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Welcome to Management Focus

... and welcome to the May/June issue.

The legal, ethical and human resource issues that surround the international recruitment of nurses have received widespread coverage in the media and nursing literature. Although organizations which do foreign recruitment invest significant resources, little has been written about the challenges in the transition of foreign nurses into healthcare practice environments outside their countries of origin.

This article outlines the experiences, best practices and leadership development needs of ten nursing leaders, from different geographic areas in the USA, who work with foreign nurses.

Jim Andrew and Hal Sirkin are both Senior Vice Presidents at Boston Consulting Group's Chicago Office. Jim leads BCG's global activities in the area of innovation and has written and spoken extensively on the topic, while Hal is world-wide leader of their Global Operations Practice, and has extensive experience working on innovation, strategy, operations and IT issues.

According to their new book *Payback: Reaping the Rewards of Innovation*, 90 per cent of senior executives say that innovation-driven growth is integral to their company's success, and most report that they're spending more on innovation efforts every year. But nearly half say they are unhappy with their return on these investments. Find out about the inspiration behind *Payback*, and the differences between ideas or creativity and innovation in this exclusive interview.

In this issue of *Management Matters*, our expert discusses what steps to take in order to encourage your employees to stay with your organization, and ensure that they want to perform to their highest possible levels.

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Best wishes,

Debbie Read

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Supervising foreign nurses: leadership development needs

The legal, ethical and human resource issues that surround the international recruitment of nurses have received widespread coverage in the media and nursing literature. Nurses in leadership positions in the USA continue to express concern about the use of foreign nurse recruitment to address the nursing shortage.

Despite the controversy that surrounds this topic, it is likely that the recruitment of foreign nurses will remain a viable strategy to fill vacancies in the USA nurse workforce.

Although organizations who do foreign recruitment invest significant resources, little has been written about the challenges in the transition of foreign nurses into healthcare practice environments outside their countries of origin. Successful transition of foreign nurses into the healthcare environment of another country requires supportive leadership. However, this does not always occur.

A qualitative approach

Ten nursing leaders from different geographic areas in the USA were telephone-interviewed to obtain information. Additionally, the Director of Global Nursing for Johns Hopkins Hospital and University and a Nurse Fulbright Scholar who had recently returned from teaching in India were also interviewed.

All ten of the nurse leaders interviewed had direct experience with foreign nurses assigned to their units over the past two years. The direct contact ranged from two nurses to 40 nurses. In the past, most of the recruitment had been from the Philippines but more recently there has been growing recruitment from India. Other countries less frequently mentioned for recruitment included China, the Caribbean and Australia.

Major challenges

Most nursing leaders report that nursing in other countries is significantly different, especially in the areas of nurse autonomy, accountability for patient assessment and technology. In India and China, physicians are present on the patient care units at all times. Unlike the USA, nurses rarely do any independent assessment and assertiveness is not encouraged.

The healthcare delivery systems in other countries frequently include large numbers of patient care assistants, unlike the USA where the majority of staff are professionally licensed. Direct care is often provided by family members in India, China and the Philippines. Foreign nurses have told their US managers that the pace of care is much slower and lengths of stay are longer in other countries.

Many foreign nurses have not been exposed to newer technologies or computerized charting. Nursing leaders who supervised critical care units and emergency departments reported

that foreign nurses, even those with extensive critical care experience, had difficulty working in high acuity areas and were often transferred to other areas after arrival. Foreign nurses who have worked in the UK or Saudi Arabia prior to coming to the USA are able to adapt more rapidly because these care delivery systems are more like the USA.

Orientation needs

Many nursing leaders agree that most foreign nurses need extensive orientation beyond the usual hospital orientation. Several hospital corporations have international offices in India and provide up to three months of onsite education and orientation. One of the nurse leaders was able to visit the facility built by her corporation and noted that they had brought state-of-the-art equipment to India to educate nurses who would be placed in critical care areas. These immersion experiences were considered to be best practices in helping to facilitate transition by managers who have the facilities to implement them.

Most of the leaders interviewed felt that general medical-surgical units are the best initial placement for foreign nurses. When foreign nurses are placed in critical care and other specialty areas, they usually need to attend the subspecialty orientation classes intended for nurses with no experience in the area. Nursing leaders reported that the foreign nurses in their work areas were

“Facilitating the growth and development of staff is an important function of nursing leadership, and enlightened nursing leadership is critical to the successful transition of foreign nurses.”



extremely receptive to education. Having nurses in the work environment, who have made a similar transition in their professional lives, assist in orientation was considered a best practice, as was extensive nurturing of their transition, not only professional but also personal.

