

Strategic Leadership and Workforce Management in Healthcare Organizations

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Mr. Kiel S. Abuiza currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Marikina Valley Medical Center (MVMC), a tertiary hospital strategically located along Sumulong Highway in Marikina City. MVMC is a proud member of Metro Pacific Health, the country's largest private hospital network.

Prior to his appointment as COO, Mr. Abuiza served MVMC for six (6) years as the Human Resources Director, where he played a key role in strengthening organizational capability, workforce governance, and leadership development.

Mr. Abuiza holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Our Lady of Fatima University – Quezon City and a Master's in Business Administration from the Ateneo de Manila University Graduate School of Business, earned under a dual-certificate program recognized by Regis University, Denver, Colorado, USA. He also completed a Certificate in Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management from the University of the Philippines Diliman – School of Labor and Industrial Relations (SOLAIR). He is currently a PhD candidate in Business Management at the Philippine Christian University – Manila Campus.

Before joining MVMC, Mr. Abuiza gained extensive professional experience across multiple industries, including quick service restaurants, retail, hospitality, and healthcare, both locally and internationally. His most recent overseas assignment was in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where he served as Head of Operations, overseeing 45 restaurant outlets while also managing sub-franchise operations across Oman, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain.

His diverse professional background has strengthened his expertise in strategic leadership, multi-division operations, and cross-cultural workforce management, enabling him to lead complex operations and drive organizational performance in a healthcare setting.

Introduction

Strategic leadership describes how healthcare leaders facilitate their organizations' progress through complex issues, while ensuring that resources and energies are coordinated to meet their organizations' needs over time. In today's world, this type of leadership is especially significant for health-care organizations, where so much is at stake, amid constant changes in the field, the introduction of new technologies, evolving regulatory environments, and evolving patient needs. Historical examples of individuals such as Bill Gates have demonstrated how strategic management approaches can shape entire industries, illustrating the necessity for all healthcare executives to adopt similar approaches if they wish to create innovative solutions and better outcomes for the industry.

Recently, the focus on strategic leadership has continued to gain momentum, driven in part by current trends such as digital transformation, value-based care, and the increased use of data analytics. Leaders' responsibilities now include not only managing day-to-day operations but also forecasting future challenges and opportunities. Leaders must also be more knowledgeable about the internal dynamics of their organizations and the external factors that directly affect them.

Health-care organizations will continue pursuing improved performance and adaptability by focusing on maximizing their workforces. Leaders need to create workforce management strategies that build their teams' knowledge and empower them, enabling the organization to achieve its long-term strategic objectives. By emphasizing workforce management strategies, organizations will be better positioned to meet the current demands of modern health care while laying the foundation for improved patient care. Building a successful team that will support an organization must start with recruiting and retaining employees who will become high-

performing supporters of the organization's mission. Many of Elon Musk's companies have developed strategies to attract high-performing talent through innovative ideas and to keep employees engaged once they are hired.

When it comes to the healthcare industry, recruiting qualified medical staff to care for patients and providing a workplace that promotes teamwork and a positive work environment are critical to successful employee retention. To achieve success in the healthcare industry, continuing education and professional development for medical providers have become the norm. By providing continuing education to employees, organizations can foster a culture of learning and growth and enhance the skills and knowledge needed to provide high-quality patient care.

Through employee engagement programs, organizations can strengthen employee loyalty and motivation by providing recognition for a job well done, regular performance feedback, and opportunities for advancement within the organization. Workforce management practices can create positive changes in the organization's operations and enhance patient care outcomes through continued collaboration among leaders and employees.

By implementing effective workforce management strategies, organizations can expect to improve patient care outcomes and operational efficiency. With a foundation of skilled, engaged employees, organizations can introduce and incorporate technology into their leadership and management practises. As technology continues to evolve, organizations will develop new and innovative ways to provide solutions for both employee and patient care issues.

Technology has transformed how organizations in the healthcare sector operate and manage their workforces. Leaders in the healthcare sector, such as Sundar Pichai, are currently utilizing technology to achieve greater efficiencies and provide improved patient care. Digital health, including services such as telemedicine and digital platforms, allows healthcare providers to connect with patients regardless of geographic limitations,

thereby increasing access to care. Improved access to care benefits patients by increasing satisfaction and creating efficiencies for organizations by streamlining workflows and reducing the costs of providing care through in-person visits.

Data analytics play a fundamental role in creating informed decisions. Data collected from patient information can be analyzed by leaders to identify patterns/trends, optimize resource allocation, and deliver targeted interventions to improve patient outcomes. By utilizing artificial intelligence within the healthcare organization, leaders can better predict staffing requirements based on the volume and acuity of patients served, enabling them to allocate nursing resources more strategically and ensure adequate staffing to meet patient care needs.

The pace of technological development creates many challenges for leaders in the healthcare sector. Some of these challenges include ensuring data security, integrating new technologies/tools, and training employees to use them effectively. The potential for technological innovations in healthcare will not realize their full potential unless such issues are appropriately managed. As organizations work to implement new solutions into their systems, they will likely encounter various obstacles that can disrupt their strategic vision and the dynamics of workforce management. Therefore, these challenges must be addressed as leaders work toward advancing both their organization's management capabilities and employee engagement.

