

Case Study: Leading Organization Renewal

“We needed our management people to function as a team.”

After one year as president, John White received a performance grade of “A+” from his management team. He got it for demonstrating a solid commitment to transform his team into a unit, working and thinking as one. Here’s how he did it.

When I first joined Floyd Memorial (New Albany, IN), I knew the managers needed an on-going and intensive management development program. It had to do more than teach skills and techniques; it also had to produce a feeling of “esprit de corps”. We looked long and hard to find the right vehicle to produce such a transformation. That Winter, I saw Dr. Clay Sherman at the ACHE Congress presenting the topic, “Creating Organizational Excellence”. I connected with his words immediately, and knew that could be our hospital. So I brought Clay in to do his course, The Uncommon Leader.

The things I like best are the reactions of our managers and the results they are now getting. People enjoy Clay, but more importantly they can see immediate results. All kinds of things have been turning around. We are getting great comments from patients and their families, who feel in their hearts that we’re here for them. The whole community recognizes the changes that have taken place.

The Uncommon Leader course proved to be the team that they were valuable to me. We knew the program was an investment in the future of our people and our business. We could have spent the same money by sending our people to outside classes. Instead we had 70 people hearing the same thing at the same time. It allowed for a spin-off of relationships that wouldn’t have otherwise happened. I think the program is

tough minded and has tough love. We work our folks hard, but at the same time we love them a lot, too.

During the program, we got rid of the nonsense and unshackled our management team. Decisions are made deeper within the departments, and more creative results occur. Departments are solving their own problems. For the first time, our people really know each other, and not just by name. They all know they’re here for one cause—the good of the patient.

The whole institution is running smoother because the managers are running smoother. They feel more comfortable managing because they know how to do it. I believe that management is truly a profession and a science. A year ago, if you had asked our people what their jobs were, most would have given their technical titles. Now they consider themselves managers.

The course has been a key to achieving our goals and laying a foundation for results. Management development is driving our organizational development. Many competitors are asking how we’re doing it. We just tell them lots of good, hard work. There are tons of seminars and management programs out there, but none of them light a fire under the team, nor do they have Dr. Sherman. He doesn’t make you rely on him with every problem. He taught us how to do it ourselves.