Improve Patient Satisfaction:
Five Things Healthcare Organizations Can Learn From Disney

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The Disney Experience

Disney and healthcare are worlds apart in what they do.

While healthcare is largely a utilitarian service offering (i.e., patients need a problem to be resolved), guests visit Disney parks seeking an exciting, carefree experience.

Despite the obvious differences, success can be measured similarly; what kind of experience did the guest have?

Focusing on financial metrics can cause an organization to lose sight of its purpose – to provide the best customer (patient) experience possible.

The Disney Experience

Healthcare organizations need to focus more than ever on patient-centered care.

Patient satisfaction metrics will impact reimbursements in bigger ways as healthcare reform progresses.

Healthcare organizations can improve the patient experience using data and taking a few lessons from Disney.

Learning a Patient-centered Approach from Disney

Disney's central focus is the guest experience. All other metrics are manifestations of how well Disney is meeting guests' expectations.

This guest centricity pervades all levels of the Disney Company, from the front-line cast members (Disney employees) to the senior leaders, including the CEO.

Learning a Patient-centered Approach from Disney

You may wonder why a data-driven healthcare company would be writing about a company such as Disney.

We believe the ability to intelligently leverage data is directly correlated to delivering a great guest experiences.

Compare the Disney approach with the average healthcare organization and you will see how the power of data is key to sustaining long term change.

Lessons for Healthcare

*Five Ways Disney Creates
the Ideal Guest Experience*

Understanding the Guest

The foundation for providing a great guest experience starts with understanding the guest by extensive hands-on experience.

Disney places the highest priority on day-to-day communications with guests. They then make operational decisions based mostly on guest feedback of their experience.

Disney uses market research to analyze guest behavior as it relates to guest satisfaction.

Everyone is a Performer

Every Disney employee is a cast member and a performer, whether she is a greeter, a cashier, or custodian.

Everything about that performance should lead the guest to feeling valued, respected, and happy.

All guest interactions should be a performance dedicated to the guest where the end-goal is their satisfaction.

Seeking Out Interactions

Disney cast members go out of their way to actively engage and interact with customers. They personalize the experience the minute the guest comes through the gate all the way to when they exit.

Huffington Post printed a story of a security guard at Magic Kingdom who delighted a young girl dressed as a princess by asking her to sign his autograph book. The effect on the girl and her family was powerful.

Owning the Guest

Disney engages in all phases of the vacation cycle, from planning their one-of-a-kind Disney experience from start to finish.

These efforts are largely automated and a great example of consumer insights coming together with information technology.

Upon arriving on a Disney property, guests are not passed on to someone else. A cast member immediately owns that guest.
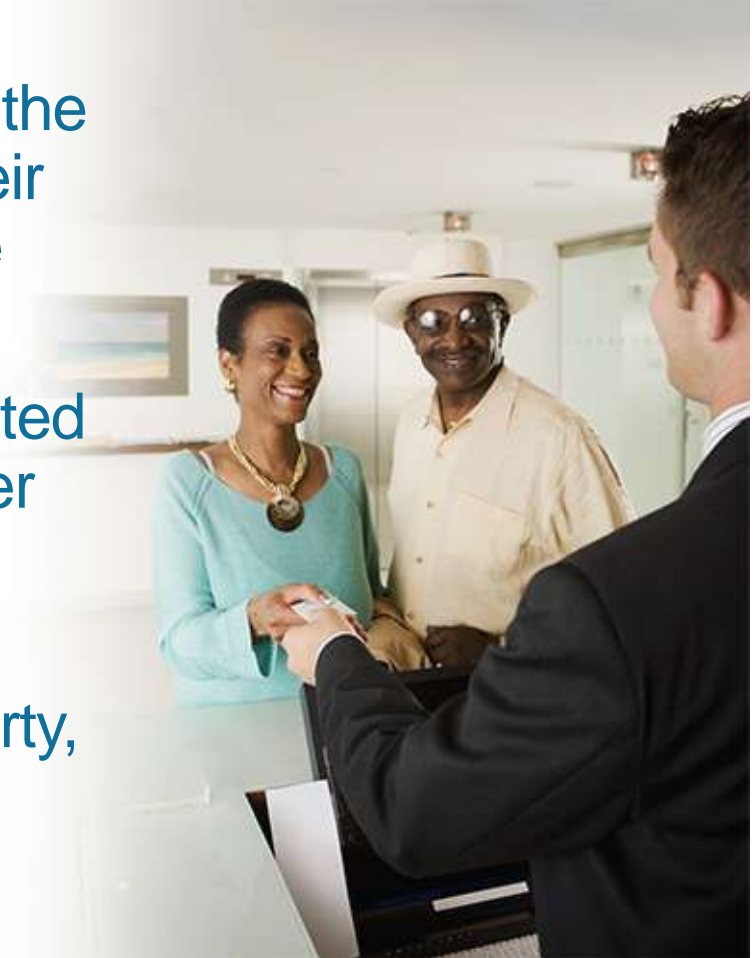
Accountability

Disney actively collects guest feedback and uses this information to celebrate great cast member service via public acknowledgement and service awards.

On the flip side, dissatisfaction is addressed with a plan for improvement, along with accountability when cast members do not follow the plan.

In the case of a dissatisfied guest, Disney tries to *reasonably* work out the guest's negative experience.

A Patient-centered Approach to Healthcare Delivery Is Possible

A myriad of forces are driving the industry to change its delivery, and simultaneously reduce costs, improve outcomes, and accommodate more patients.

Although the healthcare provider-patient relationship is not a 100% consumer-driven relationship *(e.g., just because a patient wants an antibiotic doesn't mean one should be prescribed)* healthcare organizations can mimic level of guest service by understanding Disney's guest-centricity.

A Patient-centered Approach to Healthcare Delivery Is Possible

The guest-centered approach is both a philosophy and culture from which all organizational decisions should flow, balanced by business and financial goals.

How do you maximize patient satisfaction in all areas?

Begin by understanding the patient journey and find aspects of the patient experience that drive satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

A Patient-centered Approach to Healthcare Delivery Is Possible

What attributes do patients (e.g., cost, comfort, convenience, service, etc.) value?

Where are patients willing to make trade-offs?

Knowing the answers to these questions will help prioritize the strategic direction and resources that will improve the patient experience.

A Patient-centered Approach to Healthcare Delivery Is Possible

The key takeaway is to not presume to know what the patient wants; find out who the patient is and what her wants and needs are and how best to meet them.

The application of patient-driven insight and centricity to health care data can potentially revolutionize the healthcare industry in a way that greatly reduces costs and inefficiencies while providing relevant, personalized care.

Link to original article for a more in-depth discussion.

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More about this topic

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Guest contributor, Greg Stock, CEO of Thibodaux Regional Medical Center

How Cleveland Clinic Dramatically Improved Patient Satisfaction Scores with Data and Analytics Guest contributor, Dr. James Merlino, Chief Experience Officer and Associate Chief of Staff, Cleveland Clinic

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Justin Gressel joined Health Catalyst in January of 2015 as a senior data scientist. Prior to coming to Health Catalyst, he worked both in industry (Disney and Great Wolf Resorts) and in academia as a marketing professor. Justin has a PhD in Marketing from Purdue, and an MBA and baccalaureate in Statistics from Brigham Young University.