

Estimate of the Situation

Critical Information for Critical Times, Edition of Wednesday, April 15, 2015



Where Do You Want To Be Next Year?

Busy hospital executives and managers can become so caught up in the demands of day-to-day operations that it is easy to become sidetracked from first priorities. Here is a straight-forward list of the steps you can take to help get things back on track.

- Have a current functional business plan.

A business plan is a summary of how the hospital plans to organize its resources and implement the actions necessary to meet its goals for a specified period, usually not more than one-year. It is a written description of the hospital's business model. The definition assumes that the hospital has business goals that are concrete and measurable. Each department should have a business plan, the achievement of which in aggregate will achieve the hospital's goals. Note that the business plan is different than the hospital's mission and vision statements with which the Business Plan must fully conform.

- Articulate the Business Plan's goals.

Make certain that those goals are shared with, understood by, and agreed upon by governance, the management team, the medical staff, and employees.

- Set the Expectation to "Accountability for Excellence."

Continually reinforce the hospital's commitment to perform at a level of excellence in every endeavor, through words and actions. Accept nothing less. Plan for it. Hire for it. Evaluate for it. Always.

- Build a Goal-Compatible Management Team.

Assure that members of executive management and department heads possess the requisite leadership and management skills and that they are goal focused. The essential management skill set includes knowing how to plan, organize, direct and control the hospital's resources.

- Benchmark and monitor the hospital's performance in critical areas.

Develop the mechanisms to assure that your organization is performing at levels of excellence compared to similar hospitals. This includes both external benchmarking and internal performance monitoring.

- Identify and resolve Performance Limiting Factors. Begin by asking yourself these questions.

Are business assumptions reasonable?

Does the hospital culture support goal attainment at a level of excellence?

Are the hospital's resources fully engaged and organized for optimum effectiveness?

Does the hospital provide the right physical resources (equipment, supplies, technology, physical plant) to permit goal attainment?

Does each hospital department's work force provide the right number of people, the right mix of positions, the right assignment by shift, and the right mix of full-time and part-time staff to operate effectively given current work load patterns and volumes?

It has been our experience that the systematic and consistent pursuit of these steps will produce a positive organization-wide effect, the power of which is hard to overstate.

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