
KEYWORDS: Leadership development

DISCUSSION POINTS:

What is a pharmacy leader?

- “A leader in a high-performance pharmacy must be more than a manager. A leader is one who can create an idea or vision and motivate others to share and act on that vision.”
- “An effective leader has an innate intellectual curiosity that drives a continuous learning cycle and provides the energy to learn many different things.”
- “Good leaders are organized, flexible, good at listening, able to deal with ambiguity, and able to handle multiple responsibilities simultaneously.”

What are the critical components of leadership?

- Core self: “We believe that this core self is the basis of consistency in valued and professional judgment, proving a stable base for all relationships and decisions.
- Vision: “Vision involves identifying opportunities for pharmacy within the health care environment and knowing how and when to adapt those to an organization.”
- Relationships: “Being able to articulate one’s vision through relationships with the pharmacy leadership team, the pharmacy staff, health-system administrators, the medical and nursing staffs, peers in other departments, and the community is the third critical component of leadership.”
- Learning: “The continuous learning process, which is a four-step cycle of learning, analyzing, questioning, and acting, supports a practice environment that can adapt and remain flexible while strengthening skills and developing new capabilities.”
- Mentoring: “Mentoring future leaders not only benefits the profession but energizes current leaders and ensures that what they have achieved will not be lost.”

Why is it important for pharmacy leaders to form relationships with staff, other departments, and the hospital administration?

- “It is necessary first to develop and maintain good relationships in the different spheres affecting pharmacy within and outside the health system because these relationships define a leader’s influence and effectiveness and serve as the basis of credibility.”
- “Pharmacy leaders have a unique position in health systems because they head a clinical department- one of only a few in the hospital without a physician as chair- and typically manage a multimillion-dollar business and operating budget.”
- “For pharmacy to have influence within the health system, team leaders must be visible and must relentlessly sell pharmacy’s vision to administration.”

What components are necessary to developing a plan of action?

- “Consistency in values and professional judgment is necessary in establishing credibility; equally important is how the pharmacy performs on a regular basis.”
- “A long-range plan for the department should be based on the leader’s shared vision for pharmacy.”
What are the important budgetary components to consider?

- Present the budget data to the hospital administration and the pharmacy department
- Additional service-specific reports may be generated to examine the drug costs in each area.
- “Pharmacy leaders in small hospitals who face financial pressures with fewer resources should seek out and take advantage of opportunities to adapt drug evaluations, policies, and therapeutic interchange guidelines developed by colleagues in larger institutions.”
- “To understand the subtleties of these and other financial initiatives, the pharmacy leader should take every opportunity to participate in business and finance courses sponsored by the health system, local community colleges, or pharmacy organizations.”

How are pharmacy leaders opportunists and risk takers?

- “Pharmacy leaders, as opportunity seekers, seem to have the ability to envision the potential when new opportunities arise.”
- “Pharmacy leaders are highly observant and can translate trends occurring outside their health system to the team inside.”
- “In addition to being able to take advantage of external trends, effective pharmacy leaders can transfer what they know to other aspects of a health system.”
- “Being able to take advantage of opportunities at the right time is the mark of a good leader and comes from experience and intuition.”
- “A good way to ensure acceptance of projects is to use some form of the ‘front-burner, back burner’ approach.”
- “Being an opportunist means identifying ways throughout the health system where one can gain leverage by expanding the continuum of care for patients.”
- “To advance pharmacy both in health systems and as a profession, we believe that pharmacy leaders must be willing to take risks so that institutions can seize opportunities in the competitive health care environment.”
- What lifestyle components do pharmacy leaders need in order to be successful?
- “The first is meaningful relationships with peers who can stimulate, challenge, and be supportive.”
- “The second key to success in terms of lifestyle is having a supportive spouse or partner.”
- “Finally, pharmacy leaders should play as hard as they work.”

Which of the above areas can you improve in? Choose one or two things to work on in the next 3 months. For example, better understanding the budget or re-visiting the long-range plan for the pharmacy. Identify a mentor who is able to help you.

TAKE HOME POINT: “Effective pharmacy leaders are experts in demonstrating and articulating that value and creating high-performance pharmacy practices characterized by high-quality patient care, improved medication safety, and maximum productivity.”

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