

Daive Carbone: How to Manage Organizational Change

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Today, the picture of St. Mary's Medical Center is much different than when I first walked through its doors as CEO four years ago. We have improved many areas, including programs, services, medical staff, quality, patient services, employee morale and financial stability.

It took a hospitalwide movement to shift St. Mary's into the hospital that stands today, as well as a lot of hard work and dedication from the executive leadership team, medical staff, board and employees. As I reflect on the many changes that we've implemented to turn around the hospital, I can identify four key elements that drove our success: embracing change, engaging employees, building upon strengths and inspiring innovation.

In today's market, change has to be the executive's friend. We live in a constantly changing environment and when internal and external forces evolve, businesses need to do the same. For any organization considering a new direction, it's important to refocus the executive leadership team to evaluate where improvements can be made in the current business model and develop a strategy for action. This often involves creating a new brand or image for your organization that reflects both the legacy of the organization and its new vision.

The next critical element is employee engagement. It's vital to understand employees' perspectives and discover what they need to be satisfied in their work. To reflect a new image, employees must be actively involved. They must feel engaged and take pride in the organization for which they work. At St. Mary's,

we immediately established an employee relations program with a designated employee relations staff member. Directors and managers should also be encouraged to boost morale by positively reinforcing employees that exemplify a job well done. With these resources, we were able to develop specific programs to improve our employee and physician satisfaction as well as more organizationwide celebrations and activities, consistently recognizing employees for their merit within the organization.

When implementing change, you also have to secure the support of all the people who make the organization tick. As a hospital, St. Mary's dedicated a lot of resources to expanding our physician relations program and to supporting a medical leadership that had our patients, the hospital and its legacy's best interests in mind. We increased communication with physicians to get them more invested in our hospital's success. We also developed a new governing board that could evolve the medical staff leadership into a more cohesive, cooperative group that worked together to envision the St. Mary's of the future.

With a strong and dedicated workforce, an organization has the tools to better execute its strategy for growth and development. But when deciding how to prioritize and manage strategic capital investments, it's always important to make sure they are realistic and within your organization's resources. At St. Mary's we are equipped to care for very high-risk patients with our trauma center, Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and Children's Hospital. Therefore, we set out to grow and expand services that support this infrastructure, such as our Advanced Orthopedics Institute, Neuroscience Program and our Comprehensive Stroke Program.

Lastly, it's essential to have an organization that embraces innovation from the top down. St. Mary's has achieved great success in the last four years; however, there's much more to come. It's my job to first get people thinking, and second, get people motivated for action. I'm constantly asking questions and proposing new ideas and new ways to look inside our hospital and within our very competitive market. This insight helps us predict what might affect us in the future so we can shift our business plan accordingly. Innovation drives us to look ahead, embrace change and continue to evolve.

Davide Carbone has been CEO of St. Mary's Medical Center and the Children's Hospital at St. Mary's since 2006. Prior to assuming his role at SMMC, he served as vice president of operations and market initiatives for the Hospital Corporation of America, and CEO of Aventura Hospital and Medical Center in Aventura, Florida. Reach Davide at (561) 844-6300.

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