

The Patient Experience Post

Healthcare's Resource for
Service Excellence
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Since the mid-1990s, Baird has helped healthcare organizations nationwide improve the patient experience and enhance organizational culture. Baird's culture assessment and diagnosis include experience mapping, medical mystery shopping, and focus groups to reveal the real customer experiences within your organization. Using your patients' experiences, Baird and her team prescribe critical next steps for improving patient satisfaction and HCAHPS scores.

Make it Match! Tearing Down the Silos That Disconnect Brand from Patient Experience

by Kristin Baird, RN, BSN, MHA

There's a brand/experience disconnect in many healthcare organizations (and, frankly, in many organizations across other industries as well). Here's the challenge: There are (at least) three key players who have the potential to either contribute to this disconnect—or eliminate it:

- The marketing department—the people creating the brand strategy, positioning and brand promise
- The patient experience (PX) department—the people focusing on improving patient satisfaction scores and ensuring great patient experiences
- Operations—the clinicians and ancillary staff that deal directly with patients and other customers every day

You may assume that these teams are on the same page; unfortunately, they're often not! Most of the time these groups are working within their own silos, focused on the work they need to get done and the things they feel directly responsible for: creating the messaging, improving the patient experience, delivering the experience.

I have many opportunities to interact with healthcare marketers who are generally very passionate about culture enhancement and service excellence. Yet they're often shut out of the process of considering, or contributing to, the patient experience. The marketers I know work really hard to carefully craft messages and target key stakeholders. They're the guardian of the brand, and yet they're frequently not invited to the patient experience table. Because they aren't involved in direct patient care, they're often kept at arm's length from the patient experience strategy and execution.

Think how powerful your brand, and the patient experience, could be if you could just get all of these players moving in the same direction and sending the same messages. You can! Here's how.

- Bring leaders from marketing, PX and operations together to develop a shared understanding of the brand promise. What

would consistently delivering a positive patient experience look like? How will you ensure that you deliver on that promise with every encounter, with every customer, every single day of the year?

- Engage the front line—the people who are in the trenches doing the work. Make sure they understand the brand promise and, most importantly, how their work supports the promise in concrete ways.
- Reinforce your brand promise messaging consistently in your internal communications, and tie that messaging back to the values and standards of the organization.

Marketing is often misunderstood by organizations both within and outside of the healthcare industry. Marketing is not synonymous with advertising. Marketing is delivering a consistent, and consistently aligned, experience. Yes, the brand promise should come through in a very visible fashion in your advertising. But, the positive messages you convey through your advertising needs to be supported when patients receive care in your organization. If your advertising talks about your compassionate, personalized care, but the care the patient receives when he or she comes to your emergency room is anything but, that's a problem.

How to solve it: make it match!

Interested in learning more? We'll be presenting a session on "Moving From an Influencer to a Change Agent" at this year's [annual SHSMD convention](#) in Seattle.

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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). The Baird Group provides consulting, mystery shopping, and training services for improving the patient experience. To learn more, please visit <http://baird-group.com> or call 920-563-4684.