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# Journey to Service Excellence in Patient Access

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ST. BERNARD HOSPITAL  
AND HEALTH CARE CENTER  
TRUSTED HEALTHCARE

# Topics

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- Managing staff in challenging environment
- HCAHPS and internal surveys
- Hired external consultant team– improved the patient experience enterprise-wide, clinical and non-clinical.
- Service Standards - part of yearly evaluations. This is intended to be the standard of behavior of the employees at St. Bernard.
- We have a dentist who treats special needs patients in and outside of the Englewood neighborhood
- Employees have been here up to 30 years. Some came from neighborhood establishments.

# Patient Experience Transformation

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Importantly, one must recognize that true transformation doesn't happen overnight; the journey is long and hard fought.

At the core, you need clarity of purpose, a commitment to your customers, and a willingness to ask tough questions, be bold, and act decisively. You need to take risks, accept failure, and embrace the long view.

*Unknown*

# The challenges moving to Service Excellence

- Staff was not accustomed to being challenged about their customer service behaviors; they felt the community accepted it
- Staff knew the neighborhood, subsequently felt it was okay to be casual
- Staff was not familiar with surveys or the consequences related to reimbursement.
- Staff was unaware of the need for professionalism and empathy, with all patients.
- Service excellence was needed not what was thought to be excellent service.

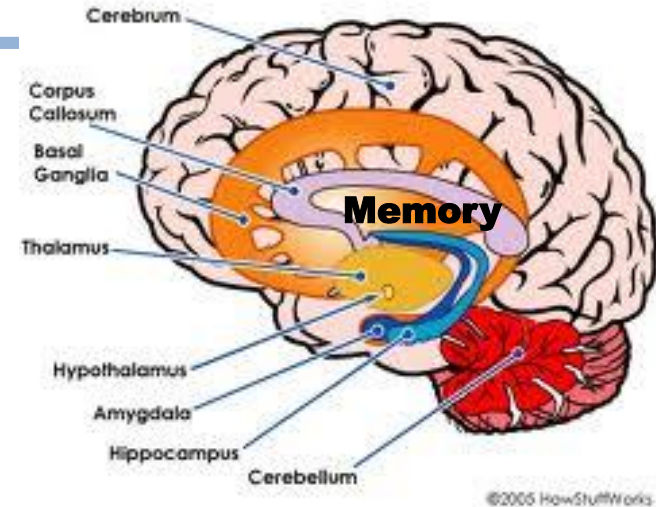
# Here is how I explained the difference

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- Excellent service is something you may give inconsistently. It is an encounter by encounter experience.
- Service excellence happens when you walk across the threshold because it is the way we treat people and do our business...it comes naturally regardless of the patient situation, communication or behavior.
- Accountability was not expected and behaviors had become lax.
- **PUSH BACK**

# What do patients remember?

Basal Ganglia and Limbic System



“Every person passing through this life will unknowingly leave something and take something away. Most of this “something” cannot be seen or heard or numbered or scientifically detected or counted. **It’s what we leave in the minds of other people and what they leave in ours. Memory.** The census doesn’t count it. Nothing counts without it.”

— [Robert Fulghum, \*All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten\*](#)

# Establishing the foundation

- Monthly meetings became standard
- I made sure everyone understood attendance expectations and that department would go by the handbook.
- Together we endeavored to improve our service standards.
- I had to stand my ground
- I told staff, “Look around you, in the direction that we are heading some may not aspire to go on this journey and may decide not to participate.” 50% improved their attendance (can’t ask for PTO if you do not have any accrued at the time of your request)

# Key contributors to the process

- Studer Group – pulled together my guidebooks and the principles that were experience at a previous employer.
- Applied the concepts in the St. Bernard setting; this credibility was demonstrated instead of management just preaching to the choir.
- If you appreciate the teachings of Studer, you already have these principles within you. YOU are an example to your staff.
- Staff did not embrace department concepts. Did things because someone told them, not because it was a good thing to do.
- By staying consistent in the expectation, over 6 months, staff changed behavior and the visitors noticed and appreciated the change in the team.
- This gave us the win, win we were hoping for!



# The culture change – how it looks...

- Atmosphere has a camaraderie effect and is more professional
- Staff feels greater pride in themselves and the role they serve at the hospital.
- Patients are greeted with standard scripting, staff tailors what they say so it sounds natural and genuine.
- Greetings went from sounding like sarcasm to a warm welcome.
- More accountability meant overarching successes!
- Patient Financial Services documented a 12% improvement in clean claims!
- 34% improvement on required signatures!

# Outside H-E-L-P!

- Baird consulting group – provided training and education to staff over a 18-month period and is still involved.
- Each employee (including physicians) were given defined standards of conduct
- This has been incorporated into Job descriptions, hiring practices, performance appraisals and ongoing leadership coaching.
- Kindness, empathy and going the extra mile has become a part of the daily work environment. Everyone is benefiting from the change.

# How the future looks

- The transformation will not become the flavor of the month!
- This process has changed people's lives! Employees are engaged and take ownership.
- Behaviors and achieving excellence...confident in the daily endeavors.
- We have come a long way, now it is our way of doing business, of providing for patients, of doing our jobs.
- It's a wonderful feeling to know goals have been accomplished.
- On our bright horizon is a new Ambulatory Care Center

# Brenda's Wish List – real time patient survey

## Patient Access Satisfaction

### *Mini-Survey*

*(1 to 5 scale: 1= lowest satisfaction, 5= highest satisfaction)*

1. Wait Time (1-5)
2. Registration Time (1-5)
3. Knowledge of registrar (1-5)
4. Ease of registration process (1-5)
5. Helpfulness of registrar (1-5)
6. **Was the registrar courteous? (1-5)**
7. **Was the area neat & clean? (1-5)**
8. Likelihood of recommending our facility (1-5)
9. **What can we do to improve?**

(\*Add additional items as determined)

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like us to contact you please provide us your name and preferred method:

Name:

Phone:

# Brenda's To Do list! (Now that we're ready!)

- Uniforms.
- Training for new Ambulatory Care Center.
- Establishing a new Call Center.
- Develop an incentive program for collections.

# Questions

