Linking Quality Assurance to Human Resources: Improving Patient Satisfaction by Improving Employee Satisfaction

Lindsey Ellen Pund
Senior
School of Public and Environmental Affairs

Pam Sklar
Adjunct Professor
Faculty Mentor
School of Public and Environmental Affairs
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Abstract

In the healthcare industry, patient satisfaction is the number one goal of an organization. The patient is the customer of the hospital and for any type of business to succeed it is crucial to create a balance between pleasing the customer, employees, boards and administrations. In order to provide quality health care to patients, employees need to be satisfied in their position as well. Employee satisfaction appears to have a strong relationship with the quality of care delivered and related costs. With the impact of rising healthcare costs, it is crucial for healthcare organizations to provide high quality care so patients will return to that organization for additional services. Many hospital human resource professionals believe the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the new demands it places on hospital workforces will expand the role of Human Resources in a health facility, particularly with respect to improving employee engagement as a means of boosting patient satisfaction.

I will examine current quality assurance measures that are in place as a result of the Health Care Reform Act and analyze where the Human Resources department can improve techniques to enhance employee satisfaction. Many alterations in physician employment and employee shortages result from the changing regulations and affect overall employee satisfaction. I will also research the current Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS), that is used to survey a patient’s perspective of their hospital care. Since, the HCAHPS is the first national, standardized, publicly reported survey of patients' perspectives of hospital care, the types of questions asked need to be evaluated to ensure they are requesting useful and accurate information from patients. The results of HCAHPS provide administration with issues needing improvement in internal customer services and quality related activities. The thesis will conclude by proposing recommendations regarding methods and tools that the Human Resources Department of a hospital can use to heighten employee satisfaction as a means to improve the quality of patient care.
Introduction

Employees in a service-based industry strongly influence customer satisfaction. The United States of America and other innovative economic countries continue to shift from a manufacturing industry to service-based industries. One of the most crucial ways that employees affect performance is in their day-to-day interaction with the customers of their organization. In the healthcare industry, the patients that are seeking services are their customers. It is vital for hospitals to consider the changes that the Healthcare Reform Bill has implemented while maintaining focus on quality patient care.

The healthcare industry continues to grow in size and importance with today’s increasing demand. The healthcare sector currently accounts for 17% of the Gross Domestic Product in the United States ("Heritage foundation,"). With the “Baby Boomers” reaching retirement age, the need for healthcare services by this population is greater than ever. With a high level of demand for healthcare services and a relative short supply of health professionals, there is a burden placed on health care administrators to provide consistently high levels of care while maintaining efficiency at lower costs. Financially, with health care reimbursement rates at an all time low, administrators are concerned with finding a balance between providing high quality of care and containing costs. Although some improvements in quality of care can be achieved through advancements in technology and infrastructure, the most dramatic improvements are achieved through people. Previous studies have shown that unsatisfied healthcare employees negatively affect the quality of care, which adversely affects patient satisfaction and loyalty to a hospital (Peltier & Dahl, 2009). A significant component of a healthcare human resource
department and quality assurance department is finding a bridge between improving employee satisfaction to improve patient satisfaction.

**Affordable Care Act**

One of the most important recent approaches to improve the healthcare system for Americans is through the Affordable Care Act. This legislation was passed into law in 2011 and is an initiative that rewards hospitals that put a focus on quality of care and maintain high levels of patient satisfaction ("Healthcare.gov," 2010). An even bigger initiative, which the Department of Health and Human Services launched, is called Partnership for Patients. This program correlates quality of care to directly affect Medicare reimbursement. The program forces hospitals to improve their service to patients or risk losing money. In the reimbursement market, private insurance companies usually follow Medicare’s lead, and it is expected that they will soon follow with aligning reimbursements to patient satisfaction.

