

The Patient Experience Post

Reflections from the Field
November 2016



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.

From Silos to Synergy

by Janet Schulz, SVP Consulting Division

Readers of this newsletter know that at Baird Group, our passion is to support our clients in transforming culture and improving the patient experience.

As we work with our clients to assess their cultures, a key theme often emerges as we ask stakeholders to "grade" service in the organization. Most often, we see participants grade their own department highest, the organization as a whole second, and "internal customer service" lowest.

This dynamic is vital to understand. True excellence in the patient experience can only be achieved when there is real progress in inter-departmental service and teamwork. In order to advance a service culture, we work with clients to understand what's getting in the way of internal service, and support leaders in improving their "sender and receiver" abilities to enhance shared problem-solving.

How can you take a look at the quality of internal service? We'd advise clients to do a formal interdepartmental service review. Doing so involves the following:

- Ask all managers to ask their staff - what are our intra-departmental, inter-departmental and organization-wide barriers to service? Request that leaders document not only concerns raised by staff, but also any suggestions for improvement.
- Use the information gathered.
 - The intra-departmental barriers should be owned by the managers to review and improve processes in their respective areas.
 - For inter-departmental barriers, managers should be asked to meet with their leader colleagues to review each concern, and brainstorm possible solutions. This is where skill in sending and receiving feedback comes into play. The discussion is not about finger pointing, but problem solving. If your leadership team is not skilled in problem-solving conversations, this represents a leadership development opportunity. Coach them in the skills and tools needed to keep conversations focused on the issue at hand.
 - The organization-wide barriers to service should flow to your organization's service excellence planning structure, or to your performance improvement structure. These barriers reflect an opportunity to research and prioritize broad service barriers, and create consistent, entity-wide solutions. Selecting some of these issues as organizational PI projects sends a strong message to your staff that your leadership is serious about service.

Organizations that successfully undertake an interdepartmental service review, emerge with a stronger culture of service overall. A message is sent - to serve our external customers well, we need to serve each other well. This step in a service journey is intense and significant work. The rewards are worth it.



Transforming culture. Shaping patient experience.

Looking for additional insight on how to build great internal working relationships? Sign up for our upcoming [webinar](#) on November 15, 2016 - "Love The Ones You're With" - to learn more about tools to create greater self-awareness and shared learning within your organization.

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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.