



SSM Health Care Improves Patient Care with Ninth House

INDUSTRY:

Health Care

SIZE:

23,000 employees

THE CHALLENGE:

- Provide leadership and communication skills to 23,000 geographically dispersed employees to achieve exceptional patient care standards

THE OBJECTIVES:

- Jump start existing mission critical education program
- Enable key leadership principles to pervade the entire employee population
- Ensure the highest level of service at every healthcare entity

THE RESULTS

- Strong evaluation ratings for learning effectiveness and job impact (5.97 and 6.08 respectively on a 7-point scale)
- Highly positive learner feedback regarding application to the job and job performance
- Development of key skills to resolve critical business issues

“Our mission is to provide exceptional health care services by helping to develop leadership throughout our organization. We selected Ninth House for its high-quality interactive courses, proven track record in leadership development and ability to train all levels of our organization – not just our top executives. Ultimately, we believe that this will enable us to better serve our employees, patients and communities.”

–SSMHC Senior Executive

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SSM Health Care (SSMHC) is one of the largest Catholic health care systems in the country with 20 acute care hospitals and two nursing homes in four states. Their team of nearly 5,000 affiliated physicians and 24,000 employees work together to provide a wide range of compassionate, holistic and high quality healthcare services.

SSMHC has a long term commitment to leadership development. Its mission and values call for the highest level of customer service in the health care industry. SSM encourages all employees to develop the critical leadership, management and communication skills needed to support the organization’s mission. SSM University, the organization’s internal education arm, provides high quality learning and development programs for employees across all levels and departments within the organization.

To help employees understand how to do the things that matter most to patients, SSMHC developed an organization-wide program called Achieving Exceptional Patient Care or AEPC. AEPC defined the actions employees could take to ensure the highest level of customer service at each facility.

Ninth House worked with SSMHC to develop an integrated learning program to compliment their existing employee development curriculum, and which encouraged the employee behaviors and actions to help to achieve the goals of AEPC. The program components included:

Custom online courses

SSMHC partnered with Ninth House to create a series of customized vignettes that address real patient care issues. These 3-5 minute learning modules provided behavior modeling to help illustrate what ‘exceptional patient care’ looks and feels like and the personal benefit of living the AEPC principles. Each vignette includes video, flash activities and quick reference tools that can be printed for instant access, to support SSMHC managers with the development of their direct reports.

Two Ninth House published online courses delivered in an integrated, learning format

SSMHC also implemented the Ninth House courses *Forging Breakthroughs* and *Resolving Interpersonal Issues* to develop critical strategic thinking, planning and decision-making skills for its senior leaders. These programs teach techniques for adapting quickly to change, promote innovative thinking and collaboration among work groups and emphasize the power of open communication and mutual problem solving. Program participants first completed the self-paced courses online and



then participated in a classroom group application session where the concepts of the courses were discussed, practiced and applied to real-life scenarios. Customized learning guides, with reference tools and practice exercises customized to SSMHC's environment were also provided to all learners.

Both programs were delivered through a cascading model developed jointly by SSMHC and Ninth House called "Leaders Developing Leaders" which started with the most senior SSMHC leaders including the CEO, Sr. Mary Jean Ryan, FSM and Entity Presidents. In addition to their participation in the program, senior executives received training led by Corporate VP of Organizational Effectiveness Dawn Runge, Ph.d., to facilitate application sessions with their extended teams.

Ninth House Instant Advice® sustainability tool for reinforcement and practice

The SSMHC leadership solution also included the Ninth House performance support system, Instant Advice. Comprised of short web-based videos, Instant Advice provides leaders immediate, actionable solutions for common business challenges. Instant Advice helps employees quickly find solutions to their daily challenges.

SSMHC senior leaders have experienced rapid success with the integrated leadership program. The program's strategic thinking application sessions have uncovered major business opportunities and issues, including how to develop improved relationships with partner physicians and how to overcome organizational cultural challenges to enable the smooth roll-out of a new electronic records system.

Initial feedback from 360 evaluation surveys indicates that the vast majority of employees strongly feel that the training is critical to their job performance and has enabled them to take new skills back to the job. Learning Effectiveness and Job Impact measures scored 5.97 and 6.08, respectively, on a 7-point scale.

"I wanted to drop you a quick note about my team's impressions of the "Forging Breakthroughs" experience. We completed the applied discussion a couple weeks ago. We all felt it was extremely beneficial and can foresee the benefit of the cascading deployment to the balance of our team. I have already seen some higher-quality interactions between my team members which I attribute to the training. Specifically, I have seen lower quality interactions be stopped earlier because of the framework that was learned."

- SSMHC Executive