Session 114X
Effectively Leading a More Experienced Workforce: A Perspective From a "Young" CEO

Presented by:
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Effectively Leading a More Experienced Workforce: 
A Perspective From a “Young” CEO

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Disclosure of Relevant Financial Relationships

The following faculty of this continuing education activity has no relevant financial relationships with commercial interests to disclose:

• Nicholas R. Tejeda, FACHE
Presenter

- Nicholas Tejeda, MHSA, FACHE
Agenda

- Learning Objectives
- The “Workforce”
- Generation, Age and Experience
- Real World Examples
- Recommendations
- Discussion

Learning Objectives

- Learn the common mistakes, misconceptions and assumptions made by executives who are tasked with leading a more experienced workforce
- Learn the processes, skills and behaviors necessary for the executive to overcome the aforementioned challenges
Executive development is increasingly a focus for all organizations.
The Business Case for Executive Development is Well Known

- Improve recruitment and retention
- Sustain and leverage institutional knowledge
- Strengthen employee engagement
- Drive organizational performance across all metrics

The Ideal Outcome…
Typical Reactions to a “Young” Leader

- Shock
- Anger
- Confusion
- Pessimism
- Cynicism
- Frustration
- Insulted
- Withdrawal
- Guarded
- Apathy
The “Workforce” of a Hospital

- Employees
- Physicians
- Governing Board
- Volunteers
- Community Leaders

Three Forces Impacting the Perspective of a “Young” Leader

- Generational Dynamics
- Age
- Experience
Generational Dynamics

For the first time in modern history, workplace demographics now span four generations.
Age is a factor as well.

Age

“People like me in our 60’s say, ‘Oh, those people in their 20’s think they know it all.’

But that isn't a generational difference — that's just a difference in age.”

-Thomas C. Dolan, PhD, FACHE, CAE
But what about “experience”?
“The only source of knowledge is experience.”

Albert Einstein

“YOUNG PEOPLE ARE JUST SMARTER.”
- Mark Zuckerberg
Experience Drives Perceptions

70% of more experienced employees are dismissive of younger workers' abilities

Nearly 50% of lesser experienced employees are dismissive of older colleagues’ abilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Fresh Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional History</td>
<td>Little Political Baggage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Instinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proven Track Record</td>
<td>Desire to Prove Herself/Himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to Contribute to Organizational Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride in Performance</td>
<td>Need to Feel Valued in the Workplace</td>
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</tbody>
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Generational differences, age and experience all contribute to the challenges faced by a “young” leader…

…but how does this manifest itself in the real world?

Five examples for your enjoyment.
“I will not report to him.”

Key Lessons

- Critical to collaboratively manage the communication about change
- Young leaders tend to micro-manage (or at least people assume so)
- More tenured employees may be uncomfortable or embarrassed to report to a younger individual
“I am going to have to change your diapers.”

Key Lessons

- Present yourself with executive decorum, particularly at beginning
- Don’t assume your staff is comfortable allowing you to learn from them
- Prepare for the assumption that inexperience equates to ignorance
“You look sooo young!?”

Key Lessons

- Be prepared to respond to comments about your youth
- Accept the fact that some people perceive that youth is contradictory to strong leadership
- Don’t assume appearance of youth will quickly be forgotten
“Have they given up on this hospital?”

Key Lessons

• Portray an unbridled sense of optimism about the future of the organization

• Address the concern that your position is a training ground for leaders

• It isn’t necessary to prove you “belong” (chip on shoulder)
“I just don’t think I can do this anymore.”

Key Lessons

- Clearly communicate how you reach decisions, particularly upon arrival
- Carefully avoid actions that appear to benefit yourself but not organization
- Gain trust of direct reports before moving on to other stakeholders
The Things I Learned: Four Principles

• Integrity
• Respect
• Curiosity
• Communication

Principle #1: Integrity

• Admit that you are young and have less experience…everyone else already knows it
• Be willing to learn from a mistake
• Avoid self-entitlement…don’t be full of yourself
• Act on behalf of the organization
Principle #2: Respect

- Learn from the past and integrate with the future
- Ensure that every member of the team feels valued
- Run a good meeting

Principle #3: Curiosity

- Never stop being curious
- Stand your ground when probing for information
- Learn from tenured employees
- Allow yourself to be dynamic
Principle #4: Communication

• Be transparent about your work style
• Remain calm in the storm
• Don’t play games if you are intimidated
• Always remember that it is not personal
• Learn how to tell a story

All of this being said…

Don’t forget about the Choluteca Bridge.
Nicholas R. Tejeda

Nicholas Tejeda is the Chief Executive Officer at The Hospitals of Providence Transmountain Campus, a member of Tenet Healthcare. This is the nation’s newest teaching hospital that opened in January 2017 in partnership with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso.

Nicholas is Past Chair of ACHE’s National Early Careerist Committee and has previously served on ACHE Chapter Boards and Regent Advisory Councils. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the AHA’s Institute for Diversity in Health Management and a member of the AHA’s Regional Policy Board #7. He was named a Modern Healthcare 2011 “Up & Comer”. The Federation of American Hospitals awarded Nicholas the 2013 Corris Boyd Diversity & Leadership Award. Most recently, Modern Healthcare named him as a 2016 Recipient of the inaugural “Top 10 to Watch” Minority Healthcare Executives. He is the recipient of the ACHE 2017 Robert S. Hudgens Memorial Award for Young Healthcare Executive of the Year.

Nicholas earned his MHSA from the University of Kansas Medical Center and a bachelor’s degree in Business Management from Wichita State University.

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