initiated through this cycle. When an organization applies all the principles, it releases freedoms, such as the freedom of positivity, freedom to be heard, to be known, act with support, freedom to dream within a community, and the freedom of contribution. Once an organization uses these processes it initiates a core team who can plan, and oversee a project, and make it work. Appreciative inquiry can build common vision, find, comprehend, and use positive existing forces within the organization. It creates a positive work climate, demonstrates value of teamwork by showing ways in which teams add life to an organization, and it opens up opportunity for a continuous growth for improvement within the organization.

Conclusion

In conclusion, mergers can be frustrating for stakeholders in the organization, from upper management to the patients. In order to ensure a successful merger, management must figure out a process to bring all employees together to maintain a healthy balance, and this is where AI steps into play. An important aspect of AI is the 4-D cycle implementation. It is the efforts of management to be fully engaged in the process, and his or her willingness to work openly with all employees to ensure a happy, healthy relationship to maintain effective patient care. AI brings with it, positive creative ways to work together as a better team, and attain patient satisfaction. AI participants can be resourceful, insightful, and enthusiastic about the values he or she can bring with them. AI can work if implemented, and it brings a momentum of positive changes with a happy, healthy, productive organization.

References

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