

### Six Key Leadership Traits for Hospital Leadership

Modern research has identified traits most useful for management and administration in large organizations. Each of the following are associated with managerial effectiveness:

#### *Energy Level and Stress Tolerance*

This is mostly common sense. A large hospital will expose a leader to high stress and difficult decisions that can mean life or death. The person who can remain calm should make the best decisions, and survive the job (Yukl, 2006a).

#### *Self-Confidence*

Leaders with self-confidence are more likely to attempt difficult tasks and set challenging objectives. They take more initiative and produce results (Paglis & Green, 2002). These leaders are more persistent; they pursue difficult objectives, regardless of setbacks. Their optimism likely will be contagious to peers, subordinates and superiors (Kipnis & Lane, 1962).

#### *Internal Locus of Control*

Do you think events are largely within or control, or determined mostly by fate? Leaders with an internal locus of control (internals) take more responsibility for their actions, plan proactively and take initiative. They are more flexible and adaptive, and learn from their mistakes. Internals are more effective in categories such as profitability and sales growth (Yukl, 2006b).

#### *Emotional Stability and Maturity*

A person who is emotionally mature has more stable emotions, is less prone to mood swings, and is more receptive to criticism. S/he learns from mistakes. Emotionally secure people maintain cooperative relationships with peers, subordinates and superiors. They understand their own strengths and weaknesses and have a desire to improve (Yukl, 2006b).

*Personal Integrity*

“I will do exactly what I say I will do when I say I will do it. If I change my mind, I will tell you well in advance so you will not be harmed by my actions” (McCall & Lombardo, 1983).

A person with personal integrity is honest, ethical and trustworthy.

*Power Motivation*

In large organizations, a need for power is strongly correlated with advancement to higher levels of management. Managers with socialized power orientation are usually more mature than those who seek power for personal gain. Socialized power involves seeking power to build up the organization. The leader uses a participative style of leadership. They open doors so subordinates can accomplish tasks (McClelland, 1975).

*Need for Affiliation*

This has a negative correlation with managerial effectiveness. Such leaders will not let work get in the way of their interpersonal relationships. They avoid making unpopular decisions and dispense reward to gain approval, not motivate (Yukl, 2006c)

**Strategies for Applying Principles of Trait Theories***Maintain Self-Awareness*

Be honest with yourself. Evaluate yourself according to the traits above.

*Develop Relevant Skills*

Once you acknowledge your weaknesses and strengths, go back to the list of traits and work on perfecting them. Focus on methods that will best serve the hospital. Be motivated toward change, but put the needs of the hospital (and consequently, patients) higher than your need for personal advancement.

With a mature, proper emotional demeanor toward the job, you will not get upset over situations that do not affect your goals. Hospitals employees are naturally motivated to achieve maximal performance. Encourage employees who display extraordinary concern for improving patients' conditions.

Finally, self-confidence has been shown to be contagious. Spend time with each department, discussing concerns, goals, and achievements. When you understand the "others" position, you will act more confidently, which will spread to the staff.

Finally, understand you cannot be all things to all people. Others can do things much better than you. Surround yourself with competent people. It takes self-confidence and maturity to admit when others know more than you, but in the end, the job will be done better, and patients will benefit.

#### References

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