

Adjustment Center Visit #1: New HR Definition

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The Attitude Adjustment Center: Not-for-Profit Version

I was the HR director in a nonprofit hospital in a market that included 8 others. We were in the middle size-wise. We were a Catholic hospital on a mission from God, providing care in the central city in a building less than 10 years old. Of all the hospitals in the city, we had the “big mo”—at least for a while. Super growth—acquiring another hospital, covering the city with family practice and women’s wellness centers, providers lining up to be on staff.

In one year it all changed. Some of the downfall could be blamed on too rapid expansion. This was coupled with the sponsoring order near default on a huge bond issue related to all of their facilities.

Large RIFS occurred. More than one as the decline accelerated. Each RIF resulted in more decline as providers left and bad press arrived. Suddenly, this hospital that once ran 350 occupied beds had trouble filling 100!

We were sold to a for-profit organization that was an offshoot of HCA/Columbia. That organization and its many copycats were busy buying every available hospital they could as they saw huge opportunities in the nonprofit sector.

We had been through so much that any stable ownership was seen as a big step up. After a blow-out “Nuns on the Run” party (since we had been treated pretty badly during their last year of ownership), we were ready to learn about life under for-profit ownership.

I can vividly remember the first meeting I had with the new CEO and his words to me. He started our meeting by saying, “We are going to be a learning organization that everyday does everything better, cheaper, and faster. **Steve, I**

don't need cheerleaders. I need HR to be the experts on the utilization and management of our human resources!"

While not visible outwardly, my inward reaction was "YES"! I didn't fully understand all that it would include but, intuitively understood that it was more than we had been doing in HR. Because of some of the transition work that HR had been involved in, I had a glimmer that expertise in the area of human resource utilization would offer real-world, quantifiable value.

To start the discussion, when looking at the charge for HR to be the experts in the utilization and management of human resources, what do you think this would include? Are these responsibilities that are in most healthcare departments?

After developing your own list, see how our HR department expanded its role at: *Adjustment Center Visit #2: Expanded Focus.*