



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



John Babiarz, President  
 ARAMARK Healthcare  
 Management Services

As the demanding baby-boomer generation consumes more

healthcare services, patient expectations are increasing as well. Healthcare is becoming more like a consumer product, where patients want choice, service, value and convenience for their growing share of out-of-pocket expenses. As a result, consumers' high expectations of the healthcare industry are beginning to mirror those in all other aspects of their lives.

And it's not just patients who want more. Doctors, nurses, employees, community members, visitors – everyone involved in the healthcare continuum – expects higher levels of quality and service from a hospital environment.

With industry research to suggest there is a direct correlation between employee satisfaction and patient satisfaction, we continue to work with our hospital partners to create innovations and introduce solutions that contribute to the overall quality of healthcare delivery. In this issue of *Insights* we explore the notion of service excellence, speak with industry leaders and examine models of excellence programs.

Increasingly, both the non-clinical and clinical experiences that impact individuals who are part of the healthcare delivery process are becoming

(see *President's Corner* - pg. 4)

# Defining A Culture of Service Excellence

## Meeting Increasing Customer Expectations in a Competitive Healthcare Environment

The commercial world has long known that excellence is defined by the consumer, and it is no different in the healthcare industry. Nowadays within hospitals, notions such as “excellence” and “best-in-class,” are more prominent and defined in more complex ways to meet the increasingly diverse needs of patients.

In addition to understanding and applying marketing and branding concepts in a highly competitive environment, hospitals must succeed in building a “culture of service” if they expect to deliver on what they promise. Customer service is not simply a job function that can be assigned to particular employees; rather, it is a value system that needs to be built into the culture of the organization – the service-minded, team-focused atmosphere that exists within a healthcare facility.

### Service Excellence

According to healthcare consultant Quint Studer, CEO of the Studer Group, there are three keys to achieving a culture that encourages the relentless drive to reach extraordinary results: service excellence, leadership development and accountability systems.

• **Service Excellence:** Connecting services to organizational values.



Quint Studer, CEO, Studer Group

• **Leadership Development:** Identifying current and future leaders, while providing adequate training and resources in a cost-effective manner.

• **Accountability:** Empowering employees with ownership and alignment of a hospital's goals.

(see *Service Excellence* - pg. 2)



this issue

- 1 President's Corner
- 1 Service Culture
- 3 Best Practices
- 5 Methodist Hospital Case Study

While patients are focused on recovering, it is their day-to-day contact with so-called “non-clinical” services - hospitality, food and facility services - that makes them appreciate and recommend one hospital over another. In *If Disney Ran Your Hospital*, author Fred Lee intimates that the quality of these “non-clinical” services, such as housekeeping, patient transportation and laundry and linen distribution, is critical to a patient’s evaluation of a hospital stay.

“Part of creating a comforting environment is taking the time to ensure patient needs are met,” says Studer. “It’s important to ask questions like ‘Is there anything I can do before I leave?’”

Many hospitals are beginning to brand these “non-clinical” services to create a positive and memorable marketplace identity. St. Vincent’s Hospital in Birmingham, AL integrates service excellence programs as a part of its overall mission. For instance, it has

consolidated dining, housekeeping, maintenance, security, valet, and concierge services into one program, called “At Your Service.” The program provides patients with one number to dial for any hospitality need during their stay.

### Patient Evaluation

Patients use a wide range of criteria to evaluate hospitals including the perceived attentiveness of the nursing staff, the willingness of staff to interact with them in more than a cursory manner, and the perceived quality of meals.

Patient evaluations also are shaped by more traditional subtleties such as room temperature and cleanliness, the ability to have food delivered “after hours” and the physical appearance of the food tray.

A physician participating in an ARAMARK Healthcare Management Services sponsored focus group said, “Patients assume the medical care is good because they cannot assess that or measure it, but they can [measure] for cleanliness and if things are working properly.”

