



BEYOND THE NUMBERS

PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR BOARDS TO BETTER TELL THEIR STORY

One value of a Governance Enhancement Plan is to clarify your organization's messages to warrant tax-exemption, and to reinforce your commitment to provide a culture that is characterized as:

- Patient Centered
- Performance Driven, and
- Values Based

Creating a “Culture of Performance” is not easy. It involves telling factual stories about great plans and results, but not just in terms of dollars and numbers, but in emotional terms. In Human terms.

We helped leaders at recent conferences of The Governance Institute to share their ideas about how our healthcare organizations can do a better job of telling stories to connect with the emotions of our workers, physicians, and communities. Below is a random list of their ideas. Please talk about these among your local leadership team and add your own ideas that may be stimulated by this list.

Thank you for your community service and the good you do every day in every way!

1. Publish a collection of observations from children about how one of our employees or doctors helped them survive a tough illness.
2. Publish stories that are powerfully positive from hospice patients about how our care system really did care.
3. Publish a book of “heroes” with one page for each of 50 employees that have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help patients. Include photos and a personal, human-touch profile of each person.

Reinforce with photos in hallways and distribute to media and civic groups.

4. Use 10 billboards to celebrate the careers of 10 of our top physicians and their dedication to care for patients and their families during the toughest of times.
5. Capture and publish a collection of oral histories from our oldest employees about how care used to be delivered, and how we can do so much more now to remove pain and suffering.
6. Publish a collection of poems by physicians about how they touch the lives of patients and their families. Reminder to us all about why we went into one of the healing professions.
7. Issue frequent news releases and ads in local newspapers and radio that celebrate our caregivers—physicians, nurses, employees, volunteers, and board leaders.
8. Conduct semi-annual “Health Fairs” with staff and volunteers who offer free immunizations, flu shots, blood tests, screenings, and health education-related materials...partner with local TV stations to do this.
9. Honor top physicians at an annual social event and reception.
10. Provide visible annual awards dinners for our volunteers of all ages.
11. Conduct an annual picnic award event for our staff.
12. Invest in our staff as “ambassadors to the community” and arm them with stories and facts about the good we represent to the health of the community.
13. Provide free or low-priced clinics for our new or special services.
14. Conduct dinners and receptions for our donors and civic leaders, then use these venues as settings to tell our story of caring.

15. Organize and celebrate with local schools and colleges to develop and sustain nursing and other allied health worker programs.
16. Issue quarterly magazines and report to the community on our innovations in medical care, in medical education in research and in health protections, and promotion activities.
17. Once or twice a year, invite patients into our board meetings to remind us about why and for whom we are volunteering so much of our time and energies.
18. Inform our local business leaders about our many contributions as we involve them in our local planning processes.
19. Tell our story not just with fiscal numbers, but with anecdotes of actual care and caring.
20. Provide updates and celebrate our value to the community at periodic local forums and town hall type gatherings.
21. Prepare and issue our balanced scorecards to the public about the value we add to the health of our region.
22. Operate our “Hope” program, a joint endeavor of the hospital and county for mobile clinics for the uninsured and disadvantaged.
23. Develop partnerships with community groups to do new housing as a way to leverage community development around our organization’s neighborhood.
24. Post pictures and short success stories of real people who have benefited over the past 10 years from our specific programs; e.g., the most recent 1,000 babies born with us and how they have grown up, actual patients that came through our emergency room, transplant patients.
25. Photos of 200 people who had total joint replacements at our institution and are doing well...perhaps some on a golf course. We make a difference to real people in real ways for real health.
26. Secure and then celebrate research grants (unrestricted) supporting new technologies that offer great promise in early recognition of unplanned, common adverse events that occur in our patient population.
27. Redefine “the bottom line” to include performance improvement in lives and levels of health.
28. Document and publish reports that promote performance-improvement tracking paid for with outside funding. Evidence-based results produced by our institution that bring about practice culture change with physicians and do more “front door screening” for our cardiac services as well as other specialty programs.
29. Arrange for a school bus loaded with school kids to tour our children’s programs and new hospital.
30. Humanize our programs by asking school kids to bring their artwork into the hospital for display.
31. Tell actual therapeutic success stories; e.g., the child who came into the hospital ER critically ill and leaves happy and well a couple of days later.
32. Earn recognition in community survey that we are one of the top workplaces in the region. We tied with the city as number one. This helps reinforce morale with staff. Hold a lot of different internal and external programs for our employees to be involved in community affairs, give them time and money to do so.
33. The hospital can convert old beds into simple rooms for families of patients in ICU/CCU.
34. Worked with local Baptist church mission to bring two Russians here for needed heart surgery.
35. Run articles in the press quoting foreign doctors who visit us and describe how wonderful our care systems are here compared to other countries.
36. Develop fresh and bold “taglines” on all our publications, such as: “We are with you for life!” “We serve those less fortunate.” “Our families are dedicated to serve your family.”

37. Conduct community service awards...each sponsored hospital donates 5% of the net operating margin to community-benefit programs. Annually, over 1.5 million dollars have been recycled into the community for project support.
38. Host “annual quality congress” to recognize caregivers and hospital best practices, e.g., collaboration, caring, and clinical excellence.
39. Host annual ethics conference for board of trustees, physicians, caregivers, clergy, and community leaders, which addresses specific potential responses in the areas of advocacy, practice, and community leadership roles.
40. Celebrate offering of university scholarships to those who will go into the healthcare professions (we are not an industry).
41. Sponsoring local sports teams for boys and girls to get our name circulating in different ways as a good neighbor and to promote exciting career opportunities in our town... you don’t have to get to the big metro areas to make a difference and “to do well by doing good.”
42. Baptist Health in Florida has in its system Wolfson Children’s Hospital. Local NFL team (Jaguars) are strong supporters of this hospital with several foundations and named events as well as many PR opportunities and visits.
43. We are looking at profitable lines of service that fit our mission and involve chronic care for seniors (adult day care and assisted living center).
44. Increase wages for nurses to support retention and decrease registry use.
45. Celebrate our new sub-acute unit.
46. Focus on our ER on-call compensation to enhance rapport with physicians and our front-line image.
47. Invest in “customer service programs”...we are focusing on all customers; e.g., patients, doctors, and other departments and employee groups. We provide financial incentive and training and contest to meet specific quality and caring targets.
48. We introduce programs of service that “share the pot of gold” in recognition and “move the 800-pound gorilla.”
49. Initiated a 100-day nurse recruitment campaign and recruited 167 nurses in 100 days.
50. Started an employee-recognition program called “Healthcare Heroes,” rewarding individuals for extraordinary acts of caring and compassion.
51. Do a capital campaign for a project—in doing so, it gives you an opportunity to tell your story with board members, in groups and one-on-one.
52. Collaboration of community, medical staff, administration, and boards to achieve the designation of “Top 100 Hospitals in America!”
53. Pursue every conceivable award and recognition program, then widely celebrate the wins inside and outside the organization.
54. Run newspaper ads showing photos of employees at work and maybe a one-page ad showing 50–100 employees thanking them for their dedication to excellence and to the community.
55. Implementation of the “Planetree” (patient-centered) approach to come.
56. Medical staff participation in the strategic planning process and inviting the medical staff executive committee to a governing board retreat to celebrate its success.
57. Developing positive community relations through our fund development activities.
58. Conduct focus groups to list what they know about us, what they think/feel about us, and how we can best celebrate our value to them.
59. On your Web site (VHA’s as well) list a page called “Innovations in Healthcare.” Have all member hospitals submit their success stories for inclusion on the page for healthcare innovations.

