

The Patient Experience Post

Healthcare’s Resource for
Service Excellence
November 2009



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.

Want to Add Millions to Your Bottom Line?
Focus on engagement

by Kristin Baird, RN, BSN, MHA

No matter how many employees you have on your team, having even as little as one percent of those employees disengaged can have a significant impact on the bottom line. Recognition is one of several leadership skills that helps strengthen employee engagement and results in a measurable bottom-line impact.

Sodexo has 110,000 employees committed to being leaders in integrated food service and facilities management. I spoke at a Sodexo conference recently in Dallas and was impressed, as always, with how much they value recognition and the efforts they go through to make recognition as easy as possible for people in the trenches. Those efforts make a difference that directly impacts the bottom line. They're a company that's committed to investing in their people.

So is Zappos, an Internet-based shoe retailer in Henderson, NV. But, Zappos takes a slightly different approach to ensure that its employees—about 1,600 of them—are engaged from the very outset of the employment relationship. New employees are offered an early-resignation offer of \$1,500 for admitting that the fit (no pun intended) is not right for them. About 2 – 3 percent do just that.

Zappos says it's worth the investment. And engagement matters, as some simple math demonstrates.

Suppose you have 1,500 employees and their average salary is \$31,000, with a benefit plan worth about 28 percent of the annual salary. We'll say that 10 percent of your staff is *fully engaged*, 40 percent are *engaged*, 40 percent are *somewhat engaged*, and 10 percent are *disengaged*.

Based on doing engagement workshops with a number of large, medium, and small employers, I can say that these numbers are actually fairly representative of what many organizations are facing today. In fact, they may be slightly optimistic. But, even optimistically, in this scenario we would be faced with a potential productivity loss of more than \$7 million over a year's time.

Let's break it down:

Level of Engagement	% of Workforce	Productivity	+/- Impact
Fully Engaged: they're going above and beyond. They're probably thinking of new ideas	10	120%	+\$1,190,400

even when they're not on the job. And, they may be taking on work assignments and projects that aren't really even part of the expectations for their jobs.	10	120%	+\$1,190,400
Engaged: also performing at a high level, we're definitely getting our money's worth from this group.	40	100%	Even
Somewhat disengaged: here's a group that's really bringing us down. And with so many of them, we take quite a hit.	40	75%	-\$5,952,000
Disengaged: the employees we'd like to pay to leave....	10	50%	-\$2,976,000
TOTAL ANNUAL IMPACT			-\$7,737,600

Play with the numbers any way you'd like and you'll still see how quickly the high costs of disengaged employees can add up. On the other hand, taking a more positive perspective, you can also see how you can reduce these costs by motivating just a small percentage of your *somewhat engaged* employees to become *engaged*.

The good news is that you can move one out of every two *somewhat engaged* people to the *engaged* category if you can determine what they need and put an action plan in place to make it happen. It can be done. And it is certainly worth the effort.

At Baird, we have been working with healthcare organizations for several years now, coaching leaders on how to identify employees' level of engagement. But beyond recognizing the level of engagement, we help leaders learn the essential actions needed to help employees become more engaged at work. I have a passion for this work because I have seen the significant difference even seemingly "little things" can make.

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 credibility with customers. For only \$89, you'll receive all this: pre-session worksheets, a session workbook, webinar slides, and an audio CD of the 90-minute webinar, complete with the Q&A session.

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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).