It is the accumulation or absence of such touches that helps define the total patient experience. As a result, successful hospitals recognize the need to incorporate these touch points into their service culture and emphasize their importance with employees.

### Employee Satisfaction

The Advisory Board conducted a survey that shows a strong correlation between highly satisfied employees and patients that are satisfied with their hospital stay.

With employees playing such an important role in a hospital’s drive towards excellence, Studer asserts that “hospitals must

implement a uniform system for evaluating employees to maintain the high level of service excellence it worked so hard to achieve.”

Evaluations hold the staff accountable, maintain focus and reinforce hospital goals and values. In return they are more conscious about their daily interaction with patients.

### Measuring Success

As consumers take more time to research hospital track records, healthcare institutions have become more competitive. A 2003 JD Power and Associates study revealed that 78 percent of consumers would use information about previous patient experiences to select a hospital. While hospitals rely on

commercial sources such as Press Ganey Associates and NRC + Picker for patient satisfaction ratings, until recently, there was not a standard survey to measure the quality of hospital care.

To make it easier for consumers to compare hospitals, in May 2005, The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services unveiled the first national survey of patients’ perception of hospital care. If approved, the 27 question survey will ask discharged patients to measure the quality of services ranging from room cleanliness to bedpan removal to bathroom assistance.

### Achieving Excellence

An increasing number of hospitals have recognized the need to establish a culture of service excellence, one in which every employee knows that every patient contact is an opportunity to have a positive impact on the quality of care and overall patient experience.

For organizations to successfully introduce a culture of service excellence, Studer advises “there must be a commitment to and a relentless pursuit of goals. The commitment comes from the senior leadership, but eventually must be part of the overall culture of the organization.” ■



St. Vincent's Hospital in Birmingham, AL has consolidated its hospitality services under one branded program.

“The commitment [to service excellence] comes from the senior leadership, but eventually must be part of the overall culture of the organization.”

Quint Studer, CEO, Studer Group

# It's the Little Things That Count... Innovative Programs Improve Patient and Employee Satisfaction

*A culture of service excellence can be achieved in many different forms and through various means. In the end, the common denominator is a commitment to creating the best hospital environment for patients and employees.*

## Patients Circle 5 at Banner Desert Medical Center



### Banner Health®

Associate Administrator of Mesa, Arizona's Banner Desert Medical Center, Jay Stallings, believes you can learn a lot about patient food service by asking the following three questions:

1. Is the food good?
2. Was it delivered on time?
3. Did you like the person who gave it to you?

"We weren't doing any of these things with consistency," Stallings said.

What to do? Fix it, and fast, said Stallings. He set a goal. He wanted the Medical Center's patient satisfaction scores to rebound to the 80s by the summer of 2004. They were 37 percent in February.

As food service is an important factor of a patient's hospital experience, the ARAMARK team tackled every aspect of the Medical Center's patient food service program - meal planning, special diet requests, food temperature and quality, and the hospitality training of the people serving the food. They asked, and Stallings agreed, to hire more Nutrition

Representatives to take orders and deliver food to patients.

The Medical Center food service staff also got a uniform "makeover." They began wearing buttons that read, "Circle 5", in reference to the highest scores on the survey forms. The buttons served as a reminder to staff about the importance of providing quality food service and to patients about its commitment to providing the best service.

As a result of the hospital realigning its food service program, satisfaction scores soared - by July, the score reached 86, earning the patient food service team the highest monthly score compared to other Medical Center departments.

The food service team finished first again in August at 92 and again in September at 96. That's a 60-point turnaround, which made Stallings a very happy client.

"ARAMARK's team is bringing extraordinary value to our organization. Our food program - patient and retail - has a halo effect. If the food is good, people are happy - patients, visitors and staff," Stallings said.

## Keeping Patients Safe at St. Vincent's Hospital

Added value. That is what hospitals look for in their partners. When St. Vincent's Hospital - Manhattan first turned to



### Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers

ARAMARK, it was to provide traditional laundry management and linen distribution.

