

## HOW-TO GUIDE

# 4 steps to shift organizational culture

## Healthcare

The past year launched hospitals and health systems on a course that spotlighted the importance of organizational design. Within the context of this guide, design refers to the structure that helps define the roles and responsibilities of the people who work within healthcare organizations, because they create the essence of your organization's culture. The pandemic revealed a need to quickly reskill and reallocate people not just for COVID, but to quickly examine and reshape your organizational design if needed.

In the *Gartner for HR: Top 5 Priorities for HR Leaders in 2021* survey, the number one priority revealed that 68% of HR professionals view building critical skills and competencies as their number one priority for 2021.<sup>1</sup> Another priority for 46% of respondents is organizational design and change management, with organizations predicted to shift away from efficiency toward flexibility in their structure and design.

Try these four steps to gain greater flexibility in shifting organizational culture and design while still maintaining excellent patient care.

### 1. Reskill and retrain

Hospitals and health systems learned early in the pandemic that a first priority was to reskill and retrain their people so they could be deployed to focus on caring for COVID-19 patients. As these organizations soon found out, though, some of this shifting required additional training. With a need to maintain social distancing, onsite or in-person learning was not always possible; however, offering additional training through a mobile workforce app helped meet everyone's needs by extending learning platforms and formats.

## 2. Lead the leaders

Leaders have struggled with how to manage a more remote workforce, or even a hybrid workforce that may in the future work part-time at home and part onsite. A study conducted by [Harvard Business Review](#) revealed that roughly 40% of supervisors and managers expressed low self-confidence in managing people remotely.<sup>2</sup> Offering a mobile platform to quantitatively measure and report defined deliverables that are agreed upon with their team members can offer managers a confidence boost. And being able to communicate using recurring check-ins, or brief, informal conversations versus formal, infrequent reviews, helps ensure that a regular dialogue is maintained without the need for face-to-face interactions.

## 3. Develop a continuous feedback loop

Another area that helps reshape organizational culture is surveying your people directly to find out how they're doing and what kinds of support the organization can offer. You can easily manage feedback via a mobile app. This offers a two-way exchange of information, and could lead to more tailored communications to respond immediately to workers' concerns by posting videos, podcasts, or written messages as information becomes available.

Virtual recognition can happen within seconds, and saved for formal reviews, and promotion and compensation discussions. A [Gallup Poll](#) further recommends that leaders maintain an ongoing dialogue with their people, and the combination of providing on-the-spot recognition, along with more frequent employee surveys, should all be considered fundamental components of a human resources system.<sup>3</sup>

## 4. Staff according to patient needs

One final area for consideration in redefining culture is to make sure that models for scheduling and staffing stay current with patient needs. Using acuity-based staffing decreases variations in work assignments and care delivery by equalizing workload distribution through equitable patient assignments. Staffing by acuity ensures that the distribution of patients is more balanced with your people power and helps alleviate frustration and possible burnout. Giving nurses ample time to engage with patients and provide the best care helps reduce adverse events and leads to better patient outcomes as well. Staffing that is based on workloads needed for patients also helps match nursing skills to specific patient needs.

Discover more ways to reassess and reexamine your organizational design by downloading this best practice guide: [Reimagine Organizational Structure, Culture, and the Health of Your People](#).

<sup>1</sup> Gartner "Gartner for HR: Top 5 Priorities for HR Leaders in 2021," 2021 report.

<sup>2</sup> Sharon K. Parker, Caroline Knight, and Anita Keller, "Change Management: Remote Managers Are Having Trust Issues," Harvard Business Review (hbr.org), July 30, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Vibha Ratanajee and Dan Foy, "Workplace: What Healthcare Workers Need from Leaders in COVID-19 Crisis," Gallup (gallup.com), April 22, 2020.

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