

RENEWING THE HEART OF HEALTHCARE

A RESOURCE FOR HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP

Reflections from Dr. Izzo

It's All About the Patient, or Is It?



It has been my privilege to work in health care for almost twenty years now, having spoken to and advised over 400 health care organizations in four countries. If there is one phrase I hear often in my travels it is this: *"It is all about the patient."* It is meant to convey that health care organizations exist to serve the patient and this must always take priority.

Though I agree with the basic sentiment, and have even found myself saying it from time to time, I have come to the conclusion that it is not a helpful statement. What I have discovered is that it is about the patient but it is ALSO about the providers.

A healthy health care system which can provide high quality, cost effective and compassionate service requires attention to three key elements in terms of the culture of the organization. These can be imagined as three legs holding up a table, when any one of the legs is removed, the table will not be strong or stable.

The first leg is care of the patient. We must always focus on the patient and build our systems, processes, and focus around their needs. We must have high standards of compassionate service, standards which are taught, caught and regularly measured.

The second leg is the care of each other. One of my greatest realizations has been that how health care people treat each other is very important in creating a healthy health care system. The work we ask people to do in health care is difficult and by nature, highly collaborative. Many studies have shown that outcomes are better when team members are

To inquire about Dr. Izzo's speaking availability please call our office at 604-913-0649

more collaborative—from reducing errors in the OR, to fewer med errors, and so on; we know that collaborative teams mean good medicine. What's more, nurses consistently tell us in surveys that "toxic" co-workers are a major source of work dissatisfaction and stress. To have a healthy hospital it is not just about the patient it is also about the team, we must work hard to create spirited teams, where collaboration, appreciation, and standards of how we treat each other become the norm. Having worked with many new nurses for example, I am aware of how much the "team" impacts the retention of these new professionals.

But there is a third, and I believe the most neglected leg in most health care organizations, which is the care of the self. The work of health care is very rewarding but also very demanding. Living in the presence of suffering, often suffering which cannot be cured, takes its toll on health care workers. What's more, the nature of the work which is both emotionally and physically demanding. Yet few health care providers have the skills to manage their own "care." If providers are not taking care of the self or if the stress they work under is not recognized, a health care system cannot be healthy. Yet in an average year, few health care providers have opportunities to learn the skills of self-care or methods to stay compassionate amidst suffering. We assume they "know" it, but I believe it not to be the case.

So maybe we need to re-think that phrase, *"it's all about the patient."* By extension it says, *"it is not about the provider"* and this is just as unhealthy. If we focus on the patient, if we create collaborative, spirited teams, and if providers have the skills to care for themselves, only then can we meet the challenges of today's health care business.

John B. Izzo, Ph.D.

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Sacred Stories: Simple Idea, Big Impact

Many of our clients have been using a simple technique, which is to begin every meeting with a “sacred story”, where team members are invited to share a story about how someone made a difference for patients or families (or sometimes other staff members). The idea is to create “space” at every meeting for sharing stories that remind us of why we do this good work. Some organizations may not be comfortable with the word sacred and could use “stories of contribution or celebration.” What people tell us is that making room for these stories both encourages the heart but also challenges teams to provide even more compassionate service. One hint-managers should be prepared with stories the first few times and it often takes several months for the ritual to become engrained, so be persistent.

Nursing the Future: Organization Supporting New Nurses

There is a great organization growing in Canada devoted to helping new nurse graduates integrate into the nursing profession. They have held several annual conferences for new nurse graduates as well as conducting research into the best practices for new nurse integration. Their director, Judy Boychuk Duchscher, RN, Ph.D., is herself a leader in moving the conversation on the future of nursing forward. Check them out at www.nursingthefuture.ca. Dr. Izzo will present at their 2008 conference for new nurse graduates.



Dr Izzo's Nurse Week Events

Dr. Izzo is already going to be doing a nurse week event at Stanford, but still has some availability in May for nurse week celebrations. In the past, he has given talks and workshops as part of nurse week celebrations in over 100 hospitals and people always tell us that he inspired and encouraged nurses to keep the spirit in their work and to remember the difference they are making. If you want to explore having Dr. Izzo come to your organization for nurse's week, please call Leslie at 604-913-0649 or e-mail leslie@theizzogroup.com.

When Should Health Care Leaders Make Rounds?

Here is a great idea from our clients. The best time for health care managers to make rounds is after a traumatic or positive experience in their areas of responsibility. If there was a tough shift, or a disappointing clinical outcome on a unit, show up and offer your support. If something very positive happens, show up and offer your congratulations. There is nothing more meaningful than rounding soon after something important has happened. And when you go, mostly listen,

hear the good news or share the burden. That is what good rounding is all about anyway. Remember the old Swedish proverb—"a burden shared is halved, a blessing shared is doubled."

