



High-quality Patient Care With Improved Internal Communication and Mutual Respect



Case Study

Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance never failed to deliver high-quality patient care. The question was: what was it costing their employees?

Customer

Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA)

Industry

Healthcare

Business Benefits

- Improved interpersonal conversations (68% of managers said this was better by 2008)
- More ease, less human wear and tear (39% of managers said it was better by 2008)
- More accountability (44% of managers said dealing with underperformers was better by 2008)
- Leaders walking the talk (66% of managers said this was better by 2008)
- Improved work processes
- Improved supervisory communication
- Improved mutual respect among teammates
- Less silo mentality (68% of managers said alignment and integration was better by 2008)

The Challenge: Healing the Healers

A few years ago when Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA) reviewed the results of an employee satisfaction survey, three issues stood out: 1) doctors and staff were overburdened; 2) organizational communication needed to be improved; and 3) cohesiveness across the alliance had to be strengthened. Despite a sterling record of providing consistently superior healthcare, HPHA was ailing internally.

The survey results were not unexpected. HPHA was founded in 2003, with a clear expectation of continuing to provide high-quality care to several of Ontario's rural communities. Its focus was squarely on the needs of the patients and families it served—not the needs of its own team. Clearly, though, this singular focus had to change, as the staffing challenges that routinely cause workload and communication problems within healthcare organizations began to impact work-life satisfaction.

Business Solution

HPHA Board

Pull Conversation™ Intro

HPHA Senior Leadership Team

360 Leadership Assessment

Pull Conversation™ 1.0, 2.0

The Five Drivers of Engagement™

The Living 360

Team Norms

InsideOut Advantage Coaching™

Enterprise™ – Alignment for Results

Leadership Competencies

Strategic Planning – Mission, Vision, Values

Operational Planning – Global Objectives across the Four Pillars

HPHA Management Team

Interviewed entire management team

360 Leadership Assessment

Pull Conversation™ 1.0, 2.0, 3.0

The Five Drivers of Engagement™

Team Norms

InsideOut Advantage Coaching™

Strategic Planning – Mission, Vision, Values

HPHA Employees and Physicians

Pull Conversation™ 1.0

How to quickly see the issue through the other person's eyes

How to remove interference

How to deal with disrespectful behavior

Practice simulators – dealing with disrespectful behaviors

Pull Conversation™ 2.0

Emotional intelligence skills for tough conversations

Practice simulators – dealing with your tough conversations

Pull Conversation™ 3.0

Departmental meetings – how to use the skill of seeing through the other person's eyes to provide great internal and external customer service

“Our internal relationships are the foundation for most of our work,” says Andrew Williams, HPHA’s CEO. “To provide excellent patient care, our team members need to communicate openly and effectively with one another. We need to protect each other from becoming overburdened and exhausted. And we need to work in an atmosphere of mutual support and respect. But our survey told us that we were falling down in these areas.”

Rather than attempting to address these challenges on its own, HPHA quickly decided to call in an expert resource, one that specializes in helping organizations improve communication, collaboration and performance. That resource was Juice Inc.

The Solution: Getting Juiced

After weeks of reviewing potential partners, HPHA chose Juice for several reasons, including the Juice team’s listening skills.

“I was impressed with how quickly they got a bead on our culture and understood what our unique challenges and goals were,” says Williams. “They took in a lot of critical information in our initial meetings and used that information to tailor all of the work they did for us.”

HPHA also connected strongly with Juice’s basic philosophy that an organization’s success is driven by the quality of its conversations.

“The message from Juice was loud and clear—it’s all about conversation,” Williams states. “If you want to improve processes and work flow, if you want to remove friction and minimize personal conflict, if you want to ensure that every member of the team is fully engaged with their work, you have to nurture high-quality conversations at every level of the organization.”