Development needs of managers

Nurse managers are often surprised about the gap between their initial expectations of the performance of foreign nurses and the realities of the cultural transition. Most managers interviewed had not received any specific education about how they could facilitate foreign nurse transition but felt that this would have been extremely helpful. Based on their experiences, areas where managers need development and education included the following:

- power-distance relationships with managers and reluctance to ask questions;
- coaching to build assertiveness skills;
- nursing practice in other countries;
- encouraging the practice and speaking of English in clinical settings;
- basic cultural norms of the cultures where recruitment is taking place; and
- realistic expectations.

The nurse leaders interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about their experience with foreign nurses. They

commented frequently that the nurses were smart, willing to learn, loyal, hard working and presented fewer disciplinary issues. They add to the richness of diversity in an institution. The majority also reported that the retention of these nurses on their original units was very high.

Recommendations

Facilitating the growth and development of staff is an important function of nursing leadership, and enlightened nursing leadership is critical to the successful transition of foreign nurses. Current leadership knowledge and strategies that support the needs of a nursing workforce educated in the USA may not be as effective with nurses recruited from foreign countries.

Ideally, nurse managers who supervise foreign nurses should be encouraged to attend a formal continuing education program, which will:

- Provide an overview of cultural differences and differences in nursing practice between the USA and countries where foreign nurses have been educated.
- Present common issues and challenges facing foreign nurses as they transition to practice in the USA.
- Describe best practices from other healthcare agencies to promote the successful transition of foreign nurses.
 - Identify coaching and mentoring

strategies for nurse leaders, educators and preceptors to overcome competency gaps and resolve cross-cultural issues.

- Review common case scenarios involving foreign nurse transition and apply interventions for the issues and challenges presented.

The ability of managers to successfully coach foreign-recruited nurses will become a skill that is even more crucial in the future. With the changing demographics in the US population, a significant proportion of the workforce in all healthcare disciplines, including nursing, are likely to be immigrants.

Providing supportive leadership to foreign nurses for a successful acculturation into health care agencies will not only bring valued skills into organizations but also improve health care for patients. Developing nurse managers who are capable of meeting this challenge is an investment that should be part of the strategy of every healthcare organization that does foreign recruitment. □

This is a shortened version of “Leadership development needs of managers who supervise foreign nurses”, which originally appeared in *Leadership in Health Services*, Volume 20 Number 1, 2007.

The author is Rose O. Sherman, Nursing Leadership Institute, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida, USA.

James Andrew and Harold Sirkin: reaping the rewards of innovation

Interview by Alistair Craven



Jim Andrew is a Senior Vice President at Boston Consulting Group's Chicago Office.

Jim leads BCG's global activities in the area of innovation and has written and spoken extensively on the topic. He is lead author of the recent book *Payback*, published by Harvard Business School Press, and he co-authored an article on innovation in the *Harvard Business Review*. Jim has also written for *BusinessWeek*, *The Economist*, *Business 2.0*, and *Fast Company*. He holds an MBA with distinction from Harvard Business School and a BS with highest honours from the University of Illinois.



Hal Sirkin is also a Senior Vice President at the Boston Consulting Group and world-wide leader of their Global Operations Practice.

Hal has extensive experience working on innovation, strategy, operations, and IT issues and is co-author (with Jim Andrew) of *Payback*. He has written numerous articles for publications such as the *Harvard Business Review* and *Knowledge@Wharton*. He holds an MBA from the University of Chicago (first in class) and a BS in accounting and finance, *summa cum laude*, from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He is a certified public accountant.

Q: Hello and welcome! Can you tell us about the inspiration behind your new book *Payback: Reaping the Rewards of Innovation*?

A: We wrote *Payback* to help address what we think is the most important problem that companies face today: how to get a better return on their investments in innovation. Every year we do an innovation survey with *BusinessWeek* magazine. We consistently find that innovation is a top strategic priority for senior executives, and most report that they're spending more on their innovation efforts every year. But nearly half of all companies will actually admit to being unhappy with the return they get from these investments (and who knows how many are not willing to admit it?!).

We've worked with hundreds of companies around the world, in virtually every industry. Most of them are very good at what they do and many of them are truly world-class. But we've seen only a few that are operating at – or even close to – their potential when it comes to getting a return on their innovation spending. And because of that they can't maximize their shareholder value, grow at a rate they'd like, or respond as effectively as they could to competitive pressure. That realization was the inspiration for *Payback*.

Q: What are the differences between ideas or creativity and innovation?

A: The difference is payback. Innovation is about more than just clever ideas or creative impulses. True innovation must lead – directly or indirectly – to increased profits. But most companies don't have a disciplined

process for turning ideas into cash. An effective innovation-to-cash process is the foundation of successful innovation, which we define as *profitable* innovation. Even when companies recognize this, they're often unsure how to determine which innovation efforts are on the road to payback, and which are destined to become “cash traps” – endless sink-holes of cash.