The goal is that within a few years all patients will benefit from the new emphasis on patient satisfaction (Blum, 2011). The government is striving to create the notion that healthcare will be given at a higher quality to reduce long-term costs. Beginning in October 2012, caregivers will be measured on certain tasks they perform to access the quality of care that is being provided to the hospitalized patient. These standards of care, or best clinical practices are an important component of quality. Over the next three years, the Partnership for Patients has the potential to save 60,000 lives and save up to 35 billion dollars in US health care costs (2011). Under the Accountable Care Act, teams of doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers and suppliers working together would coordinate and improve care for patients. There is a strong emphasis on preventative care
and wellness services in attempt to lower costs and decrease hospital visits. This piece of the Health Care Reform is bringing together hospitals, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, employers, unions and state and federal governments to keep patients from getting injured or becoming sicker in the health care system.

Some of the measures the program uses to assess the quality of care in a hospital are:

1. Ensure that patients who have a heart attack receive care within 90 minutes;
2. Provide care within a 24-hour window to surgery patients to prevent blood clots
3. Communicate discharge instructions to heart patients;
4. Ensure hospital facilities are clean and well maintained (2009).

Research has shown that when hospitals follow these types of proven best practices, patients receive a higher quality of care and in turn see better outcomes (2011).

**Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems**

The intent of the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems, or HCAHPS, initiative is to provide a standardized survey instrument and data collection methodology for measuring patients' perspectives on hospital care ("Hcahps: Hospital care," 2010). This survey is used to gain an understanding of the patient’s satisfaction and their experience with medical, surgical, or maternity care during a recent overnight stay in the hospital. Many hospitals currently collect data on patient satisfaction, but there was no universal standard for this collection process. HCAHPS will be the standard used to collect or publicly report patients' perspectives of care information that will enable valid comparisons to be made across all hospitals ("Hcahps: Hospital care," 2010). The HCAHPS survey, is also known as the CAHPS® Hospital Survey, or Hospital
CAHPS. HCAHPS is a core set of questions that can be combined with a broader, customized set of hospital-specific items. HCAHPS survey items complement the data hospitals currently collect to support improvements in internal customer services and quality related activities.

There are three broad goals that have shaped the HCAHPS survey. First, “the survey is designed to produce comparable data on the patient’s perspective on care that allows objective and meaningful comparisons between hospitals on domains that are important to consumers. Second, public reporting of the survey results is aimed to create incentives for hospitals to improve the quality of care they are delivering to patients”. This HCAHPS results are available to the public to use as a factor when considering which healthcare facility they will receive services from. Third, “public reporting will serve to enhance public accountability in health care by increasing the transparency of the quality of hospital care provided in return for the public investment (“Hcahps: Hospital care,” 2010).

The HCAHPS survey contains 18 patient perspectives on care and patient rating items that encompass eight key topics: communication with doctors, communication with nurses, responsiveness of hospital staff, pain management, communication about medicines, discharge information, cleanliness of the hospital environment, and quietness of the hospital environment (“Hcahps: Hospital care,” 2010). The survey also includes four screener questions and five demographic items, which are used for adjusting the mix of patients across hospitals and for analytical purposes. The survey contains twenty-seven questions and one crucial standard of the HCAHPS survey is that the questions that may not be varied or changed in anyway to reflect the specifics of a hospital. Although a hospital may ask additional questions for their own purpose, the HCAPHS questions have to be
provided to the patients in the same order as guidelines set forth and may not vary or change in any way from the national standards.

The HCAHPS survey is administered to a random sample of adult patients with varying medical conditions between 48 hours and six weeks after discharge. The survey is not restricted to Medicare beneficiaries. Hospitals may either use an approved survey vendor, or collect their own HCAHPS data, however, they must receive approval from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to collect their own data (2012). It is more common for a hospital to contract with a third party organization to collect the data. The survey can be distributed via mail, telephone, mail with telephone follow-up, or active interactive voice recognition. The goal is to obtain a large sampling with diverse patients, spanning throughout the entire year. This survey is used as part of the accreditation process that hospitals must go through to obtain Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement.

