

Professional Paradise: Oxymoron or Healthcare Imperative?

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Professional Paradise. Some healthcare leaders might say it's an oxymoron. But even those who readily believe it is in fact possible to achieve a constant state of "paradise" or "bliss" at work might think that finding or creating Professional Paradise in today's climate of healthcare reform is ludicrous. In fact, in today's business and economic climate, helping employees find their Professional Paradise is no longer an option for leaders – it's a requirement.

What is Professional Paradise?

When you're in Professional Paradise you genuinely enjoy each

day. You are satisfied, energized and productive. You work to your strengths, routinely perform at your peak and effortlessly produce results. Your interactions with co-workers and patients are positive and productive. In other words, you are engaged at work. And, if you have to work for a living, what could be better than that? In fact, who wouldn't want to work in Professional Paradise?

Perhaps you're thinking that Professional Paradise comes from working for a particular healthcare organization or having a certain job. This is most definitely *not* true. Professional Paradise is a state of being – a state of mind backed up with intentional action. As a leader, you have the ability to create an environment where staff members can connect to this state of mind. Employees want to be the CPO – *Chief Paradise Officer* – of their job and need your help to get there.

Take Yourself and Others to Professional Paradise

So you may be asking, "If paradise is a personal matter, what can I do as a leader?" Here are five powerful recommendations for leaders who want to provide their staff the tools to get to and stay in Profes-

sional Paradise. They aren't complex and you may already be trying a few of them. The key to success is consistency and execution.

1. *Become the CPO of your own job.* Direct reports pay attention to what you say, your moods, your reactions and everything else you do. Make sure you are in Professional Paradise yourself and let folks know. Connect to what makes you satisfied, energized and productive. Create a mindset – and actions that follow – to support your own view of Professional Paradise.
2. *Engage in a Viewpoint-SHIFT™.* Look at work through the eyes of your direct reports. Find out what Professional Paradise looks and feels like to each of them. Ask each person what makes them satisfied, energized and productive, and then give the employee the tools to be the CPO of their own job.
3. *Create safe harbors.* Your intention to create Professional Paradise for yourself and others shows your respect for each employee. Generate trust through your words and deeds. By demonstrating transparen-

cy and open communication, you create an environment where staff members are free to tell you the good and bad news about their work.

4. *Let folks know the score.* Directly connecting employee's goals with the organization's goals is the first part of this recommendation. Can each person on your team state how their job contributes to the bottom line of the organization? If not, explain it. Part two is keeping people apprised of what those bottom line results are on a regular basis. Everyone likes to know how they are doing.
5. *Master the art of delegation.* When I surveyed people about what makes them happy at

work, the number one response was successfully completing a project or task. If you keep all the good jobs to yourself, then how can they find happiness? A Professional Paradise leader delegates work, maintains ultimate accountability, and relinquishes authority to staff members. Now that's Professional Paradise!

How liberating. You now know unequivocally that you can work in Professional Paradise no matter what is happening in the world around you and you have tools to create a paradise-like environment for those who work with you. You don't need to make reservations, travel long distances or incur great expense. Grab your "passport" and go. Because after all, who wouldn't want to work in Profes-

sional Paradise?

Vicki Hess, RN, MS, Certified Speaking Professional, is an Escape Artist. A professional speaker, author and consultant, she helps individuals and leaders escape to Professional Paradise. Vicki is passionate about working with forward-thinking health-care organizations to develop fully engaged employees and leaders who deliver remarkable business results. She is the author of The Nurse Manager's Guide to Hiring, Firing & Inspiring and SHIFT to Professional Paradise. To learn more, please visit www.VickiHess.com. To download free tools for creating Professional Paradise, visit www.ProfessionalParadise.com. To download free tools for healthcare managers, visit www.HiringFiringInspiring.com.

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