



Advancing Excellence in Pharmacy

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Elevate your Team

by Travis Hunerdosse, PharmD, MBA, ICHP President

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Healthcare is a complex system made up of multiple teams that enable the delivery of care and services to patients. All of us work as a member of many teams - patient care teams made up of healthcare professionals in hospitals and ambulatory clinics; pharmacy teams that work synchronously to provide expert medication management and drug delivery services; and quality and safety teams to ensure care is delivered safely and effectively to all patients throughout the health system.

A team is a group of individuals who possess complementary skills that are required to complete a task, job, or project. Members of a team work independently, share responsibility, are accountable for outcomes and performance, and work toward a common goal. Effective teams are those that are more than just a collection of people performing tasks to merely get the job done. Teams that have a strong sense of culture and mutual commitment create a synergy that allows the team to generate high performance that is much greater than the performance of individuals. All team members, technicians, pharmacists, big L, and little I leaders influence the performance of the team and can elevate individual members of that team to achieve greatness.

Being in a formal leadership position is not a requirement to have an impact on a team and its individual members. Little I leadership is required from the team members in order for the team to perform at its best. For example, senior technicians are responsible for training and mentoring of newly hired teammates. This is a vitally important role to ensure medications are prepared and made available in a safe and efficient manner. Similarly, clinical pharmacists serve as primary preceptors for pharmacy students, residents, and new practitioners. In the preceptor role, the clinical pharmacist is responsible for shaping the future of the profession and serving as a role model. A strong team requires individuals to step up and assume responsibility for elevating the people surrounding them.

At this point, you may be asking yourself "how can I elevate members of my team"? Here are some tips and fundamental to elevating the people around you.

Give them face time.

In order to elevate your team, it is important to let them take center stage. In your role, think of how you can increase your teammate's interactions with other healthcare providers and leaders in the organization. For example, pharmacy students should present their recommendations to the physician and care team during rounds based on an earlier discussion with the

Regularly Scheduled Network Meetings

Chicago Area Pharmacy Directors Network Dinner
3rd Thursday of Odd Months
5:30pm

Regularly Scheduled Division and Committee Calls

Executive Committee
Second Tuesday of each month
at 7:00 p.m.

Educational Affairs
Third Tuesday of each month at
11:00 a.m.

Government Affairs
Third Monday of each month at
5:00 p.m.

Marketing Affairs
Third Tuesday of each month at
8:00 a.m.

Organizational Affairs
Fourth Thursday of each month
at 12:00 p.m.

Professional Affairs
Fourth Thursday of each month
at 2:00 p.m.

New Practitioner Network
Second Thursday of each month
at 5:30 p.m.

Technology Committee
Second Friday of each month at
8:00 a.m.

Chicago Area Pharmacy Directors Network Dinner
Bi-monthly in odd numbered months with dates to be determined. Invitation only.

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preceptor. If you have been asked to give a presentation at a department or committee meeting, provide the opportunity for team members to get involved in delivering the presentation.

Remind them that they are the experts.

Some team members may be a little hesitant to take center stage. They may need some encouragement and a reminder that they have the skills and the training to do a great job. It is important for team members to have confidence in their role and to establish strong relationships with key customers and stakeholders.

Pave the way.

It is important that your customers and stakeholders understand why they may be interacting with your team rather than you directly; or why you are providing the opportunity for your team member to present at a meeting. This also demonstrates to your team and customers that you trust the talents of your team members.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

You need to ensure your team is prepared to deliver recommendations or presentations. This means you have to take the time to practice with your team on how to have those interactions with your customers. In order to have a positive outcome, you need to provide clear direction to the team and coach them on delivery of the message. This will also allow you to provide feedback and instill confidence in the team member.

Elevating your team also means finding the right people, setting the culture, and leading by example. These fundamentals will ensure your team is performing at the top of their ability.

- Pick the right people – make sure you have the right person in the right seat. Outline the key responsibilities of the role and hold the team accountable.
- Inspire – inspire the people around you to work at the top of their ability. Provide the inspiration to take their practice to the next level.
- Celebrate – take the time to celebrate the wins your team achieves. Showing appreciation for a job well done keeps everyone motivated to continue pushing forward.
- What is their “why”? – take the time to remind the team of their “whys”. Why did they decide to be a pharmacy technician or clinical pharmacist? Why do they have a passion for it? What are they hoping to achieve?


Preparing the team to practice at the top of their ability and advance to new roles is every team member’s responsibility. Fostering teamwork, collaboration, and excellence is key for a high performing team. I encourage you to take the time to reflect on how you can use these tips to impact your team and elevate their performance.

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