National Committee for Quality Assurance

The National Committee for Quality Assurance is a private, not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to improving health care quality. Founded in 1990, NCQA has been a central figure in driving improvement throughout the health care system, helping to elevate the issue of health care quality to the top of the national agenda ("http://www.ncqa.org/tabid/675/default.aspx," 2011). The NCQA is the organization that develops quality standards and performance measures for a broad range of health care entities. These measures and standards are the tools that organizations and individuals can use to identify opportunities for improvement. The annual reporting of performance against such measures has become a focal point for the media, consumers, and health plans,
which use these results to set their improvement agendas for the following year. These annual reports are called “report cards” which are used by hospitals and other healthcare organizations to measure patient satisfaction and the quality of care that they are providing ("http://www.ncqa.org/tabid/675/default.aspx," 2011). The report cards are prepared based on the results of the HCAPHS surveys that hospitals and furthermore are used throughout hospital systems to identify areas of weakness and find measures to improve certain low aspects of the quality of care provided.

**Role of the Quality Assurance Department**

Quality healthcare is defined as “the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes are consistent with current professional knowledge” (Huges, 2008). According to the Institute of Medicine, the majority of medical errors are a result from faulty systems and processes, not individuals specifically. In most hospitals, there is a designated quality assurance department that is usually overseen by the organization’s medical director. The programs in this department are designed to analyze health care requirements, determine ways of ensuring that protocols are followed throughout the organization, ensuring a system is in place to audit the protocols for compliance, and institute performance improvement plans when standards are not met (Huges, 2008).

Personnel in quality assurance programs analyze and identify areas for improvement and work with various staff members throughout the hospital to make sure Federal and State regulations are clearly deciphered and followed. The quality assurance department creates policies and procedure manuals to exhibit the clinical and business
processes in the company. After that, the program develops audit tools to obtain quantitative data and measure compliance. Compliance is associated with a specific performance standard, which the programs use as benchmarks for audits.

The quantitative data is analyzed to find deficiencies in current practices and departments of the hospital. Hospital administrators and quality assurance executives join together to decide which projects are the most feasible and imperative to the hospital. Performance improvement projects are then designed and implemented to bring the area into compliance (Quality Assurance, 2011).

**Importance of Human Resources Department**

Human Resource leaders are catalysts for creating a culture of engagement in the hospital. They develop programs, services and education to support new competencies. They are senior management’s greatest resource for building value in health care, and assuring that employees have the communication resources and tools they need to deliver superior quality and patient safety (Kiefer, 2008). Hospitals are required to meet nationally directed core measures and simultaneously change work processes to meet the standards set forth. They are also required to train the employees on ways to successfully meet these requirements.

Human Resource executives are the leaders for re-designing the work process, training, and the measurement and reporting that surround these changes. They strive to find ways to keep front-line employees engaged in the commitment to quality and improving patient satisfaction. The human resource department is a vital component
during the planning of quality and patient safety programs because it is their responsibility to identify candidates that will be successful employees at the hospital (Kiefer, 2008).

**Employee satisfaction**

With the Accountable Care Act and new updates to the healthcare system, employee satisfaction and retention play a crucial part in the success of a hospital. Patients have come to assume quality care from hospitals. Simply providing great clinical care will no longer win the hospital accolades in the eyes of the patients simply because they expect it. An increased focus from the quality assurance and human resources department of the hospital is needed to analyze employee satisfaction. Studies have shown a direct correlation between employee satisfaction and patient satisfaction.

A study completed by the American Psychology Association indicated that half of employees who say that they do not feel valued at work intend to look for a new job in the next year. “The Society for Human Resource Management, estimated that it costs $3,500.00 to replace one $8.00 per hour employee” (Harris Interactive, 2011). With turnover costs being significant, it is important to explore ways to retain the current employees of the hospital. In addition, the survey from the American Psychology Association indicated that 93% of employees who reported feeling valued said that they are motivated to do their best at work and 88% reported feeling more engaged in the workplace (Harris Interactive, 2011).

