

Key Human Resource Strategies Within a Healthcare Organization

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A true differentiator between a Personnel and Human Resource function is the level of focus on Strategy. To move from a Personnel function to a Human Resource function it's critical to have an emphasis on *planning for the future*. At Seattle Children's, our Human Resource function supports daily operational needs while at the same time develops strategies to ensure organization success well into the future. Two key Human Resource Strategies practiced at Seattle Children's are Workforce Planning and Succession Planning.

Workforce planning gets quite a bit of attention these days. Future labor shortages loom on the 5 –

20 year horizon fueled by retiring Baby Boomers, lower birth rates, and increased demand for healthcare services. Much is happening on the state and federal levels to address these shortages, but individual healthcare organizations require proactive, multi-year strategies to ensure competitiveness.

Most healthcare organizations engage in business or strategic planning and financial planning, but how many engage in people planning? The goal of strategic workforce planning is to provide the *right talent* for the organization in the *right job* at the right time for the *right cost*. Clearly, human resources has a significant role to play in this work, but workforce planning cannot be conducted solely by HR. We must partner with operational leaders to provide assessments, forecasts and strategies that are relevant to their business.

At Seattle Children's we have been engaged in workforce planning for approximately two years. "We began our efforts in a single division, inpatient nursing, to develop our workforce planning capacity. We chose nursing because leadership was already attuned to workforce needs. Within the first year, we had developed a forecasting tool that operational leaders can use for budget planning" stated Pam

Cowles, Workforce Planning Manager. The second year we focused our workforce planning efforts on the new Bellevue Ambulatory and Surgery Center we opened in July 2010. The clinic was 97% staffed on the first day, and the majority of staff who transferred to Bellevue from other departments had been backfilled. When operational leaders were asked what they learned about recruiting for a new facility, they said, "Start early!"

Every business plan has a talent need, and the best business plans can be derailed by inadequate workforce planning. Many organizations engage in 1-year to 3-year workforce planning for budget purposes. If this is where workforce planning is in your organization today, make it a priority to raise it to a strategic level and plan for the next 5 to 10 years.

Succession Planning is another area that is getting more and more attention within Healthcare organizations. From a national perspective, a large percentage of Executives will be exiting the workforce within the next 5 years. Human Resources play a large role in implementing a succession plan that ensures ready successors for all executive and critical leadership roles.

At Seattle Children's we presented

our first Succession Plan to the board in 2009, it focused on our CEO and his Executive team. The plan outlined successors, a timeline of readiness and a development plan. Additionally, we identified successors in the case of an emergency.

In 2010, we updated the above plan and added a Succession Plan for the next level of senior leaders. We now have a plan of successors for our Vice Presidents and above. As we think about the future, we will take the strategy of succession planning deeper into the organization and to critical jobs that will have future labor shortages identified from our workforce planning efforts.

Human Resources play a large role in developing and implementing Strategies within a Healthcare Organization. Two Strategic areas are Workforce Planning and Succession Planning. At Seattle Children's we have placed a focus on

these key HR strategies while also developing strategies around Compensation and Benefits Management, Leadership Development, Occupational Health Services, Talent Acquisition, HRIS, and HR business partnerships, and Employee Engagement. It's a great time to be in Human Resources within a Healthcare Organization.

Steven Hurwitz is currently the Vice President of Human Resources for Seattle Children's. Steven joined Children's in this role March, 2008. Steven has overall responsibility for the Human Resource organization supporting the Hospital, Research Institute and Foundation. Steven ensures strategic alignment with his executive counterparts to ensure that integrated and leveraged solutions are realized throughout the organization.

Prior to joining Children's, Steven worked at Starbucks Coffee for 9 years with his last role being Vice

President, Human Resources. Steven also brings diverse HR experience from working at Macromedia Corporation, Nabisco Biscuit Company, and Harris Corporation. In these previous roles, Steven led major projects in the areas of Performance management, Succession planning, HR strategic planning, Global compensation, Organization development and Employee/union relations.

Steven earned a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Hofstra University and both an MBA in General Business and Master's degree in Organization Development from the Florida Institute of Technology. He served on the board of Big Brothers Big Sisters for many years, supports numerous charitable organizations, and currently sits on the board of Providence Senior and Community Services as their Human Resource Executive support.

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