LEADERSHIP:
TEAM PROBLEM SOLVING PROTOCOL

By Dike Drummond MD, CEO TheHappyMD.com

If you believe you must be the one with all the answers and the one who tells the team what to do - you are working too hard and damaging your team's effectiveness.

This Top-Down, Command and Control leadership style is the default style in healthcare. After all, the doctor is the one who diagnoses and gives orders, right? As a leader, you damage your effectiveness if you do not take this "Doctor Hat" off.

Being an effective team leader is less about CONTENT ... or WHAT you are doing ... than it is about the CONTEXT you create for your team. Great leaders ask questions to tap the skills and experience of the whole team. Asking questions also gets your team engaged and participating from the start.

Here is a framework for leading your team to create problem solving projects that work. You focus on asking questions, while the team creates a solution to the team's problem.

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1) CREATE PROBLEM LIST
Use your TEAM to create a master problem list for your committee/department/organization

2) PRIORITIZE
Pick one
One at a time here - the Plate Spinning Theory of Leadership
Make sure you have consensus on this problem being addressed first
"I can live with that and support it"

3) IDENTIFY THE VISION (IN THE BACKGROUND)
All problems point to a unfulfilled VISION
You can fix the problem and you will only have a fixed problem
What if your VISION is bigger than that
Example:
"Well, team, we are suffering from "Problem X"
And we could fix "Problem X", but before we do that let's ask this question:
In an Ideal World, how would this area of our business work?
What else would we change if we could take the area where "Problem X" exists, wave a magic wand and make it work perfectly for us?"

4) BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS
If we are headed towards this VISION, what are your ideas on how we might proceed
More ideas are better
No judgment
You must hold the brainstorm context here - NO EVALUATION, MORE IS BETTER, GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE

5) PICK A SOLUTION
Pick one to implement
Consensus check

6) ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENT
Don't lose your creativity here
Another round of brainstorming
What is the best way to implement this quickly?
So we can start gathering data to see if it is working
Who will be responsible for what?

CREATE A RAPID FEEDBACK LOOP

> **NOTE:** the following two steps are the ones most commonly missing in physician led projects. Do not launch a project without these two bases covered. If you are leading a project now that does not have a Metric or a Follow Up and Communication Plan, get those in place ASAP!

7) PICK A METRIC
What is your metric - what are you tracking?
Something that tells you quickly if you are moving in the right direction
Or headed off the rails
Simpler is better
Don't get IT involved if you can help it

6) FOLLOW UP/COMMUNICATION PLAN
Who is in charge of this project?
When and How will they communicate with the group?
When will we reconvene to discuss progress and make adjustments?

7) REFINE AND REPEAT
Once you have results report them back to the group
Run the After Action Review on Your Results
Refine this project and action plan
REPEAT: Run this cycle again as needed

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Next Steps:

The Team Problem Solving Protocol is just one Burnout Prevention Tool.

Visit TheHappyMD.com for additional resources and tools so you can be a HappyMD

- Stress Management and Burnout Treatment and Prevention
- Physician Leadership Development
- Physician Wellness and Engagement Resources

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That's all for now. Keep breathing and have a great rest of your day,

Dike

Dike Drummond MD
www.TheHappyMD.com