The main factors linked to employees feeling undervalued at work included; having fewer opportunities for involvement in decision making, being less satisfied with potential growth and advancement, having fewer opportunities to use flexible work arrangements,
and receiving inadequate monetary compensation and non-monetary awards. As an increased focus has been placed on retaining employees and improving their satisfaction, many healthcare organizations have implemented major strategic initiatives that carefully focus on employee satisfaction and employee retention efforts.

In addition, to capture the magnitude of current issues that hospital employees are experiencing, a recent study was conducted to survey human resource managers regarding their most pressing organizational concerns. A study published in the *Health Care Manager Journal* selected 1,000 recipients out of a nation-wide database of approximately 6,000 human resource managers within the healthcare industry to view their experiences with employee satisfaction and employee retention (Arnold, 2005). Information was gathered from 100 organizations and the results showed a direct correlation between employee satisfaction and patient satisfaction.

The study indicated that the best way to increase employee satisfaction is to initiate programs that bring a sense of fun into the workplace. The sense of fun was more related to praise and small activities that could boost employee moral. The study also showed that the top three most common ways to make a job more rewarding and enjoyable are to implement casual dress days, which was used by 85% of the organizations surveyed. Also, 83% of survey recipients created employee recognition and rewards programs to praise outstanding employees. In addition, 82% of the recipients provided complimentary food and refreshments throughout the year to show appreciation (Arnold, 2005). As a result of the preceding studies, research shows that hospital executives need to put emphasis on finding ways to allow employees to feel empowered in the workplace and to boost their morale.
Outcomes from Literature Review

Research has shown that increasing employee engagement positively affects many aspects of a hospital. First, it has a direct effect on the employee’s. Increasing an employee’s engagement has been shown to improve employee productivity. Employees are more likely to work harder if they feel valued at their hospital. In addition, it improves relationships that employees have with management. They also have reduced stress and overall increase their satisfaction in the workplace. In return, employees are more likely to stay at an organization longer, which means retention rates are higher (Peltier & Dahl, 2009).

Furthermore it is proven that higher employee engagement has a direct effect on patients. Patients are receiving higher and improved quality of care, their satisfaction is increased and their loyalty to the organization is increased. Patients are more likely to also recommend the hospital to their friends or family if they had a pleasant experience.

Finally, higher employee engagement has shown to have a direct effect on the financial performance of the hospital. With a lower turnover rate, the hospital is spending less on employee recruitment and training costs. For most hospitals recruiting costs represent 3-4% of their annual operating budgets (2005). Reducing that amount by even 1% could result in substantial savings to any facility. When patients are loyal to the hospital, they in turn bring more revenue to the organization. Increased revenue is something every business strives for especially hospitals, when reimbursement rates are being cut. Overall, employee engagement has a positive influence on many constituents in the hospital.
Recommendations

From collaboration between medical professionals, colleagues and prior research, I have developed many recommendations as ways to empower employees and boost their morale.

Recognizing Employees

Human beings need to be recognized and rewarded for special efforts that they contribute to a hospital. The cost of recognition is not always the most important; they strive to have some sort of tangible proof that management values the work they do. Researchers have found that the reward most employees preferred was personalized, impulsive recognition from their direct supervisors.

No-Cost Recognition

One way to recognize an employee is for the supervisor to call an employee into their office just to thank them for the work that they do. This is not a time to bring up another issue or fault; it is solely a time for praise. Also, creating “You’ve Done Well” notecards for employees to send to other employees is a way to show appreciation. Many times supervisors do not have direct daily contact with the employees, so if a co-worker recognized the superb work an employee is exhibiting, they would be able to show appreciation by completing the notecard. Another way to acknowledge an employee is for the CEO or COO to give them a personal phone call or note thanking them for their efforts. Informal day-to-day acknowledgements mean a lot. Especially calls from upper management congratulating someone when they exceed expectations. Without a personal touch, a job would just be money and money can only motivate so much. Recognition gives
someone personal pride which sometimes can mean so much more than a monetary amount.

