

UPMC Focuses on Culture to Accelerate Growth

University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) recognized that to drive organizational success in the future, it could not focus solely on operational improvements; it had to transform its culture. As a result, it embarked on the UPMC Experience to increase employee engagement and retention and improve the experience for its consumers.

Challenge

As one of the most innovative healthcare organizations in the nation, UPMC wanted to accelerate its growth plan. Its leaders recognized that while they were already a high-performing organization, they could elevate the consumer experience to create consumers for life. At the same time, they sought to improve the employee experience to attract and retain top talent.

“I am proud that we’ve made the employee and consumer experience a top priority, and we are seeing results.”

**SANDY RADER, EXECUTIVE CHAMPION,
THE UPMC EXPERIENCE**

Approach

UPMC and Huron collaborated to create a foundation that would enable cultural transformation. To do so they:

Created a structure for change. Organizationwide change was supported by the board of directors and

Results

9% increase in nursing engagement score at the 787-bed flagship hospital, UPMC Presbyterian

5% improvement in employee engagement among 30,000 employees

Advanced overall 9 or 10 HCAHPS rating by 38 national percentile points, moving from the 28th to **66th percentile**

system leadership, which highlighted the importance of the transformation to other leaders.

Messaged and modeled behavior change from the top down. The team branded its employee and consumer experience as the UPMC Experience and developed messaging around a cultural transformation. This message was not only communicated by senior leaders — leaders modeled the behaviors they were asking employees to demonstrate.

Aligned goals to culture change. Senior leadership aligned 80% of its goals to employee and consumer experience outcomes, while 20% were aligned to financial performance and quality metrics. Incentives were aligned to employee engagement and and Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) scores.

Created a sense of accountability. Leaders were given clear goals tied to outcomes, which provided them with direction and focus on what was being asked of them. They were also equipped with training to execute against these goals.

Conducted leadership training. Executive leaders committed to bringing 1,500 UPMC leaders together quarterly for training aligned to organizational priorities. The sessions served as an opportunity to build transformation buy-in by providing consistency in communication, explaining the “why” behind changes, and skillbuilding to close the gap in performance.

Coached high-priority leaders. Coaching sessions helped leaders achieve their goals and model the behaviors they were asked to perform.

Created a mechanism to capture care team feedback. Seeking to create a better employee experience, leaders gained an understanding of the challenges employees and providers encountered by gathering feedback from them.

Met employees’ desires for change. UPMC elevated employee feedback to drive positive change across all UPMC hospitals. Concerns from leaders about resistance to change were eased as it became evident that, with commitment from leadership, employees embraced the UPMC Experience. This initiative resulted in better execution, driving rapid and significant improvements in employee satisfaction followed by improvements in patient experience.

UPMC is a world-renowned healthcare provider. The system combines clinical research excellence with businesslike discipline to provide high-quality care at its more than 30 hospitals and 700 physician offices and outpatient sites.



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