

## **Creating a Culture of Philanthropy**

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Having a 'culture of philanthropy' refers to your organization's attitude toward philanthropy and fundraising. As a charitable organization, or an institution that's funded by a charitable organization, it's essential that your culture includes and embraces philanthropy. Organizations that do this typically understand three key things:

1. The value of organizational culture.
2. The importance of philanthropy.
3. The link between philanthropy and fund development.

These organizations are also keenly aware that their philanthropic culture belongs to every individual, every department and every volunteer.

### **Fostering a Culture of Philanthropy.**

There are a few things that you and your organization can do to foster a culture of philanthropy. Your leadership and operations teams need to connect the impact of fundraising goals to the organization's mission and vision. This will help clarify how integral fundraising is to fueling success. Accomplishing this incorporates two distinct parts. First, is stipulating that everyone in the hospital be empowered to respond to a patient who is indicating they'd like to "give back". This will require a high level of trust between the hospital staff and the foundation staff. The second part is ensuring the entire hospital staff understands that they are working for a non-profit organization – where philanthropy can make a significant difference in the services provided and patients' experiences.

### **Creating a positive environment is key.**

Physicians and nurses spend time with patients on a daily basis - in many cases, developing a strong rapport with them. Naturally, they can often provide insights into a patient's interest in making a future donation. An environment that's positive for the patient is certainly of exponential importance. But, having a trusting community where referrals can be made to the fundraising effort from anywhere, can open the door to plenty of donation opportunities.

### **Cultivate relationships with clinical staff in the same way you would develop relationships with donor prospects.**

Implementing a role for a clinical liaison, such as a retired or former physician, clinician, or hospital

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administrator, within the foundation can help generate strong clinical staff engagement. In essence, building relationships within your staff, is similar to how you would build them with a prospective donor.

Nurturing relationships with employees, like donors, increases the chances that their interactions will result in a donation. To enhance this, maintain a visible foundation presence by locating an office where they are – such as within the clinical office area.

### **Patients are more likely to develop trusting relationships with their physicians than with any other staff.**

Physicians are healthcare's front line. Their work involves the commitment and dedication to an institution's mission and its patients. They truly understand how philanthropic investment can change lives and they can communicate that authentically.

Training physicians how to respond to a patient if they indicate a desire to give back is key to activating their involvement. Or, even helping them recognize the cues that should prompt them to reach out and ask. Patient-physician relationships are fundamental aspects of identifying a grateful patient and recognizing their giving potential.

### **An effective training program should include the following fundamentals:**

1. Educate staff on the fundraising process – many may not be aware of the role of philanthropy, the direct impact of donations, and the methods used to raise funds.
2. Educate clinical staff on how to identify potential donors, including expression of appreciation, interest in volunteering opportunities, and a desire to give back.
3. Provide resources to use when soliciting potential donors, such as presentations, reports, and other marketing materials.
4. Provide different methods of reaching out and communicating to patients.
5. Provide step by step guidance on how to participate in cultivation and solicitation activities.
6. Provide staff with knowledge and tools to enable patients to donate on behalf of caregivers. This furthers the development of a positive environment for staff engagement; offering an opportunity to be recognized for quality care.

### **Inspiring employees to donate to your cause.**

Increasingly, people want to work for organizations with a strong commitment to social responsibility. When employees realize they are working for an organization with a broader mission to help the community at large, it strengthens their commitment and nurtures feelings of pride and loyalty. Corporate fundraising gives employees an efficient and tangible way to participate in an

organization's charitable activities.

## **What inspires employees and motivates them to give?**

### **Communication and appreciation are crucial**

Telling the cause's compelling story, and how an employee can be a part of that story – much like any effective donor campaign – is important to encourage engagement. Make this engagement easy and exciting for your employees and always take time to say thanks. Recognizing employee donations should be as gift appropriate and prominent as non-employee donor recognition.

### **Report on campaign progress and celebrate success**

Illustrating the impact of the campaign lets employee contributors share in the achievement and difference they are making. Sharing inspirational stories and team fundraising initiatives can make the campaign more tangible. Ensure that you can track donation activity so these stories can be showcased.

### **Embrace some friendly competition**

There's nothing like a little competition to generate some excitement. Adding this element to your strategy can boost the donations and enhance the campaign's impact.

### **Include a company incentive**

Whether it's matching donations, or offering exclusive goods or experiences – utilizing any marketing or sponsorship connections to source these would be ideal – these can help engage employees who may not normally have given.

### **Think local**

People feel much more connected to a cause when it's closer to home. A strategically local campaign, aligned with the organization's goals, is an effective means of generating engagement.

### ***Maintaining a culture of philanthropy means that everyone in the organization embraces a patient-centered and donor-centered environment***

And by empowering employees to be ambassadors of the organization and its philanthropic culture, fundraising can be even more effective. There are additional benefits to this as well.

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Engaged employees improve morale and productivity while enhancing retention, recruitment and skill development.

Because when they're engaged and believing in what they are doing, it's more than just a job – they care about the difference they're making. And having employees that care is an enormous asset to any organization.

Do you feel your organization embraces a culture of philanthropy? Then the [Recognition Paradigm Shift](#) is for you.