Many hospitals have internal publications, such as newsletters or flyers that are distributed throughout the hospital. This can also be used as a means to acknowledge employees. Employees may not always feel as though their job is important to the hospital and feel insignificant. From observation and research in a hospital setting, it was found that in most cases, upper level management are the only personnel that have business cards. This sort of hierarchy can make lower-level employees feel less important to the organization. A way to remove that perception, all deserving employees can be given business cards to showcase their job title and department. These minute, no cost behaviors can empower employees in the hospital and increase enthusiasm.

Low-Cost Recognition

There are many low-cost ways to recognize employees as well. Although there are not always extra funds in the budget to participate in these activities, in the end the benefits of participating in them will outweigh the costs of training new employees. For example, the CEO can send birthday cards to the employee’s home. The CEO, department director and even the other staff throughout the department can sign the card. There can also be a type of Most Valuable Associate award in each department. The price could consist of a small monetary value or gift card as a result of winning the award.

The Emmy-nominated #1 new series of 2009-2010, Undercover Boss used heart-felt rewards as a way to compensate an employee on their dedicated work. This same technique can be used in a hospital setting. For example, the organization could pay for the tutoring of an employee’s child or pay for another troubling expense the employee has.
The only drawback to cash or monetary rewards is that after some point they cannot be enhanced and they become an expected type of reward.

Communication Recognition

Increasing communication is another easy way to acknowledge employees. The day before a new employee comes to work, several people from the hospital can call and welcome him or her to the organization. Charts and posters can be created and displayed throughout the hospital to show how well a specific employee or group is performing. This is a way to show how the performance is in line with the mission of the company and the philosophy of the management.

Fun Celebrations

Research has shown that creating a somewhat “fun” environment in the workplace has been shown to result in increased productivity and outcomes. This includes having specific celebrations for specific achievements and results. Many hospitals create annual banquets to recognize employees based on their years of service to the hospital. Recognition can be done in a five-year manner and certain gifts can be developed for employees with five years and subsequent five year multiples of service. The event can be a formal dinner where employees interact with co-workers outside of work and receive an elegant meal as well.

A simpler event could be catering lunch for a department that reaches a certain monumental goal. Such event could boost team morale and allow employees to collaborate to accomplish the goal.
Employee Suggestion

On average only 41% of employees surveyed believe the average organization that they work for listens to their suggested ideas (Nelson). The staff of the hospital are the individuals dealing firsthand with the department and can identify improvements sometimes more easily than upper-level management. As a way to increase their motivation to make suggestions, rewards can be given to employees that present an outstanding idea. Incentivizing employees to make recommendations to management can increase outcomes as well as optimism about the department.

Customer Service Awards

Statistics show that it costs five times more to win a new customer than to keep an existing one. Good treatment of workers results in similar treatment of customers. Employees that exhibit extraordinary customer service should receive a reward for their actions. These can be decided based on patient or even co-worker recommendations. Hospitals could implement some sort of educational activity to train and enforce the list of performance standards that the hospital has. Returning patients are key for a hospital to survive, so it is crucial that they are given the highest customer service.

Boosting Employee Morale

Patients are the reason for the existence of a hospital, and to be able to provide them with the best care, it is essential to put the individuals providing care to the patients at the forefront as well.
Building Trust

Business is personal and people commit themselves to other people, not organizations. The individuals and personal connections employees make in the organization is what makes them committed or apathetic to the organization. An imperative way to complete this is to break down barriers between management and staff and require all employees to operate on a first-name basis. Management can also keep in touch with front line employees by working answering phones and registering patients in the departments to understand employees’ needs. Managers should also meet with each employee and ask him or her what they want to become and how management can help them become more successful. Opening these lines of communication will allow employees to gain a sense of trust in their managers and enhance self-esteem.

