

Patient Satisfaction Scores Soar at Florida Hospital for Children, Thanks to Help from *Disney Institute*

SUMMARY

Orlando-based, 1,200-bed, Florida Hospital for Children has a solid reputation as a first-class, well-respected health care facility. But after measuring patient and family satisfaction scores two years in a row, administrators were shocked to find that their facility ranked in the bottom ten percent of hospitals nationwide. A massive change of culture was needed to boost the hospital's ratings.

After implementing many of the lessons learned in *Disney Institute* seminars and presentations at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., the 1,000-employee hospital's satisfaction ratings are now in the high 90th percentile—among the highest in the nation. Employee morale and retention rates have also increased.

FULL STORY

"I knew we could do better," is what Tim Burrill remembers thinking two years ago when the Press Ganey patient/family satisfaction survey scores placed Florida Hospital for Children among the lowest scoring hospitals in the nation. "In fact," he says, "we had to do better."

As chief of operations for the 1,200-bed, Orlando-based facility, Burrill knew that while the hospital's surgeons and staff were excellent, their interaction with patients and their families left a lot to be desired.

"We decided we needed to change our culture," says Burrill. Adds Shara Mock, director of patient experience, "We didn't want to be at the bottom of the rankings, we wanted to be at the very top."

A Massive Undertaking

Changing the culture of a hospital with more than 1,000 employees is a massive undertaking; Burrill likens it to "turning around an aircraft carrier." He and his team contacted several consultants before deciding upon *Disney Institute*. "We knew *Disney Institute* had helped other hospitals and health facilities improve their patient satisfaction levels, and we admired the way Disney itself excelled at delivering first-class service and satisfaction," says Mock.

After making several site visits to the hospital and speaking with numerous staffers, *Disney Institute* consultant Chris Caracci worked with Burrill and his team to draw up a custom three-and-a-half-day seminar for about 60 of the hospital's executives, physicians, nurse managers and directors.

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"Chris didn't simply give us a toolkit or a handbook on what to do to change our culture," says Mock. "Rather he told us that he'd show us Disney best practices and allow us to decide how to apply them to our organization. We liked that." For example, taking a page out of Disney's Quality Service program, Caracci showed the attendees how Disney's service infrastructure and service standards help to consistently exceed Guest expectations. He also included content from Disney's Approach to Leadership Excellence and People Management in his presentations.

"We're going to explore the business behind the magic," Caracci explained. "These might seem like common sense," he told his audience, "but they're not necessarily common practice."

During on site visits throughout the *Magic Kingdom*® Park, hospital staffers had the chance to see for themselves how "detail is king." "We saw so many things that related to a hospital setting," says Mock. "Disney Cast Members would get down on one knee to address a child at his or her level. We loved the way they engaged both the child and the parent."



CASE STUDY: FLORIDA HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN

Seminar attendees were impressed to find that Disney prohibited Cast Members from using cell phones while on duty. Using a cell phone created a distance between the Cast Member and the Guest, explained Caracci. “That’s something we knew we could adopt in the hospital,” says Burrill.

Even the design of the Disney name badges that featured only first names and hometowns impressed the hospital staffers. “They were so much more user friendly than ours,” says Mock. “Almost everywhere we looked, we saw firsthand how details matter.”

Embracing Change

Inspired by the *Disney Institute* seminars, site visits and subsequent training sessions at the hospital, Burrill and his team began implementing many of the practices they’d discovered. “Our first priority was getting all our leaders on board,” says Burrill. “We knew that if they didn’t embrace the new culture the rest of the staff wouldn’t.”

Once the hospital staff began treating the patients and the patients’ families as Guests, attitudes began changing. To increase interaction with patients and visitors, the hospital asked staffers not to use their cell phones while in patient areas (another Disney concept). Employees were given baseball-type trading cards with their names and likes and dislikes to hand out to their young patients. Titles were also simplified; for example, “neurologist” became “brain surgeon.”

The entire hospital staff ascribed to a new code of conduct, consisting of three simple, but often overlooked, basic principles:

- “I introduce myself and smile.”
- “I actively listen.”
- “I anticipate needs and go above and beyond.”

Says Mock, “It sounds simple but once you consistently get those basics right, the culture begins to change.” Burrill likens the change to baking a cake. “By excelling at the basics we have baked our cake. Then we add the icing by doing the fun things for our patients and their families.”

Recently Burrill himself was able to go above and beyond

for a patient’s family. After nurses learned that the father of a young patient was disappointed that his daughter’s injury would prevent him from getting his favorite chocolate chip cookies from *Walt Disney World*® Resort, Burrill jumped into action. He took off an hour from work and picked up the cookies from the bakery on *Main Street U.S.A.*® at the *Magic Kingdom*® Park.

“You should have seen the look on the man’s face when we gave him his cookies,” says Burrill. “It also did wonders for all of us. It was a real morale booster.”

Staggering Results

From warm cookies to broad smiles to sincere listening, Burrill and Mock and the entire team at Florida Hospital for Children have transformed their culture.

“I’ve never seen a health facility turn it around so totally and quickly,” says *Disney Institute*’s Chris Caracci, himself a former health care professional. “It’s largely due to the hospital’s leaders inspiring the entire staff.”

The results, less than a year after the *Disney Institute* training began, are staggering:

- Press Ganey patient/family satisfaction scores jumped from the bottom ten percent in the nation to the top 10 percent. (One month the results went as high as the 98th percentile.)
- Employee morale has soared.
- Employee retention rates have improved.
- The hospital’s pediatric emergency room is now ranked top in the nation.

But Burrill and his team are not resting on their laurels. They continue to use *Disney Institute* to improve their practices. Says Burrill, “We had to do better, and we did. Striving for excellence is a non-stop process.”