

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.

Reflections from the Field: *"I Know It When I See It"*

By Angela Fieler, MPA, CMQ/OE

Here at the Baird Group, one of our "drum beat" messages is that the culture of an organization ultimately defines the patient experience. We reinforce that message by coaching leaders to create a culture that supports their service vision. Sometimes, our coaching is focused on structural changes that the organization needs to make – things like creating standards and incorporating standards into recognition and evaluation practices. Making structural changes is relatively easy. Leaders can clearly define what they expect, those expectations can be codified in a policy or procedure, and the effective of the change can often be objectively measured.

Sometimes, though, our coaching is focused on holding up the mirror to the leaders' commitment to service excellence. After all, it's their actions that demonstrate true commitment. It isn't always easy to describe and measure a leader's passion for the patient experience or one's ability to encourage staff engagement in achieving the service vision. Assessing a leader's effectiveness in communicating the service vision and helping to improve that communication can also be a challenge.

As difficult as these leadership characteristics might be to define, I can best describe it borrowing the immortal words of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart who said, "I know it when I see it." The same goes for me and the other Baird coaches. For example:

- When the Chief Operating Officer kicks off a customer service training class with actual current examples of service and can tie the example to both the service behavior and the vision for all experiences, I know he is engaged and committed.
- When a Chief Operative Officer, who is the service champion, shows up late for a service excellence meeting, says nothing, and then leaves early, I know she needs coaching.
- When a Human Resources VP spells out a long term plan for improving pay and benefits and then communicates progress and/or actions taken to remove or minimize barriers along the way, I know she has a strategic communication plan.
- When a Human Resources VP, who sees that employee engagement is falling, then schedules another meeting to "discuss the ideas" for improving engagement, I know he needs coaching.

I can provide many examples of leaders who do and do not demonstrate passion, encourage engagement, and effectively communicate. What I can't



Transforming culture. Shaping patient experience.

do is be all places at all times, observing leaders in action, encouraging them when they get it right and coaching them when they have an opportunity to improve. So, I'm calling on you to channel your inner Baird Group consultant. Examine your own behavior and make a list of things that you do that illustrate these leadership characteristics. Take it one step further and ask your direct reports if they agree. Step out of your comfort zone and provide feedback to others, even people you work for. Don't be afraid to ask yourself, "What would my Baird Group consultant do?" and in that way, together, we can continue to "Raise the bar."

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.