Building Team Spirit

In a hospital, many individuals are responsible for providing care to one patient. Increasing the unity in a department can lead to increased quality of care. Creating a mission statement for each team or service line can help define the purpose for the team’s work. Also, allowing employees some authority to hire their own co-workers can assist in uniting staff. In addition, posting HCAHPS scores of other competitors in plain view of the employees can remind them not only how well they are serving the patients compared to other hospitals, but also create competition and energize employees to perform their best at all times. Heightening team spirit can improve the delivery of care to patients as well as improving the work atmosphere.
Staff Development & Education

Encouraging employees to participate in educational development activities can have a direct correlation in providing high quality of care to patients and increasing self-confidence. There are many classes and training sessions available to a variety of healthcare careers and if employees attend these, they would not only be advancing their knowledge in their particular field, but also improving the hospital as a whole. With constantly changing procedures and methods, it is crucial for the staff to stay up-to-date on the newest ways to provide care.

Reducing Job Stress and Burnout

The issue of job stress and burnout can be widespread in all healthcare roles, but is particularly acute in clinical professions. There are many complex reasons for the high quantity of job stress and there is no definite solution, but there are ways that management can decrease this incident. One way is to provide a forum for communication and managing expectations. Lack of communication and set expectations, could be a source for friction and stress. Setting clear goals that are linked to organizational goals can help by giving employees a context for their work and efforts, so they know they are working on the correct things and what they are doing is contributing to the success of the organization. Formalized goal setting can help identify unrealistic expectations and encourage managers and employees to better balance their workloads. Creating a performance evaluations system will also create a consistent and uniform process that allows employees to receive feedback and direction that they need to perform at the highest level. They will also identify necessary knowledge gaps and can be addressed with
a training activity. These functions help support performance, ensure employees have the skills to do their jobs effectively and overall increase employee satisfaction.

**Employee Satisfaction Surveys**

In addition, to distributing the HCAHPS surveys, hospitals are also choosing to distribute employee surveys to understand how satisfied employees are in the workplace. Employee satisfaction surveys provide the information needed to improve levels of productivity, job satisfaction, and loyalty. Organizations can identify the root causes of job issues and discover what motivates people, what drives loyalty, and what genuinely makes and keeps employees happy (2008). Satisfaction levels increase when employees know that their issues are being addressed. A recent study in the Health Care Manager Journal surveyed human resource managers to determine what their biggest concerns were and employee retention emerged as one of the leading problems. Results showed that by placing a large emphasis on employee satisfaction, employee retention would be increased as well. Since employee satisfaction surveys are a current trend in the industry, they documented the frequency that organizations measure employee satisfaction. The findings show that around 62% of healthcare organizations distribute the surveys on an annual basis. In addition, almost 25% of the organizations did not even distribute an employee satisfaction survey.
Findings indicate that since employee surveys are mostly conducted on a yearly basis, that the results of the surveys may not be received in a timely manner and would be somewhat out of date. Health care organizations may increase the distribution to even a semi-annual basis to improve results and make changes in a more suitable method. Results of employee satisfaction surveys have shown to be a definite catalyst to improved employee satisfaction and retention (Collins, 2008).

In addition, it is crucial, that following the review of survey results, human resource leaders work with upper management to develop action plans based upon employee comments. An engaged workforce is vital to a hospital’s long-term ability to execute a strategy, making it one of today’s most important business issues (Collins, 2008). A significant difference can be made in the hospital if executives understand their employee's level of engagement and satisfaction. Therefore, an employee satisfaction survey is an excellent tool to gain insights into the hospital workforce.
The following are types of questions that should be addressed in each employee satisfaction survey. The standard format is to provide a statement and then measuring how well the employee agrees with the statement (Insight).

