
THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

research

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

TITLE Transformational Leadership Behavior of Successful Nurse Managers

RESEARCHER Melanie M. Heuston
School of Nursing
University of Pittsburgh
Unpublished capstone project: August 2010

OBJECTIVE The aim of this study was to identify specific transformed leadership behaviors of successful nurse managers of inpatient nursing units.

METHODOLOGY

All 34 nurse managers at an 897 bed academic Midwestern Magnet accredited medical center, which included a tertiary care hospital, women's and maternity hospital, and a psychiatric facility were invited to participate in the study. Thirty-two nurse managers completed the Leadership Practices Inventory (88% response rate) and were asked to have their constituents complete the LPI-Observer (376 were returned for a 54% response rate). Participating nurse managers were mostly female (94%) with a median of 4.5 years as a nurse manager and 18 years of nursing experience, and 97 percent held a Bachelor's or Master's degree.

KEY FINDINGS

Nine nurse managers (NM) were subsequently qualified on the basis of their LPI-Observer scores to participate in one of two focus groups. "Inspire a shared vision was defined by the focus groups as the ability to get staff nurses engaged in aligning the vision of their unit to that of the hospital. The focus groups were able to easily identify the skills and tactics used for this practice and spoke with passion and conviction about the importance of being skilled in this area" (p. 12). "The nurse

manager's responsibility in role modeling professional behaviors and consistently demonstrating a warm demeanor was a central theme in the discussion of the practice of model the way" (p. 13). "In order for nursing staff to "buy into" change, this group of NM's believed that the nursing staff needed to own the process. In the practice of challenge the process, the focus group shared stories about nurse led change initiatives, allowing staff to try new ideas and to be able to make mistakes" (p. 14). "The role of the NM as a coach and mentor was clearly the subject of discussion in the practice of enable others to act" (p. 15). "In the practice of encourage the heart, the NMs passionately discussed the importance of personal individualized recognition, engaging the staff through communication, and stressing the importance of storytelling" (p. 16).

The author suggests:

Based on this study, one might theorize that self assessment is not a reliable mechanism for determining transformational leadership skills and behaviors. In fact, failing to accurately identify one's transformational ability (or lack of it) could limit the development of the nurse manager. If a nurse manager sees him/herself as a high performing nurse manager, he/she would be less motivated to change or learn new skills. The 360° feedback method is an effective mechanism for assessing this behavior as perceived by others. The Kouzes and Posner's LPI is an excellent tool for nurse managers who are interested in self development and improving their skills as transformational leaders (p. 17).