

The Patient Experience Post

Healthcare's Resource for
Service Excellence
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A Good Read: Barbara Balik's "Leaders' Role in Patient Experience"

by Kristin Baird, RN, BSN, MHA

In the recent issue of *Healthcare Executive Magazine*, of the American College of Healthcare Educators, Barbara Balik, RN, EdD, discusses how pivotal the role of executives is in shaping the patient experience and engaging other staff members in maintaining service excellence.

Executives must frequently ponder ways to raise staff involvement and patient satisfaction while on a budget. As those who hold organizational power, they are hugely responsible for leading the actions of healthcare staff toward creating a service- and patient-centered culture. It is the executive's goal to maintain, instruct, and uphold the standards for patient service at his or her organization of work. Executives are healthcare role models for all staff—they are leaders.

Balik points out ways that executives can change employee responsibilities to better the patient experience, including regular rounding, getting patient family members involved in the care process, and keeping patients up to date about their care providers' work schedule so they are never in the dark about who and when someone will be there to provide support. Executives don't monitor and implement these staff duties based on guesses of patient needs; it is their job to get to know and understand all patients.

"Purpose is key," writes Balik, explaining the thought process that every executive must undertake: "At every opportunity, leaders must ask: How does this improvement benefit patient care and experience?" (p. 78).

By keeping this top-of-mind awareness about providing quality care to patients, the organization as a whole will benefit.

Additionally, "Patients and families view their experience of care in its entirety," explains Balik, so it is important for healthcare leaders to influence the consistency of care in every encounter and every department with every staff member (p. 78).

The bottom line is this: if healthcare leaders treat patients as best as possible, the whole staff will become aware of the standards for service that must be upheld at their organization. Executives are responsible for just that: to lead. Where is your organization being led?

*Learn more about ways you can ensure that all of your customer interactions, including over-the-phone interactions, support your healthcare organization's brand, as in [Living Your Brand Promise](#), featuring Kent Seltman, co-author of *Management Lessons From Mayo Clinic*. As the former Director of Marketing at Mayo Clinic, Seltman was charged with managing the brand for this world-renowned organization. During this 90-minute presentation, you'll hear about crucial elements in aligning the brand promise with the patient experience in order to build trust and*



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Nurse, author, and consultant Kristin Baird, "Healthcare's Customer Service Guru," is the author of *Raising the Bar on Service Excellence: The Health Care Leader's Guide to Putting Passion into Practice* (Golden Lamp Press, 2008), *Reclaiming the Passion: Stories that Celebrate the Essence of Nursing* (Golden Lamp Press, 2004), and *Customer Service In Healthcare: A Grassroots Approach to Creating a Culture of Service Excellence* (Jossey Bass, 2000).