“Feedback
I receive useful and constructive feedback from my manager.
I am given adequate feedback about my performance.
I receive feedback that helps me improve my performance.

Opportunities for Growth
I have adequate opportunities for professional growth in this organization.
I receive the training I need to do my job well.
My manager is actively interested in my professional development and advancement.

Mission and Purpose
I have a good understanding of the mission and the goals of this organization.
I understand how my work directly contributes to the overall success of the organization.
My job is important in accomplishing the mission of the organization.

Work/Life Balance; Stress and Work Pace
The environment in this organization supports a balance between work and personal life.
My manager understands the importance of maintaining a balance between work and personal life.
I am able to satisfy both my job and family responsibilities.

Respect for Employees
My manager always treats me with respect.
My manager listens to what I'm saying.
This organization respects its employees.”
Implementation

Change is a fundamental component of continuous quality improvement in any organization. Any improvement methodology involves introducing change and measuring its impact. In healthcare there has been recognition of the need for system change to support the delivery of safe, quality care (Victorian Quality Council, 2006). The focus on system change has been associated with the development of a number of tools and improvement strategies. There are five key steps to implementing change in the hospital workplace.

The first is to motivate change in the organization. Change will be much more successful, if employees are committed to the change, and believe that it will improve things (Victorian Quality Council, 2006). Clinical leaders can influence this process by creating a positive planning environment and encourage their staff to contribute creativity and innovation to the change.

The second step is to create a vision for the organization. Leaders in the organization must articulate a clear vision that describes what the change effort is striving to accomplish. Ideally, people in the organization have strong input to the creation of the vision and how it can be achieved (Last Authenticity Consulting, 2012). The vision should clearly depict how the achievement of the vision will improve the organization. It is critically important that people believe that the vision is relevant and realistic.

The next key component during the change implementation is to develop political support. This is a phase that often stops successful change from occurring, if it is not completed successfully. Many times in organizations politics are what depicts organization,
however, when implementing change it is important to analyze the best managers to administer change. When modifying the culture of a hospital or even creating a new procedure such as the employee satisfaction survey, it is essential that the leaders are effective communicators and can motivate employees.

The fourth step is actually making the change transition. This phase occurs when the organization works to make the actual transition from the current state to the future state. The plan for change can include a wide variety of activities and undertakings designed to make a change in the organization. These changes usually require ongoing coaching, training and enforcement of new policies and procedures. “In addition, means of effective change management must continue, including strong, clear, ongoing communication about the need for the change, status of the change, and solicitation of organization members’ continuing input to the change effort” (Last Authenticity Consulting, 2012). It is crucial that the lines of communication are open during the change process to ensure employees are able to ask about any uncertainties.

Finally after the change occurs, leaders must sustain the momentum to ensure the modifications are ongoing. Change efforts can encounter a wide variety of obstacles so ongoing support, often in the form of provision of resources, along with training and coaching are necessary components of implementing change (Victorian Quality Council, 2006). Employees should be informed of successes and even failures in the process and include them in the evaluation process. For change to be positive all five previous phases should be incorporated in a plan to modify current workforce culture or performance.
Conclusion

Employee satisfaction within a healthcare organization is a definite catalyst to improved patient care and satisfaction. With enormous changes to the healthcare system as a result of the Affordable Care Act, the Human Resources Department and Quality Assurance Manager will have increased responsibility in monitoring the levels of employee satisfaction within the organization. With the implementation of HCAHPS surveys and employee satisfaction surveys, directors will gain a better understanding of the areas needing improvement throughout the organization. These departments as well as other hospital executives will focus on reducing turnover, and creating a well-planned strategy of job enhancement activities to increase employee satisfaction whereas in turn to increase patient satisfaction.
Works Cited