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*“It’s no longer about how workers
must adapt to their employers,
but how employers must
adapt to the new world of work.”*

—DR. JOHN IZZO

Health Region in Canada takes on their Culture and their Generations

By Olivia McIvor



There could not be a more true statement that needs to echo throughout the corridors of our workplaces than the quote above.

Dr. Izzo’s quote informs leaders today they need to wake up to the stark reality that it really is no longer about how their employees must adapt to their managers and leadership styles, but how managers need to learn to develop skills and cultivate attitudes so

they can now adapt to their employees with a more holistic view. New values are upon us as organizations, ones that are shaping everything from our leadership competencies to our recruitment and retention strategies. The new values are literally transforming the workforce and workplace, as we know it and quicker than some are able to adapt.

For the first time in history there are four generations, with different and like values, in the workplace at the same time and it’s causing a bit of a stir. The primary challenge today is how to navigate amidst four generations differing styles, strengths, communication channels and needs, in order to create a long lasting, successful and diverse team.

Here are a few questions to contemplate to see if generational differences are impacting your working environment.

- Are you finding you need to seek unique, innovative recruitment and retention tools and strategies?
- Are you confused at the different levels of work ethic and loyalty among employees?
- Do you notice a difference of values and behaviors across generations?
- Do your leaders understand what sustains employee engagement?
- Do you make assumptions about what each generation values for training, recognition and communication? How often have you been right?
- Do you believe you are getting the best each generation has to offer?

One of the top reasons for conflict in the workplace is the perception of ‘work ethic’ and its relationship to generational differences. Although many believe work ethic is different today than it was

yesterday, it really hasn’t changed. It just is exhibited differently for each generation.

The Izzo Group embarked on an 18-month journey with the A health Region in Canada in order to assist them to answer some of these questions about the impact of generations in their workplace.

The client had clear objectives to be achieved for the region:

- Improve understanding & responses to generational differences
- Provide leaders with practical strategies to recruit, retain & lead
- Create a network of individuals committed to quality workplaces
- Develop internal facilitators to train generational course for a larger outreach

As a Quality Health Workplace Initiative and with the support of their region, they were able to secure funding in order to ‘*promote healthy workplace practices to build momentum for positive change*’.

The book, **Values Shift; the new work ethic and what it means for business**, was the model used to develop and build strong foundations for the programs required to support them to achieve their goals. Values Shift is based on robust research across Canada and United States and lays out a clear roadmap for understanding these shifting values in the workplace and the needs of each generation.

Based on the book here are the six shifting values in the workplace each leader needs to be aware of:

- Balance & Synergy
- Personal Growth & Development
- Work as a Noble Cause
- Partnership
- Community at Work
- Trust

In order to reach the objectives of this client, two training programs were custom designed for their goals.

FOUR GENERATIONS-ONE WORKPLACE: *Recruiting, Retaining & Leading the Changing Workforce*

Our key message for this program was that we think it’s because we are different that we are divided, when in fact, it’s the judgments we create about each other, which is getting in the way of understanding each other.

PEOPLE CENTRED LEADERSHIP: *Retaining & Engaging Employees*

Our key message for this program was that employees don’t leave

their organizations; they tend to leave their managers. The role of the leader is crucial to retaining and developing great employees.

Each program aims for these learning outcomes:

- To change perception through an experiential approach
- To have staff come together to learn, grow & appreciate differences
- To develop Interchangeable skills between life and work
- To seed each generation in the room for the full impact of learning from one another
- To have fun through music, high energy and making the programs Interactive

Our joint aim was to have programs that changed behavior and showed lasting effects; months after participants attended the programs. Through pre and post surveys we were able to know if the programs have had impact that increased understanding of inter-generational relationships.

Through the use of online surveys a series of questions were asked. Here are a couple of notable outcomes. Regarding the program, Four Generations-One Workplace, respondents were asked if they *have* recommend this course to others-91% said yes. Respondents were also asked if they had an increase in their understanding of intergenerational relationships-95% said yes.

Similar results followed People Centred Leadership with 95% saying they *have* recommended the course and 91% saying they have taken action to support the six shifting values for themselves. In addition, 86% stated they have more empathy and understanding of each generation.

This Canadian health region has continued to link these two programs to organizational priorities and strategies which have continued to strengthen the programs outcomes. Taking an integrated approach with Quality Workplace & Healthy Workplace strategies, Employee Opinion Survey, Human Resources strategies, including training and development, they have created a sustainable model for improving the workplace.

Employees are attracted to businesses where corporate values are strong and respected. This also includes creating a business model where employees feel their values are respected and there is mutual respect for gender, race and age.

