

## *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.

## Are Disengaged Employees Sucking the Life Out of You?

by Kristin Baird, RN, BSN, MHA

According to [2013 research by AonHewitt](#), while employee engagement levels are beginning to show some slight signs of improvement globally, only 4 out of 10 employees report that they are engaged—40 percent are “passive or actively disengaged,” a number that has been relatively consistent since 2011.

Why should you care? Disengaged employees can suck the life out of your organization:

- Their actions or inaction can negatively impact how coworkers, patients, and family members view your organization
- Other employees will “check out” if the disengaged are allowed to stay
- They reflect negatively on your leadership abilities

As I've begun to deliver a new keynote presentation around the country—“Engaged, Empowered and Energized”—I've been finding that this is a topic that resonates strongly with healthcare leaders. This isn't just about nursing staff—it's about *everyone in your organization*.

One of the things I stress is that engagement is a choice—it's your choice. Empowerment is your choice. Being energized is your choice. It all begins with how you chose to approach the people you work with, the environment of your day, and the situations you face.

Critically, as healthcare leaders, your choices also impact those around you. Like it or not, realize it or not, you are a barometer of the levels of engagement, empowerment, and energy around you. You set the stage.

One of the interesting things that I find when I conduct these workshops is that *leaders know* what disengaged employees look like—they can readily identify the behaviors that signal their lack of engagement. They openly and honestly indicate that yes, they too, have disengaged employees represented among their staff members.

The big question for these leaders—and for you—is why? If you know who the disengaged workers are in your organization and you recognize the damage they can do; why do you allow them to remain in their roles? Why do you allow them to continue to suck the life out of your organization?

At one of these recent presentations, the CEO addressed the leaders. I was heartened by what one CEO tells all new employees. John P. Harney, President & CEO of The University of Colorado Hospital said that at every new employee orientation, he talks about his organization's mission, vision, and values and he tells these new employees: “If, in six months you don't wake up and feel excited about coming to work every day—if you don't feel like you're in the

right place and that you're truly excited to be part of this, please leave. Otherwise, we'll help you leave."

That is *exactly* the kind of philosophy and culture that healthcare leaders around the country need to be nurturing and modeling. I wish every CEO I worked with would have the guts to stand up and say: "If you're not engaged, move on or move out." After all, it's the patients who suffer when staff are disengaged.

Again, the key point here is that *leaders know—YOU know—*who your disengaged staff members are. You know the damage they do in terms of internal employee morale and external patient satisfaction. The question remains: "Are you ready to do something about it?" If your answer is "yes," we can help. In our employee engagement workshop we'll teach you how to identify levels of engagement in each staff member, and then provide coaching and communication tools to help you increase engagement or counsel disengaged individuals out of the organization. What I've learned over the years is that the steps are simple. They're just not easy. But I also know that if left unchecked, disengaged staff will suck the life out of you, their co-workers, and eventually erode the organization's reputation.

Click keynote or workshop below to request more information:

[Keynote: "Engaged, Empowered and Energized"](#)

[Workshop: "Engaging and Retaining Healthcare Employees"](#)

*Phone communication is an essential part of the patient experience and is often the first part of the patient experience. In just seconds, your patients are deciding if you are friendly, knowledgeable, concerned, and willing to help. In fact, research shows that after just a 2-minute phone encounter, patients are clear about whether or not they would return to your organization or recommend it. Patients rely on phone encounters to make appointments and seek clinical advice. Other callers rely on phone encounters to gain vital information about a loved one. In both situations, it's important that you create a positive, trust-building experience. To engage your staff in essential phone skills, look toward the tips and tools in [You'll Have Them at "Hello": Phone skills that will WOW your callers every time](#). For only \$199, you'll receive the following: the video recording, presentation slides, a transcript of the recording, a participant guidebook, a moderator guidebook, a quality assurance tool, and additional handouts! This session is also available as a live training workshop.*

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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.