

Culture and its impact on financial sustainability

Rising costs, constrained resources, exhausted teams and increasingly sick patients are challenges facing healthcare organizations today. It's crucial now more than ever for healthcare leaders to invest in their organization's culture if they have any hope of achieving financial sustainability.

Katerie Chapman, senior principal, Vizient®, discusses what it takes to improve culture for your healthcare organization and how doing so can help the bottom line.



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In today's market, why is it so essential for healthcare systems to have a focused effort on culture, and how does it help with financial sustainability?

An organization's cultural health determines its ability to achieve and sustain excellence, so to fulfill our mission to care for patients and serve our communities, there must be an intentional focus on and explicit nurturing of a healthy culture and environment where team members deliver care. If these teams aren't supported with healthy environments, processes and systems, then they will experience significant burnout and the organization will experience attrition, inefficiencies, low productivity and medical errors — all of which show up in the bottom line.

What are key attributes healthcare systems with a healthy culture embody?

Building healthy cultures is intentional and perpetual work. When elements such as respect, trust, teamwork, psychological safety, transparency and personal accountability are present; where there is clear, bidirectional communication and strong leadership that promotes continuous learning; and teams are taught to collaborate and are accountable to create solutions that ease the burden of their work, improve patient care and advance organizational initiatives, a healthy culture becomes feasible.

What actions can healthcare systems take to improve their culture?

For a start — measure it and act on the insights. Many organizations assess their team member engagement, and all must assess their culture of safety, but using those insights to inform and accelerate learning and performance improvement is not yet fully leveraged. Because of that, cultural data is vastly underestimated in its power to facilitate cultural change as well as clinical and operational impact.

Another high-impact activity is leader rounding. A recent study revealed that effective leader rounding can show up to a 34% increase in areas like teamwork, burnout, local leadership, work-life balance and learning environment. That impact translates to the capacity for team members to engage in their daily work and advance organizational initiatives. When organizations focus on creating healthy cultures, it leads to more engaged, higher performing teams, which enhances clinical and operational performance and therefore contributes to financial stability.

A third major component is training the frontline managers who orchestrate care delivery, thereby running the learning systems that support operational excellence. Often, they are undertrained and unsupported — to their and the patient's detriment.

How is Vizient partnering with healthcare systems to improve culture and reduce burnout?

Through Vizient data, we're able to pair insights with expertise to prioritize the interventions that give the most leverage in improving cultural, clinical and operational outcomes.

Specifically, Vizient's SCORE survey — recognized by Leapfrog and ANCC Magnet — measures and provides insights on psychological safety, well-being and engagement and enables a strong understanding of the workforce and the interventions we can implement to reliably drive meaningful cultural improvement. We have used SCORE to survey more than 15% of the U.S. healthcare workforce, which makes SCORE the largest benchmark on burnout and resilience in the country. We've found that for every 10-point increase in the leadership domain of the SCORE survey, the odds of burnout in that team are reduced by 28%.

We also help equip leaders and teams through our academy with the necessary skills, activities and behaviors needed to drive cultural transformation and operational and clinical excellence. We're finding those organizations are the high performers — they're the ones on track to achieving both financial sustainability and growth.



Learn more at vizientinc.com/impactofculture

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