For all leaders in healthcare it has never been so important to see the workplace through worker's eyes. For more information on these successes—please e-mail us at: info@theizzogroup.com

Until next time,

Olivia McIvor

A Story of Nursing Compassion

On a recent visit to a health care organization in the Pacific Northwest, Dr. Izzo was told this story by a nurse who had been a nurse for over twenty-five years. The story illustrates the true heart of nursing.

An elderly woman entered a unit at the hospital. She had a variety of illnesses all of which seemed relatively manageable. As the nurse began to get to know this patient she discovered that the woman, who was well into her eighties, spoke about how she was ready to die. She told the nurse that her husband had died several years before and that she had lived a very good life. She did not want to continue to take medications to keep her failing body alive, she was ready to go.

After many conversations, the physicians and the family found alignment and the wishes of this brave and spirited woman were heard and honored. Over the next several weeks her condition deteriorated but the bond this nurse developed was very special indeed. The nurse knew that the time this elderly woman had left was precious and as the nurse was leaving near the end of her shift one day, she said a prayer: ***“God, please let her die on my shift so that when the time comes, she will have someone here who loves her.”***

The next day, her condition worsened. The nurse called her adult children to ask if they wanted to come to the hospital. They told her: “We have said our goodbyes and now we want to remember her as she was.” The nurse respected their wishes and for the next several hours, she sat on and off with this woman, rubbing her hands, telling her what a wonderful life she had lived, how she had raised good children, and how soon she would join her husband. Later that day, the woman died in her presence. As the nurse told the story, the room filled with the tears of other nurses.

Is this not the heart of nursing, the courageous walk of a great calling: ***“God, let her die on my shift.”***



New Workshop Offering Nurses-Giving Care, Care of Self

Many hospitals are increasingly concerned about nurse burnout and also nurses providing truly compassionate care to patients and families. For some time now we have been developing and offering a workshop that focuses on helping nurses renew their own work and at the same time provide compassionate service to patients and families. This workshop helps nurses explore, learn skills, and commit to practices in three areas: Care for the self, support for other team members, and providing more compassionate service to patients. In working with nurses, physicians, and managers, we have created a workshop that we believe helps nurses explore ways to renew their own work, care for themselves more effectively and have a more positive impact on others.

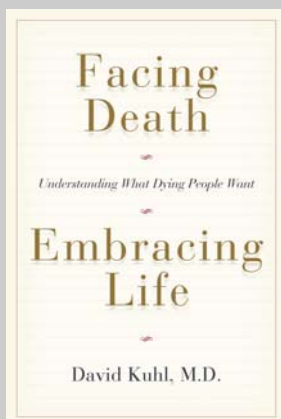
Among other things, this program offers a “toolbox” for how to demonstrate compassion to patients in small time increments. We are currently piloting this program in several organizations. If you want to discuss this call us or e-mail info@theizzogroup.com.

Dr. Izzo's book pick

Facing Death—Embracing Life:

Understanding What Dying People Want

By David Kuhl



Many of you know that we often sing the praises of David Kuhl's first book, “**What Dying People Want**”. Now Dr. David Kuhl (a gifted physician and teacher) has written a book applying that wisdom in a practical way for those who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness.

His sensitivity and wisdom, learned from sitting at the side of those who are dying, helps each of us embrace

life. A great gift for anyone in your life who is grappling with a terminal illness or living in the possibility of dying, which ultimately includes us all.

Available in Canada and the United States



Four Generations, One Workplace

... Recruiting, Retaining & Leading the Changing Workforce

Leaders today are waking up to the stark reality that it's no longer about how workers must adapt to their employers, but how employers must now adapt to their employees. Partnership. Balance. Personal Growth. Community. These are only some of the current values shaping the new world of work and transforming the workforce. For the first time in history there are four generations in the workplace at the same time and it's causing a bit of a stir. The primary challenge today is how to navigate amidst four generations differing styles, strengths, communication styles and needs in order to create a long lasting and successful team.

- Are you seeking unique and innovative recruitment and retention tools?
- Are you are confused at the different levels of work ethic and loyalty among employees?
- Do you notice a difference of values and behaviors across generations?
- Are you looking for ways to build stronger collegial relationships and improve communication?
- Are you getting the best that each generation has to offer?

Being able to answer these questions and understanding that new workplace transformation is essential for business leaders wanting to attract and retain the brightest stars in their industry.

Four Generations- One Workplace promises to deliver sound suggestions, build leadership confidence and take the mystique out of how to interpret, interact, and get the best from the four generations in your workplace.

This half-day seminar is for **anyone** who wants to benefit from having a multi-generational workplace.

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