



“Sustaining Employee Engagement During COVID-19”

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Saving hospitals. Saving jobs. Saving lives.

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...”

North Vista Hospital Patient Access Services



Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.



I joined the North Vista family on 01/06/2020. Never in my life had I imagined what was ahead of me. Nothing that I had encountered in my previous years of experience would prepare me for what I was about to experience!

Nothing would ever be the same...

- By mid-March we were in lockdown
- Employees were suffering financial loss as family members were furloughed and some permanently displaced due to closure
- The facility became VERY busy
- Everyone was getting sick
- People close to us fell victim to this virus
- Co-workers couldn't return as this illness left them with conditions that prevented them from working
- Amidst all of the news... there were no solid answers

Despite the chaos, we remained strong!

- For the first 11 months of the pandemic, we had the lowest turnover rate to date for PAS at North Vista
 - Until 01/2021 we only had 2 employees leave our team
 - Of the two that left, one was for another opportunity and the other for reasons beyond their control
- Morale remained solid and “eyes could be seen smiling”
- Teamwork was redefined and bonds were developed
- We walked away from being “just registration” and earned our place on “the care team”
- We found new ways to celebrate
- We found a new normal

How did we sustained engagement during crisis?

- Leaders dropped the title and pulled up a seat
- Employees were given ample time to rest and break (again, leaders pulled up a seat)
- We found ways to make each other smile, laugh and momentarily forget about the chaos around us
- We shared in each others struggles
- Empathy became common inwardly and not just within our external customer service practices
- We took time to reflect on the good and focus on the great things that were yet to come (a vaccination)
- Together we put aside pettiness and moved forward

Nothing came easy...

- Staff needed to feel more than lip service; they need to see support
- Being new, I had to earn trust at a rapid rate
- Not knowing the team (or leaders) I had to exhibit trust at a rapid rate
- There were times when damage control consisted of late night and weekend rounding

The answer to our success was not found in micromanagement, but rather in servant leadership and leading by example.

Moving Forward

In my experiences, lessons learned in the midst of chaos hold firm for a long time... As a leader I learned that:

- My team needs me as much as I need them
- Together we really can accomplish more
- It is ok to laugh with the people you work with
- Admit your mistakes
- Never give up... others are watching
- It really is possible to sustain a positive employee culture in the midst of chaos