

Strengthening the Legacy of Service. Transforming a Culture.

The St. Dominic-Jackson Memorial Hospital Story

In 1946, a small group of nuns from the order of Dominican Sisters left their home in Springfield, Illinois, for Jackson, Mississippi, to help transform the old Jackson Infirmary into a modern new hospital. They could not have known that their unfailing determination to serve that community - initially in the face of strong prejudice - would become an inspirational legacy for the leaders, physicians and staff of St. Dominic-Jackson Memorial Hospital.

Facing New Challenges

Years later, in 2002, hospital president Claude Harbarger faced another daunting challenge: specifically, how to position his leadership team to manage a future that promised significant workforce shortages during a period

operational goals in a complex and ambiguous environment. For help with this transformation he turned to leadership*Forward*.

Choosing leadership*Forward*

Founded in 2002 by partners Greg Hiebert and Paul Litten, Atlanta-based leadership*Forward*'s purpose is to improve the capability of individual leaders and systems to create high performance environments. They focus on developing leaders to unlock their potential and to align their behavior, individually and jointly, with the mission and operational goals of the organizations they serve. They focus on organizational culture and systems to assure that the environment is equipped to support the delivery of the outcomes that are critical to the organization's success. They get to know their client organizations from the inside out. Partner, Rebecca Henson calls this "professional intimacy—a deep knowing of both the character and potential of individual leaders and the organization."



St. Dominic-Jackson Memorial Hospital

of explosive patient population growth. He knew he had fundamentally a good team, but he also knew it needed to do things differently, to abandon comfortable behaviors, in order to continue to support St. Dominic's legacy of service, its vision, mission, and strategic and

"[leadership*Forward*] understood our needs and were willing to change the routine as required, rather than stick to a pre-determined or canned program."

— LAMAR NESBIT,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT



leadership*Forward*

Unlock the Performance of Your Organization

Doing the Hard Work

In late 2003, St. Dominic began its journey of learning and development with leadership**Forward**. The first step in this transformational process was a unique 360° assessment of the effectiveness of the senior leadership team members. Each leader received extensive, confidential

feedback on his impact on his manager, peers, and direct reports; each leader created an individual development plan to address the downsides of his leadership as well as bi-monthly executive coaching, provided by a member of the leadership**Forward** team. Monthly action-learning sessions followed on critical issues like leading change, leading teams, coaching for improved performance, accountability and decision-making. During these monthly sessions, leadership**Forward** created a context and supported a quality of interaction among team members that allowed them to challenge themselves

and each other to elevate the quality of their leadership and to rigorously apply their learning to real-time issues they were facing.

Evolving A New Leadership Model

With leadership**Forward**'s coaching, senior leaders at St. Dominic report that they feel more aligned and cohesive as a team, that they exercise higher levels of dialogue and interaction, are more visible outside the executive suite, and are both more decisive and accountable for the execution of their decisions. Because they have developed deeper levels of trust and respect for one another, they feel more empowered to dissent and debate, as well as to offer innovative solutions to problems.

In fact, the leadership team at St. Dominic has been so enthusiastic about its experience with leadership**Forward** that it asked leadership**Forward** to cascade leadership training through its middle management level by creating a development program for emerging, high potential leaders. This program, now in its third year, has significantly enhanced the quality of leadership provided throughout St. Dominic and has prepared leaders from within who have the capability to step into senior leadership roles when needed.

Measuring Outcomes

Armed with more credibility, capability and confidence, the leadership team at St. Dominic has put into place both new metrics and new goals for measuring the overall performance of the hospital.

These include:

- Patient satisfaction,
- Employee satisfaction and voluntary turnover,
- Adjusted admissions,
- Clinical quality standards, and
- Financial operating margins

"THEY HAVE CREATED AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP IS MOTIVATED TO CONTINUALLY ENGAGE OURSELVES AND OUR COLLEAGUES TO ACHIEVE GREATER PERFORMANCE."

*-LAMAR NESBIT
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
ST. DOMINIC HEALTH SYSTEM*

Although the founding Dominican Sisters are no longer present to observe what has transpired at their hospital in recent years, the new commitment of its leadership team would surely make them proud. Their legacy – the determination to serve – lives on at St. Dominic-Jackson Memorial Hospital.



leadership**Forward**

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