The solution to this problem is to identify and control the factors that affect payback. The tool we offer in our book is the cash curve, a reality check for innovation efforts. We also recommend that companies develop a robust set of metrics that provides a clear picture not only of the *outputs* of innovation – cash payback and indirect benefits – but also of the *inputs*, such as time and money, and the overall effectiveness of the innovation *process*.

Q: How difficult was it for you to write a book on innovation which takes account of the plethora of business types around the world?

A: Most companies have the same problems with regard to innovation. Their size, business, industry, or geographical location may be different, but almost all companies confuse good, or even great, ideas with innovation, and would like to get more payback from their innovation investments. Most need more discipline in the process they use to turn ideas into cash. Fixing that problem alone will dramatically improve the return they get from their innovation spending. Virtually every company can generate real value through successful innovation. There

are many different dimensions in which a company can innovate – products, services, customer experience, process and business model. All can generate substantial cash payback. Innovation is the primary source of value in an organization – and absolutely essential for growth, profits, and long-term competitive advantage.

Q: From your research for the book, which organizations impressed you most about their approach to innovation, and why?

A: Through our work and research, we've discovered many companies that are very successful innovators. Among those that most impressed us are:

- Samsung, which transformed itself from a maker of inexpensive, undifferentiated products into one of the most respected – and innovative – companies in the world;
- BMW, whose tightly aligned organization supports innovation and payback at every level, from strategy to measurement;
- Seagate, which has mastered the “integrator” model of innovation by doing everything in-house;
- Microsoft, the greatest innovator in terms of payback in business history. □

To read the full interview with James Andrew and Harold Sirkin, visit <http://first.emeraldinsight.com> and select the “Strategy” community.

Management Matters

Welcome to our Q&A section – *Management Matters*, where you can find actionable advice on current management topics. An article published in a previous issue of *Management Focus* claims that chief executives of most organizations rarely miss an opportunity to remind their audience that their people are their most precious asset. However, many still do not put this thinking into practice.

Q. What steps would you take to encourage your employees to stay with your organization and ensure that they want to perform to their highest possible levels?

The declaration of human capital as an organization's most important asset is accepted as something of a business cliché these days. As with several other bombastic catchphrases, its meaning has been somewhat diluted by its appearance on countless corporate websites. But those organizations adopting the mantra without a genuine sense of purpose are doing themselves – and their people – a significant injustice.

Encouraging loyalty and high performance invariably requires an effective method of developing inspiration and a belief in a sense of purpose. Accomplishing this in a multinational organization employing thousands of people is hardly a simple task, but at a fundamental level it is the direct

responsibility of the chief executive. After all, a lack of belief in top management will soon get the gossip flowing at the water-cooler. During her days at the helm of Hewlett-Packard, Carly Fiorina's inability to convince both the board and the factory floor of her quest ostracized her, and is often quoted as a significant part of her eventual downfall.

Those wishing to avoid a culture of ambivalence need to take note of a few key pointers. First, hire a no-nonsense and personable chief executive. The days of the ivory tower occupied by an aloof and unapproachable CEO are long gone. Today's leader must be direct, transparent and accountable. JetBlue's David Neeleman runs his own blog on the airline's website. In it

he is frank and forthcoming – even linking to videos he has recorded to communicate with his audience. Of course such an approach will not be able to mask basic deficiencies in product, service delivery or strategy, but excel in these areas and the behaviour of your CEO really can help to pave the way for a culture of high performance.

Loyalty and high performance are also factors of a solid training and development structure. In hard times it is all too common to see the training budget slashed first, but doing so could be disastrous for morale. Try to do your utmost to ensure that training programmes are readily available, clearly linked to the objectives of your organization, and that the results are measurable. Sounds simple on paper, but you will probably need expert assistance to get this one right.

Last, but far from least, is communication. How many times have you read about barriers to effective communication and the dreaded "silo" mentality in the business press? It is still far too common to hear about rigidly hierarchical management structures which only serve to stifle creativity and progression. Get your top management team together and find ways in which you can flatten the boundaries and encourage a truly participative culture – right throughout your organization. At the end of the day it is more often than not your front-line employees who can help guide management in the right direction.

Whilst many factors will undoubtedly remain outside your control, there is nevertheless plenty you can do to make your company a great one to work for. The question is: are you up to the challenge? □

If you would like to send our resident expert a question, write an e-mail to Web Content Manager Debbie Read at dread@emeraldinsight.com and the best submissions will be featured in a future issue of *Management Focus*.

point of view

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Final thought ...

“Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.”

Peter F. Drucker

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