

RURAL HOSPITAL RENAISSANCE

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INTRODUCTION

A Blueprint For Success

In Florence, Italy, at the close of the Middle Ages, in the 14th Century, a momentous event occurred. Spreading throughout Europe, a relatively sudden and pervasive renewal of learning and culture took place. This movement is referred to as “The Renaissance.” (“rebirth”). Universities sprang up; art and literature began to flourish. This period spawned such giants as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Erasmus, Donatello and Raphael to name a few. The term “Renaissance,” is used today to highlight revitalization or renewal and can be applied to individuals, and institutions or organizations, including hospitals.

A cultural Renaissance in health care is currently taking place. There is a renewed focus on maximizing the patient experience. This renewal is accomplished through empowered frontline engagement led by total management engagement. The magic

consists of building positive connections between patients and frontline staff as well as positive connections between management and staff. It is nothing less than achieving a breakthrough in the patient experience to transfer the future of health care from decline and survival to growth and revival.

My mission for the book is to empower readers as patient relationship experts to implement a blueprint to become a Rural 5 Star Hospital of Choice.

To assist you in that journey, I have included two invaluable tools:

- Addendum C
A self scoring Rural Hospital Assessment tool that will enable you to complete your very own “Survival Index”, as a valuable benchmark in your journey.
- Addendum D
A study of HCAHPS Best Practices in High Performing Critical Access Hospitals authored by StratisHealth.

This 100% relevant research provides an extraordinary guide to rural hospital leaders wishing to improve and I extend my enthusiastic gratitude to StratisHealth for their authorship and the permission to reprint.

CHAPTER 1

Two Ways To Grow Market Share

There are only two ways to grow your market share:

#1 Provide New Services

#2 Word Of Mouth Advertising

There are obviously many constraints to developing new services. So, it's more useful to turn our attention to "word of mouth." How important are word of mouth recommendations to you?

Have you ever gone to a movie based on a word of mouth recommendation? I often go to movies based on

recommendations from friends. It's the same for books or articles to read. How about selecting a handyman? In the face of no evidence to the contrary, we all tend to follow word of mouth recommendations from family and friends and what we find on the internet. How much more important is this when selecting a hospital or residential facility for yourself or a loved one?

In the world of health care there are at least 16 websites that are available for access by our patients. In other words there are a lot of ways they can check on our service:

- www.besthospitaladvisor.com
- www.caring.com
- www.caredash.com
- www.google.com
- www.healthgrades.com
- www.ratehospitals.com
- www.ratemds.com
- www.topdocs.com
- www.wellness.com
- www.vitals.com
- www.webmd.com
- www.yelp.com
- www.yellowpages.com
- www.zocdoc.com
- www.whynotthebest.org
- www.topdoctors.com

The ratings from these sites provide transparency of the customer experience in health care institutions for everyone to see. More and more people are consulting these sites to guide their decision making.

Yet, with all of this internet technology available ...

“People influence people. Nothing influences people more than a recommendation from a trusted friend. A trusted referral influences people more than the best broadcast message. A trusted referral is the Holy Grail of advertising.”

– Mark Zuckerberg, CEO, Facebook

In rural areas especially, patients, neighbours, friends, and family offering recommendations is all that matters when selecting a health care institution.

Remember – Advertising will not bring back people who don't like you.

Having placed about one million dollars of advertising in a year, I was once asked how much of it works. I replied, “About half.” I was asked which half and I had to reply that I didn't know. But what I did know is that recommendations from a satisfied customer or patient do work.

“A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is. It is what the consumers tell each other it is.”

***– Scott Cook, CEO and
co-founder of Intuit***

Here are some startling numbers: “84% of consumers say they either completely or somewhat trust recommendations from family and friends about patient services.”

And... “88% of people trust online reviews by other consumers as much as they trust recommendations from personal contacts.” (www.getambassador.com)

In these days of social media exposure, your service is fish-bowl transparent. People are beginning to trust what they find online as much or even more than personal recommendations.

What are your patients reading about your hospital?

“Are your patients and their families telling their story of their experiences the way we hope they will?”

*Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bows,
“Raving Fans”*



Recommendation:

Set a personal example to engage and influence everyone to ensure that no patient leaves your institution without experiencing a kind, compassionate experience.