

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.

Service Excellence: The Power of (Every) One!

by Kristin Baird, RN, BSN, MHA

It's not uncommon for me to be on site talking with healthcare leaders about culture and the challenges they have with creating and sustaining a positive patient experience culture. During these conversations, at least one leader will inevitably say something like: "I don't understand it, we've done training. We've emphasized the importance of service. We've provided employees with guidelines and tools."

I'll then ask when this training was done. The answers can range anywhere from "last year" to "five (or more) years ago."

That's the problem.

Training and communication around patient service expectations can't be a one-and-done activity. It can't be something that's done every few years with the expectation that the behaviors will stick. It has to be part of ongoing conversations that take place from the top to the bottom of an organization.

Why? Because employees need reminders—and also because your employee landscape changes over time.

Consider that, in 2015, the average turnover rate for healthcare employers, [according to Compdata Survey](#), was 19.2 percent—up from 17.7 percent in 2016. Rounding this number to 20 percent to keep the math simple, this means that, if your hospital employs 1,000 people, you're at risk of losing 200 this year. Over a five-year span of time that means that you could have lost 1,000 people – basically your entire workforce – in that timeframe.

So, if you're only doing training every few years, or less often, at any given point in time only a fraction of your organization will have been *exposed* to that information, let alone still recall what they learned.

But, building a service-centered organization requires more than training. It requires arming leaders with the information and tools *they* need to hire right, onboard effectively, coach and counsel continuously, monitor, mentor, and reinforce to drive desired results. Coaching your leaders so they're prepared to: hire for, coach for, spot, and recognize desired behaviors is key. Beyond that, you must also hold leaders accountable for their own, and their staff, behaviors and actions. Individuals, of course, must also be held accountable.

The model we advocate at Baird Group is one where training is 25% of the success formula. The other elements include: culture pre-work, coaching, recognition and standards reinforcement. It is the combination that makes the difference between a culture shift and a one-and-done program.

We have a new paradigm in healthcare where Patient Experience departments have become popular. These departments can, and do, provide benefit but they *should not*



Transforming culture. Shaping patient experience.

be viewed as holding all accountability for the patient experience. That accountability belongs to every member of the organization—not just the Patient Experience department, or the Patient Experience Officer.

Each member of your organization holds the power to shape the patient experience. Armed with standards and tools for ensuring service excellence, they can do this positively. Without the ongoing communication, coaching and access to standards, support, tools and other resources, you're leaving the patient experience to chance—and, chances are, these experiences won't be as positive as you'd like them to be.

Baird Group can help you create the infrastructure to make service excellence stick—to build service excellence into the fabric of your organization. Using our training tools, [The Power of One](#), we'll work with you and your staff to weave service excellence into the fabric of the organization, starting with behaviors and their interactions with patients and others—every time, every day. We've made it easier than ever with our licensed product. Find out more [here](#).

To learn more about the [Baird Model for Service Excellence](#), employee engagement or leadership development workshops, or to sign up for her FREE newsletter, write to info@baird-group.com.

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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.