Once Juice’s initial intake was complete, a detailed action plan was developed and agreed upon. HPHA and Juice then launched an intensive training program, beginning with sessions for managers that would foster improvements in HPHA’s top-down communication, as well as communication among those at the highest levels. Training also focused on how to coach people to deliver their best performance and how to improve the performance review process itself. Staff members attended the training next, concentrating on their vital role in improving communication with supervisors and each other.





In the end, every doctor, nurse and staff member at HPHA was provided the opportunity to participate in the Juice training. A major portion of the curriculum for all attendees was devoted to helping them see day-to-day tasks through the eyes of their co-workers. Williams says this not only improved the team's sensitivity to their colleagues' needs but it also helped everyone recognize the need to take action—to actually help a co-worker get the job done, whatever it might be.

“There's a big difference between feeling each other's pain and doing something to ease it,” he says. “Basically, we've learned to try to treat each other as well as we treat our patients.”

Experiential learning exercises, role playing, visualization techniques and other tools were employed to help the HPHA team identify the specific areas where communication was breaking down, coaching and mentoring direct reports more effectively, constructively confronting and resolving personal problems, supporting one another's daily tasks and challenges, and sharing work more fairly.

According to Williams, there was a palpable sense of hope and encouragement when the training was completed. “We truly felt that we had been given the tools we needed to re-energize our people.”

The Results: Across-the-Board Improvement

Williams says that HPHA began seeing positive results from its work with Juice fairly quickly and the results have continued to accrue. While the workload is still a challenge, there is a greater emphasis on improving work processes and helping each other with daily tasks. Also, the HPHA team now works together with less friction and fewer unresolved problems due to its improved interpersonal conversations.

Accountability also has improved at all levels because people understand their roles and responsibilities more clearly.

HPHA's follow-up employee satisfaction survey, conducted in 2009, bears out the organization's progress. Scores were up on most corporate indicators, including staff being proud to be associated with the organization and assuring the organization's ongoing commitment to quality.





Williams adds that HPHA's improved employee engagement has allowed them to maintain their emphasis on consistently improving customer service, through initiatives such as wait time reduction.

One of the latest outcomes of its work with Juice is that HPHA is currently in the process of revising its leadership competency assessment process to help develop the leadership skills that will move the organization to the next level of success—in essence, creating a leadership culture that links performance expectations directly to role competencies.

Summarizing the value of HPHA's work with Juice, Williams says that focusing on the quality of its conversations actually achieved far more than enhanced communication at HPHA.

"We've improved work processes, reduced stress and friction, increased personal energy levels, enhanced accountability, and secured our ability to continue delivering high-quality care to our patients," he states. "I think it's safe to say that our work with Juice was just what the doctor ordered."

About Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA)

Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance is a four-hospital alliance that serves the residents of Southwestern Ontario. Comprised of hospitals in Clinton, St. Marys, Seaforth and Stratford, HPHA is committed to providing the highest quality care possible to those patients and families seeking their service. A dedicated team of staff, physicians and volunteers are available to support the varied needs of those using their services and all are committed to ensuring a safe, high-quality environment.

Love at Work

Authored by Juice co-founder Brady Wilson, *Love at Work: Why Passion Drives Performance in the Feelings Economy* will be available in mid-May 2010. The book seeks to energize organizations for positive change through the notion that engaging people's hearts trumps engaging their minds when it comes to sparking discretionary effort. The book also seeks to inspire leaders to build cultures where managers can learn to extend themselves, investing in the highest good of their people, their communities and their planet. The concepts outlined in the book are the same concepts applied to Juice's work with HPHA.





About Juice

Juice Inc. delivers training and development services to increase employee engagement and productivity. Juice works with companies that want to build a productive culture and understand that interactions between people are major drivers of organizational success. Juice's conversation-enhancing methodology delivers a process for improving the human experience in the workplace while driving employee performance and business results. If you would like more information about how Juice can help your organization, e-mail Cheryl Rayfield at crayfield@juiceinc.com.

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