Strategic Leadership Challenges and Workforce Management Challenges

A healthcare leader's role has many challenges. Some of these include how to provide the best possible care while making operations run more efficiently; how scarce resources will be allocated; and how to keep employees mentally motivated in an environment of unpredictability.

To create a strong and responsive healthcare system, leaders must face these issues collectively. Leaders must also prepare themselves and their organizations to thrive (not just survive) in the current competitive health care marketplace.

Future healthcare leadership and workforce management will most likely evolve as indicated below:

Emerging Leadership Models

As the industry begins to move away from the traditional top-down leadership model as demonstrated by Tim Cook and other industry leaders, the next generation of leaders must embrace collaborative and inclusive styles of leadership. To accomplish this, future leaders must create a working atmosphere based on team-oriented thinking, open dialogue, and respect for diversity. Encouraging innovation and responding rapidly to changing realities will be achieved through the establishment of collaborative cultures.

Workforce Management Trends

As the profession changes with increasing use of technology and changing employee expectations and preferences, healthcare organisations will need to create flexibility for their employees, including working from home and flexible work schedules, to ensure that they remain competitive and attractive to the current and future healthcare workforce. Emerging healthcare professionals place more emphasis on achieving an improved work/life balance and having access to additional continuing education opportunities.

The Increasing Use of Artificial Intelligence and Automation in Healthcare:

As healthcare organizations begin to incorporate the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation into their daily healthcare workflows,

healthcare leaders will need to carefully consider how their employees and organizations will function in this new business model. In particular, technology use in healthcare will create increased efficiencies and allow healthcare employees to concentrate on providing the highest level of patient care and developing strategic initiatives.

Building an adaptable culture of learning and continuous improvement in response to changing market expectations will enable healthcare organizations to remain competitive and responsive to patient, employee and marketplace expectations. Building the organizational culture of adaptability will support improved patient outcomes, thereby helping to build a healthier world.

Reflection-in-Action: Strategic Leadership and Workforce Management in Healthcare Organizations

In my reflection on my leadership development in healthcare—especially as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of a tertiary hospital—I realize that creating strong strategic Leaders through the people that lead them is the foundation for achieving successful strategic Leadership. The transition from Human Resources Director to Chief Operating Officer (COO) confirmed my belief that workforce governance and workforce management are critical functional areas of responsibility for any organization and directly impact an organization's performance, patient outcomes, and the sustainability of the institution. The experience of exposure to numerous industries, including Hospitality, Retail, and Quick Service Restaurants, early in my career, has taught me operational discipline, the importance of Service Excellence, and the critical role of Scalability. These experiences have contributed to the evolution of my Leadership style and, in doing so, prepared me to lead and develop multi-divisional organizations. However, it has been in the Healthcare arena where I have gained a true understanding of the Human Component to Leadership.

Healthcare organizations operate in high-risk environments, and every decision made by leaders in the organizational structure has both Business Outcomes and Human Life implications. As a result, the two functions of Strategic Leadership and Workforce Management cannot be viewed as separate; rather, they must be considered interdependent. As the Human Resources Director, I was heavily involved in creating an Organizational Capability through developing Leaders, Performance Systems, and Governance Frameworks. While working in Human Resources, I learned that Workforce Management Strategies are continuously developed and refined to adapt to the ever-changing Healthcare environment and the institutional goals of Organizations. Thus, reflection-in-action (continuously evaluating whether the Governance Policies, Leadership

Practices, and Organizational Structure are providing Employees with the Tools, Engagement, and Support necessary to excel in their jobs while also enabling their continued Professional Growth and Development) became a necessary tool for my Leadership Development.

As COO, my role transitioned from Managing People to Coordinating Systems. To be an effective Strategic Leader, I needed to strike a Balance between Operational Efficiency and Workforce Sustainability. I learned that having clearly defined Governance structures, developing Empowered Leaders, and creating a Culture of Accountability were critical to ensuring that the activities performed by Frontline Employees aligned with the Strategic Goals of the Organization. My experience as COO required me to continually reflect while in Action, constantly Adjust Decisions based on what I was learning about the Organization from the Employees, Workforce Dynamics, and the Changing Healthcare Environment.

As I have had the opportunity to manage Cross-Cultural Teams throughout the Middle East, I have also gained further insight into the benefits of Inclusive Leadership and Cultural Competency. Diversity within an organization is a strength when strategically managed. To be successful, Healthcare Organizations need to have a good understanding of their Employees' different Perspectives, share a common set of Values, and build Collaborative Relationships that span Professional and Cultural Boundaries. These lessons have been invaluable in helping me to create Leadership Development systems that support Diverse Healthcare Workforces within Complex Organizational Structures.

As a result of the above, strategic leadership and workforce management have been instrumental in shaping my Leadership Philosophy must focus on People, be driven by Data, and be aligned with an Organization's Values. Workforce Management is not just about staffing and compliance, but also involves developing new leaders, cultivating talent, and establishing a system that enables healthcare professionals to provide safe, high-quality care. As I lead my organization, I strive to ensure that the organizational strategy and workforce capabilities move forward together and in partnership to deliver organizational excellence and patient-centered care.







