

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.

3 Powerful Words for the Patient Experience Professionals

by Kristin Baird, RN, BSN, MHA

There are ample changes impacting the healthcare industry these days, but one thing remains constant: the need to provide exceptional patient experiences. In fact, that need is stronger than ever before, in this environment, as hospitals struggle to control costs while maintaining high levels of quality and service.

As more and more healthcare organizations embrace the patient experience as a top priority, many are appointing a patient experience professional (PXP) to lead the charge. These positions can range from an advisor or coordinator to a C-suite level chief experience officer (CXO). Despite the title, the overarching goal is the same: to improve the patient experience. And there is pressure to do it now.

As I travel around the country and meet with newly-minted PXPs, I'm finding consistency in what I'm hearing from them: they're overwhelmed. While excited about their new role and the opportunities they have to positively impact patients, they're also challenged to quickly make an impact in organizations that are often mired in past practices and politics.

One thing they all share is a sense of urgency and pressure to achieve results quickly. Yet, despite that sense of urgency, many fail to make meaningful steps to move forward. The result is increasing stress and even fear that can cause either a frenzied rush into tactic overload or paralysis. It's a "deer in the headlights" response. They know they need to move, but they're frozen in place, in fear of doing the wrong thing or just not knowing what to do next as the pressure mounts.

In these situations we find there are three powerful words that they fail to say. They are the same three powerful words that most of us don't like to say, "I need help."

Habits of Highly Effective PXPs: #7 Seeks Guidance and Accepts Feedback

In my webinar, ["7 Habits of Highly Effective PXPs,"](#) (an encore presentation will be held August 26th), I identify the seven habits that we believe are the hallmark of the most effective patient experience professionals. One of these is "seeks guidance and graciously accepts feedback," and it's an important one. It's the "I need help" habit that so few have mastered. PXPs can't do it alone and as a newly emerging discipline, there's a lot to learn.

We're finding a lot of fear out there. PXPs are feeling stumped, frustrated, and ultimately, immobilized. They're thinking, "Oh no; I've got the job, but I'm overwhelmed and I don't know where to turn!" But, despite the fact that many PXPs feel overwhelmed and uncertain of exactly what they need to do to

achieve the results their leadership is expecting from them, they don't take that important step of seeking guidance from sources, both inside and outside their organization.

Many believe that saying "I need help" is a sign of weakness. The opposite is true. It takes strength to recognize, and to admit, that you don't have all of the answers and that others just might have some key insights that can help you move forward.

Guidance From Internal Sources

You also have the opportunity to gain insights from those within your organization, if you just take the time to ask, and really listen to, the feedback you receive. Too often there is a tendency to dismiss feedback from others for a variety of reasons: "they're only a (fill in the blank), they haven't been here long enough, they don't understand my role," etc., etc.

The truth is that their internal inputs are valuable. It's important to seek honest feedback and to be open to that feedback. Keep in mind, some of the best feedback you can receive is constructive input about what you may be doing that may not be working, or that may be somehow alienating those around you.

Guidance From External Sources

When you're inside an organization, especially when you've been part of an organization for many years, your perspectives can become somewhat "skewed." You're an insider and, as an insider, you may be missing—or misinterpreting—things that an outsider might see very quickly, and very clearly. A friend of mine articulates this phenomenon beautifully by saying, "It's hard to see the picture when you're inside the frame."

Clarity is important, as is having a clear plan of action. An outside perspective from a firm like Baird Group can help you achieve the clarity you need; our experiences with literally hundreds of healthcare organizations mean that we can offer best practice guidance and direction to get you moving forward down the right path quickly.

[The PXP Advisor©](#)

When you're ready to say those three powerful words, "I need help," we're here to give you the assistance you need. [The PXP Advisor©](#) is a customized approach to supporting PXP's in their new roles. With our one-on-one coaching, we help PXP's crystalize their vision and get laser-focused on an action plan that elevates their personal reputation as well as their organization's patient experience outcomes.

Ready for help? Get [in touch](#) with us today.



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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.