However, because the relationship proved itself a viable option for reducing laundry costs and improving the delivery of linens, St. Vincent's management turned to ARAMARK for something that at first glance, may seem outside the realm of traditional laundry services. They asked the laundry and linen team for a solution to better secure the emergency room and monitor the whereabouts of patients.

"When we encounter a problem, we feel comfortable turning to the ARAMARK team, knowing they'll develop a cost-effective solution," said Will Grice, Vice President of Operations, St. Vincent's Hospital.

Located in lower Manhattan, St. Vincent's provides emergency medical services to many psychiatric patients. Oftentimes, while awaiting consultation with the doctor, these patients will leave the emergency room area, prior to receiving

appropriate treatment. The ARAMARK team jumped to action and developed a system that was as simple as assigning lavender colored gowns to psychiatric patients and gray gowns to the general population.

The innovative solution now enables all hospital employees to identify psychiatric patients. More importantly, the program is a way to ensure the safety of the entire hospital community.

Additionally, it improved satisfaction and productivity among the nursing staff, which no-longer needs to spend as much time monitoring patient whereabouts.

“The value of the department is a reflection of the management team’s commitment to innovation and excellence,” said Grice.

## Personal Attention Pays Dividends at Iowa Health System



Personalized care is the one thing patients relish during their hospital stay. It increases the comfort level of patients and allows them to build a strong rapport with hospital employees.

Recognizing the impact of a hospitality-driven environment, Iowa Health System asked long-time partner ARAMARK to create a solution that focuses on the “personal dimension” of a hospital stay.

Working with the nursing staff, the team developed the multi-service associate (MSA) program that blends traditional distinctions between non-clinical staff functions to create a new multi-skilled, patient-focused position.

According to Sara Poling, Senior Vice President, Allen Hospital, Iowa Health System, “The multi-service associate program cannot be overvalued.”

Under the MSA program, one staff person maintains the patient’s immediate

environment and brings a hospitality concept to the patient’s bedside. Instead of relying on different hospital staff for their meals, fresh linens, or adjusting the room TV, patients now turn to a single resource.

“Our nursing staff has fully embraced and applauded the services provided by multi-service associates,” added Poling.

In a survey of nurses conducted five months after the MSA program was introduced at Allen Hospital, nursing perception of room cleanliness improved from 3.36 to 4.8 on a 5 point scale.

Patients benefit from the continuity, responsiveness, and personalized attention; support staff now views themselves as valued members of the care team; and nurses are able to devote more time to direct patient care.

A key part of the MSA program is the growth opportunities it provides associates. Developing new skills increases employees’ sense of belonging, which translates to better service delivery.

Sue Thompson, COO, Trinity Regional Medical Center, Iowa Health System, believes that “By improving employee satisfaction, patients will be better cared for.” ■

*President’s Corner (continued from pg. 1)*

interwoven. It is no longer enough to just be the best clinically as all hospitals quickly embrace clinical innovation and technological advancements. Today, hospitals looking to gain a competitive advantage are becoming great at creating the optimal service experience for all key constituents.

Ensuring the timely arrival of meals, expeditious transportation throughout the facility, cleanliness of rooms, immediate availability of clinical equipment, and overall responsiveness of the staff are critical to shaping a patient’s perception of a hospital. At the same time, contributing to the “well being” of clinical and non-clinical staff by creating a positive, service-minded work environment is just as important.

“ When we encounter a problem, we feel comfortable turning to the ARAMARK team, knowing they’ll develop a cost-effective solution.”

Will Grice, Vice President of Operations, St. Vincent’s Hospital

As a leader in comprehensive non-clinical services, we are committed to providing the management, associates, training, services and innovative programs that are necessary for achieving a culture of service excellence at every level.

