

CREATING HIGH PERFORMANCE THROUGH THE LENS OF LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Creating a culture that is unified, integrated, and aligned across the variety of services offered in an organizational system, like ProMedica, is no easy task. ProMedica, a full spectrum healthcare system, started a successful organizational transformation process by equipping their leaders with the skills to align around strategy, model core values, groom talent, and create change within various levels of the organization. ProMedica's goal of achieving an integrated system with one clearly articulated vision, mission, and set of core values, required leaders to commit to intentionally adopting new ways of developing leaders at the individual, team, and organizational levels.

Established in 1986, ProMedica is a locally owned, nonprofit healthcare organization serving northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. ProMedica has experienced extensive growth and cultural change through multiple acquisitions to form a consortium of 11-member and affiliate hospitals. Along with extensive growth, the healthcare industry has faced numerous changes within the context of pending healthcare reform requirements. In lieu of such change, the leaders of ProMedica have recognized the power and value of moving toward their vision of *One ProMedica*. This vision will enable ProMedica to be an organization that develops leaders at all levels to have the essential skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to navigate and adapt to an ever-changing healthcare environment.



LEADING UPSTREAM

As a result of ProMedica's rapid growth, leaders at all levels had to learn to lead larger teams of employees hailing from different organizational cultures. At the same time, leaders had to navigate new policies and procedures, which changed the existing methods of providing healthcare access to patients. The lack of integration across the organization resulted in a variety of challenges, impacting quality of care, costs, and ability to increase access. Physician, employee, and patient satisfaction levels were not meeting expectations and needed improvement. In order to continue to meet quality standards in an ever-changing environment, leaders needed to focus on leading with agility and the managing change exceptionally well.

Together, a team from gothamCulture and Denison Consulting partnered with ProMedica, to develop a plan to evolve the culture of the organization to excel in this new environment. While transforming organizational culture can be a time-intensive and difficult process, the team worked to design, develop, and supervise the implementation and measurement of the effectiveness of a unique leadership development methodology aimed at creating highly effective leaders capable of achieving the full potential of the *One ProMedica* vision.



WHY START AT THE TOP?

Developing a strong group of leaders, capable of modeling the behaviors necessary for future success is critical to the process of creating buy-in and motivation for others across the organization to commit to continuous improvement. As senior leaders portray their willingness to change through modifying their leadership style, other leaders and employees begin to see the need for changing their own attitudes and behaviors. Strong leaders serve as positive role models for their direct reports to emulate. A highly effective and skilled leader can reshape their relationships with their employees, impacting the relationship between employees and customers or patients. This trickle-down effect helps improve upon many of the organizational change metrics important to ProMedica's culture transformation, including employee and patient satisfaction scores.

In order to facilitate the transformation from the top-down, ProMedica is using a three-layered leadership development process (LDP) that addresses leadership, starting at the top with the Executive Council (EC), then progressively moving into deeper layers within the organization to reach roughly 2,000 leaders throughout the system.

APPLYING THE INTENTIONAL CHANGE APPROACH* TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

ProMedica kicked off its LDP in February of 2012 with the EC leading the way. This group of senior leaders participated in the Denison Leadership Development Survey (360) to develop a foundation for understanding their personal strengths and areas of opportunity. The coaches used the 360 data to help guide the leaders in determining the areas of opportunity in realizing their ideal self. As some 360 data may be difficult to receive, leaders participated in role plays so the leader may begin to understand the “why” behind the “what” of the feedback they received, which provides clarity and acceptance around the leader’s current state of leadership.

The role of the coach was to provide a different perspective, honest feedback, and guidance in a safe and strictly confidential environment. The key to this coaching approach is that the coach can inspire and provoke the leader to push him/herself to be courageous and to move out of their comfort zone in order to escalate their development as an exceptional leader for ProMedica. The coaches of gothamCulture collaborated with each leader to establish their individual vision for the “ideal leader” at ProMedica, which grounds the leader’s development in a positive way. More importantly, it creates the motivation to transform into one’s best self, while employing appreciative inquiry processes and techniques. Envisioning one’s ideal state of leadership was a novel concept and inspiring process for the leaders on the EC.

The coaches from gothamCulture worked with each senior leader over the course of five months to create intentional change through appreciative inquiry and positive self-learning, focused on areas essential to effective leadership at ProMedica. The coaches helped each leader identify their personal reasons for change and helped tie their individual goals to ProMedica’s strategy for achieving *One ProMedica*. Through multiple and intensive coaching engagements, leaders were provided the opportunity to practice new behaviors and to obtain feedback on their progress during following sessions. This allowed the coaches to help leaders tweak certain aspects of their newly established behaviors as they evolved toward their desired future state.

A key aspect to making the development stick for each leader was the establishment of a personal board of directors. Each leader assembled a board to provide real-time feedback based on the leader’s specific areas of development. The board provided accountability and honest feedback in order to establish a continuous accountability framework to support their development. Moreover, creating a culture where both positive and constructive feedback is encouraged is a crucial aspect for advancing the change process and sustaining ProMedica’s new culture. By putting in place a personal board to observe behavioral change in leaders, culture change will be sustained even after the coaches and consultants have departed.

* *The Intentional Change Approach is based on Richard Boyatzis’ Intentional Change Theory.*

HOW WAS THE COACHING PROCESS RECEIVED BY PROMEDICA'S LEADERS?

In order to assess the impact of coaching on the leaders within the EC at ProMedica, gothamCulture administered a follow-on survey to participants where they provided more than favorable reviews of their development experience. Every leader completing the survey and indicated their coach established a trusting relationship, practiced confidentiality, and displayed high levels of emotional intelligence. All of the feedback provided by the participants indicated that their coaches were effective in guiding the leaders in the creation of their development plan based on their individual vision of the ideal-leader for ProMedica.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The culture change process, through leadership development, is a journey. As the leaders of the EC continue to progress towards their ideal state of leadership, they will receive feedback from their personal board. In support of this feedback, a follow-up 360 survey is planned for 2013. The data from this survey compared with the first round of this survey, will provide visibility around their progress and allow changes in each of the leader's development plans.

The team from gothamCulture, Denison Consulting, and ProMedica is working together to cascade this approach to provide real-time leadership development for the next level of ProMedica leadership. Changes will be made to the delivery based on feedback and recommendations from the EC. Organizational culture change can be a lengthy process. However, ProMedica has taken critical steps through ensuring that the senior leaders have a view of their personal leadership and are moving with intention to become their best. By recognizing that leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin, ProMedica is well on their way to achieving their vision of *One ProMedica*.

My coach was flexible and supported me in creating a development plan that I embraced. He provided good ideas and suggestions to be effective.

– ProMedica Leader

gothamCulture helps clients achieve exceptional organizational performance through the lens of culture and leadership. The gothamCulture team is comprised of seasoned professionals from a broad array of professional backgrounds who support client change efforts with precision and focus on achieving tangible performance gains.