SOLUTION: Managing Up



MANAGING UP IS A TECHNIQUE THAT COMMUNICATES POSITIVE INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER CAREGIVERS OR DEPARTMENTS.

"Managing Up" is positioning others in a positive light. It is a form of communication that aligns your skills and those of your co-workers, other departments and physicians to the goals of your organization. The opposite of "managing up" is "managing down" which creates negative impressions of individuals and/or departments.

The technique of managing up is a simple, effective method of lowering the anxiety your customers are facing and increasing their confidence in all who serve them. In healthcare, we can use this technique to do a very positive hand-off between care providers. We want to increase the faith that our patients and their families have in each of our employees, physicians, leaders, and organizations every day.

What if the opposite of managing up happened in a surgical setting? What if a surgeon was running late one day, and the nurse getting the patient ready for surgery (you know, when you are going under anesthesia where you have no control over what happens to you, just like flying in an airplane) decides to throw the surgeon under the bus?

"Doctor so and so is late for your operation today. He is always running late. Evidently he cannot manage to get his kids out of the house and onto the bus on time."

Okay, this man is cutting you open! How much faith do you have in his ability to do that when he cannot get a 6th grader on a bus? Those employees who work in the public eye, and in a service industry, can sometimes decide to manage others down in order to take the blame for poor service or results off themselves. The, "It's not me that is the cause of your pain or discomfort, it's him" tactic.

Managing Up is a technique that communicates positive information about other employees or departments. "Managing Up" is positioning others in a positive light. It is a form of communication that aligns your skills and those of your co-workers, other departments, and leaders to the goals of your organization. *The opposite of "managing up" is "managing down" which creates negative impressions of individuals and/or departments.*

Benefits of managing up:

- Customers feel more at ease about the coordination of the service you are providing. Patient and Families want to know there is a team that cares for each other working for them.
- Co-workers have a head start in gaining the customer's confidence. Managing up is a must during bedside interdepartmental and shift to shift reports.
- Patient and their families know they have come to the right place. They know they are in a place where people genuinely like each other and trust each other and the service transitions are seamless. Much of my job in the ED as a leader was to assess the family waiting in the lobby when a crisis or resuscitation was going on in one of my ED rooms. Our neck of the woods is beloved for its FEET and YARDS of pristine white snow to play in. People travel across our great country to visit us, and ride snowmobiles. At least one of these precious visitors a week would have a snowmobile vs. car or tree

incident. As we were working to save a life, I would go to the lobby to see if there were any witnesses to the event, as well as to manage up my hard-working team. I knew that likely my audience when I arrived used the Cleveland Clinic for their urgent care needs. They were from large cities with Level One trauma centers and a chopper parked on the rooftop. They were likely extremely concerned they were not in the right place for trauma resuscitation.

Make those you serve feel very comfortable in your care and service. No one is looking for a hero; they want to be in a place where there is professional courtesy, trust, and respect. I would begin each of these conversations with:

> "I want to let you know that your son is receiving the very best care at this time. I have the A TEAM on, Dr Edwards is a board-certified Emergency physician, and Dr Rechner is a certified trauma general surgeon. Your son could not be in better hands. My nurses and paramedics are all certified in trauma and we unfortunately have a lot of practice dealing with this type of trauma. I want to make you comfortable with his care. What questions can I answer for you?

Successful and Sustainable Launch of Managing Up, and all Positive Communication Standards

There is no one successful way to launch a positive communication standard such as Managing Up. It will depend on your organization's culture, and communication web. How have truly successful changes that frontline employees adopt readily into practice been launched? We suggest you do not rely on only one method of communication and education of the positive communication standards. Adoption and Diffusion

theories tell us that your leaders and employees will accept a change in practice at various rates. Perseverance is the name of the game when it comes to implementing the positive communication standards. We do have some best practices our partners have used successfully we would be happy to share with you.

The most important piece in the successful launch of any positive communication standard is for the patient experience, (or clinical team) to create excitement and challenge around the positive communication standard; and then for the leaders to take the baton from the teams. What we mean by taking the baton is for the leader to transfer the innovative and creative change ideas and put them in place in the standard day to day operations of the various departments. This can be different in each department. The leaders must know how to gain support for the communication standard from their employees. Questions at a staff meeting may be, "How will managing up work here? How do we do a positive hand off between shifts or departments?" Who do we have a chance to manage up each day in our work?"

Validation of Managing Up, and all Positive Communication Standards

The Capstone model for change means not only providing the PDSA step of study-adjust for each positive communication standard, but validation that the positive communication standard is happening in every department, and every day.

Leaders cannot assume that because they communicated a change and requested the change be put in place; that it actually will happen. That's just not normal life.

Remember the 4 ways that leaders can validate that a change put in place, such as the implementation of a positive communication standard like Managing Up:

- Observe employees at work; make sure they are managing up. (both themselves and others)
- Round on employees and ask if they have implemented Managing Up in their daily work.

- Watch the data that would indicate that managing up is occurring. How are your teamwork scores in both the patient and employee engagement surveys?
- Leaders validate by rounding on patients and asking them if the change is happening.

It is amazing the good will and positivity that managing up spreads in your organization. Slay the SILO's with this very effective positive communication standard!