

# SOLUTION: Senior Leader Rounding

Senior leaders impart a vision for where the organization is going. They infuse pride in what the organization is achieving. Employees want to know that their senior leaders are there for them. While frontline employees and senior leaders may not develop a relationship close enough to know what motivates both parties, they want a relationship based on respect and approachability.

Many a senior leader has created time in their schedule for “management by wandering around.” This is not what we refer to as **purposeful** rounding. Senior leaders have the responsibility to communicate the mission and vision of the organization and connect how current events are in alignment with the strategy of the organization. The interactions of the CEO and senior leaders with employees are very important. Senior leaders should be prepared for their time rounding with employees and should avoid the urge to act as a hero and solve problems for employees and frontline leaders. Senior leader rounding is not a rescue mission!

The most successful examples of Senior Leader Rounding we have seen are those that communicate mission, vision, Values to the frontline, and also are done with great purpose and intent. Senior Leaders may struggle with making their rounding intentional and a valuable resource for both the frontline leaders and employees, as well as the Senior Leader themselves.



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SOLUTION: Senior Leader Rounding 1

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## GREAT IDEAS FOR SENIOR LEADER ROUNDING:

### 1 Zone Validation Rounding:

When you communicate to the frontline employees that you are present in their department to validate a change that has been communicated through a variety of ways to the frontline, it sends a powerful message. That message is “We believe in SBAR communication, Safe Hand-offs, and Managing Up (as examples) - We want you to know the importance of these initiatives. “Senior Leaders in this instance are not “spying” on employees, but rather checking in on the diffusion and adoption of their change process. Each department, when Zone Rounding is complete is assigned a score, and the leaders are very transparently given their scores. Meanwhile, the Senior Leaders are seen in departments other than their own, and are seen as approachable, confident, competent and knowledgeable.

### 2 Make Senior Leaders the Safety Champions:

Round with safety in mind. Safety and quality leaders tell us that the voice of the CEO and Senior Leaders when focusing on ONE safety initiative at a time creates change to diffuse more rapidly and is very effective.

### 3 “Skip Level” Rounding:

“Skip Level” Rounding. This is when a Senior Leader takes the time to dig into the culture of a department that reports to them through a leader. You are “skipping” a level of leadership when doing this form of rounding. The Senior Leader, again, is not there to rescue, or problem solve but to assess. The key to successful skip level rounding is to communicate transparency about the outcomes and sharing with a frontline department leader their assessment.



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## EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR “SKIP-LEVEL” ROUNDING:



The Richland Hospital, Inc.

### **Skip Rounding Form**

Employee:

Dept.:

Date:

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### **Rounding Questions**

**What is something that you’ve accomplished or are you working on that you’re the most proud of?**

**On a scale of 1-10, how are you feeling about working here lately? If not a 10, what would make it a 10?**

**What changes or improvements might help you in your every day work environment?**

**What are your views of where we’re headed as an organization? What do you think the hospital’s goals are?**

**How do you feel the work you do contributes to those goals?**

**What are your professional goals for the coming year? Next 3 years?**

**Is there anything else I should know or any questions I can answer for you?**

**Is there anyone I can recognize who’s gone out of their way to help you, patients, or your department lately?**



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The frequency of senior leader rounding is often less than frontline leaders. Even though senior leaders may have many direct reports, their meeting schedule and commitments often limits their availability to create daily time for rounding. Senior leaders rounding once a week, coupled with staying connected to the day-to-day operations by reading rounding documentation of front-line leaders, is often sufficient.

Frontline leaders can also assist senior leaders by coordinating employee rounding time with a senior leader. Some frontline leaders do this by simply announcing that a senior leader will be in the department at a specific time that day and a sign-up sheet is made available.

It is best when the frontline leaders know that a senior leader will be rounding in their department. This allows for some preparation to take place (i.e., the CEO may be rounding with an employee that has just disciplined...the CEO should know about this in advance). A brief standardized report format may help prepare the senior leader for rounding. This brief report or conversation between the senior leader and frontline leader could include these highlights about the department:

- Recent Accomplishments
- New Equipment
- Employees to Recognize
- Employees to Coach/Mentor
- Tough Questions/Issues
- Physician Activities/Issues
- Current Patient Satisfaction Results
- Other goal results (employee satisfaction/turnover, quality, etc.)
- Other “heads up” issues

As with all types of rounding conversations, start senior leader rounding on a positive and end on a positive as suggested below. Then, customize your rounding with a few of the suggested questions in the middle of the conversation.



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## SAMPLE SENIOR LEADER ROUNDING QUESTIONS

- Start on a positive:  
(i.e., What is working well? If there is a big initiative/project going on, what is going well with XX?)
- Options for questions (Select 2-4):
  - Ask about safety in the work environment and for customers
  - Ask about Equipment, Space, Supplies and Training needs (but don't be the hero and try to trump the leader - support the leader to resolve the need)
  - Customized question regarding improvement priorities or goals
  - May want to consider one or two of the recommended inter-departmental rounding questions especially if you are a senior leader over support-type departments (e.g., human resources, IT, environmental services/maintenance, quality, etc.)
  - Ask if there are any "burning questions" for administration regarding current or future strategic priorities, goals, or projects
  - Is there anything you think Administration should know about or any other questions you may have?
- End on a positive - Gather Recognition Opportunities:  
(i.e., Who can I recognize for doing a great job? Can you tell me a story about a co-worker that has done something amazing lately for a customer or a team member?)



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<b>Leader Standard Work</b>		<b>Zone Weekly Rounding Sheet</b> Target Audience: staff and managers		<b>Department:</b>
				<b>Date:</b>
		<b>Who</b>	<b>What recognizing for</b>	
<b>Relationships</b>	<b>Staff Member to be recognized if you see them:</b>	1		
		2		
		3		
		4		
		<b>Week of March 11th</b>		
<b>G</b>	<b>Goal/Theme:</b>	<b>SBAR</b>		
<i>Ask staff to share: How the department has implemented SBAR? Why is this important?</i>		Improve handoff communication (at end of shift, with transitions of care) To ensure patient safety		

**Building Improvement Muscle**



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<b><u>R</u></b>	<b>Reflect/Reality</b>	
<p><i>Ask staff to share a time when SBAR improved communication (you could ask if anyone should be recognized in here as well.)</i></p> <p><i>Why do you believe SBAR improved communication</i></p>		
<b><u>O</u></b>	<b>Opportunities/Options</b>	
<p><i>Ask staff to share:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A time when SBAR wasn't used and how this impacted communication?</i></li> <li>• <i>Ideas to improve use of SBAR?</i></li> </ul>		
<b><u>W</u></b>	<b>Way Forward</b>	
<p><i>What can you address to help reach the goal?</i></p> <p><i>Reflecting back on the example where SBAR could have improved communication, how do you see yourself improving your use of SBAR?</i></p>		



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**SOLUTION: Senior Leader Rounding 7**

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