This is an exciting time for the healthcare industry. With a greater percentage of the population relying on healthcare-related services for both curative as well as preventative care, hospitals are in a position to showcase their expertise and ability to adjust to the ever changing demands of patients. ■

# CASE HISTORY

Driving Outstanding Non-Clinical Service Outcomes Takes a Focused Approach.

## The Methodist Hospital Delivers Results with a Hospitality-based Strategy



*The call center at The Methodist Hospital processes nearly 32,000 requests per month.*

The Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas, has developed a hospitality service model that is delivering results.

With nearly 1,200 patient beds in six buildings, Methodist ranks as one of the top 15 teaching hospitals and one of the largest non-profit healthcare providers in the country.

“As a hospital that had traditionally used in house resources to deliver non-clinical services, it was paramount that we align with a partner capable of helping to fulfill our mission,” said Dr. Marc Boom, Chief Operating Officer, Senior Vice President, The Methodist Hospital.

The hospital approached ARAMARK Healthcare Management Services in 2001 and charged the company with adopting its mission and culture in an effort to help Methodist become the “Four Seasons of Healthcare.”

It was important to Methodist that ARAMARK become fully consumed within the hospital’s culture. As a result, all uniforms, business cards and signage utilize Methodist branding — no visible identification separates ARAMARK employees from Methodist employees.



ARAMARK is responsible for more than 273,000 patient transports per year at The Methodist Hospital.

### Creating a Technological Advantage

When tropical storm Allison destroyed more than 350 thousand square feet of the hospital in 2001, ARAMARK was called upon to develop a rebuild plan, supervise the construction and manage the operation of a new call center.

Today, Methodist has one of the most high tech and integrated hospital call centers in the country. Encompassing all services, the call center processes an average of 32,000 requests per month and monitors more than 500 security cameras.

As Methodist's "nerve center" for all non-clinical services, the hospital leadership has come to rely on the comprehensive electronic program tracking and progress reporting that the call center is able to produce.

### Environmental Service Excellence

On the nursing floors, ARAMARK has helped Methodist score in the top three percentile nationwide, for cleanliness of patient rooms, as ranked by Press Ganey, and similar third party evaluators. Bed turnaround time is just over 32 minutes versus a goal of 60 minutes.

Specially trained teams of two or three dedicated employees clean and sterilize more than 70 operating rooms in six different buildings each day.

To ensure high quality outcomes, ARAMARK regularly tracks and benchmarks the entire environmental services program against itself through call center reporting and with third parties.

### Improving Patient Throughput

A patient transportation program was introduced that has been successful in terms of patient satisfaction and reducing throughput time.

ARAMARK's approach uses 170 trained patient transporters who respond to approximately 800 calls per day for more than 273,000 transports per year. The program has reduced patient wait time from 90 minutes to 19 minutes.

### Focusing Hospitality

Making a great first impression was very important to the Methodist leadership and they entrusted ARAMARK to develop a solution for receiving patients and guests. The hospital integrated the reception desk and valet services to bring a "hotel style" service to the hospital setting.

ARAMARK was able to streamline the valet parking program and increase the volume of cars parked by 45 percent to approximately 500 per day.

At the hospital's main entrance, a full-time greeter directs patients and visitors when they arrive. The greeters, respectfully dressed in shirts and ties, direct visitors to their loved ones, help coordinate transportation for incoming patients and even personally escort visitors to the appropriate rooms on the nursing floors.

### Building on a Positive Relationship

As a result of ARAMARK's results-driven performance on the facility service side, in the fall of 2004, Methodist awarded the company a contract to provide patient food service.

"We appreciate ARAMARK's leadership in non-clinical areas and they continue to raise the bar on service delivery," Dr. Boom said. ■



This publication is a product of ARAMARK, 1101 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

Visit us on the Web: [www.aramark.com](http://www.aramark.com)

E-Mail questions and comments: [solutions@aramark.com](mailto:solutions@aramark.com)

© 2005 ARAMARK Corporation. All Rights Reserved.