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Three strategies for 2009

Tough economic times can sometimes be the best times to grow your business. Here are three things hospitals, school boards, universities and colleges should consider for 2009:

1. **Improve product flow and efficiency** – look for opportunities to reduce non-value-added activities and streamline business processes. Look for savings opportunities by negotiating better value for the organization through improved service levels or preferred pricing on products.
2. **Improve the customer experience** – look for opportunities to improve the experience of the student or the patient (your customer). People will look back at the overall experience they had and not necessarily the list of services that were provided to them.
3. **Improve technology use** – purchase the new technology that you need to get to the next level and look at new equipment to streamline operations. Make your application or registration process simple and electronic. This will help to improve the customer experience and there are deals to be made with suppliers.

Employee retention

Retaining top employees will be one of the most important things that you can do to ensure a successful year in 2009. Here are a few things that you can do:

Make them proud

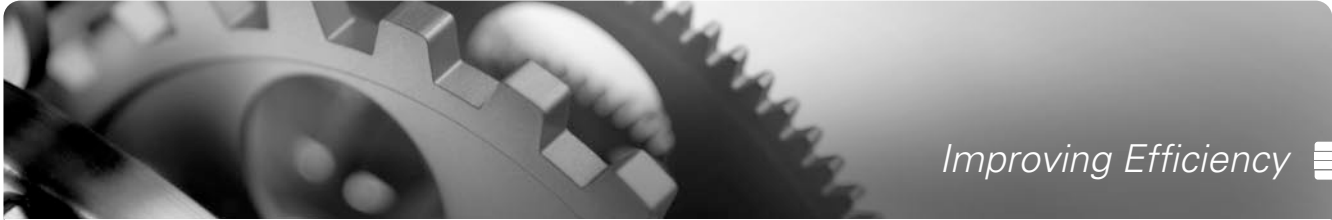
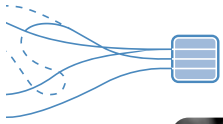
Employees want to be proud of the organization for which they work, so publish success stories in magazines and newspapers, speak at conferences and write articles about the good things the company has done and how it is well positioned for success.

Engage and challenge them

Find out initiatives that interest the employees and get them involved. This might be supporting a charitable cause, creating a corporate environmental sustainability program or starting a competition to improve company operations.

Communicate with them

Communicate the direction of the company and why it is well positioned to take advantage of the economic conditions. If the company is not well positioned, communicate what is being done to improve its condition. Intranet videos, town hall meetings, department meetings and email blasts from the President are all effective means of communicating.



Running a successful bid process

In these times of uncertainty, it is imperative that you get the most value for your organization and much of that value can be gained through running an effective competitive bidding process for goods and services. Here are the key steps to follow:

Activity	Timelines
Complete bid document	4-6 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define objectives, scope and requirements• Identify evaluation criteria and team• Document proposal guidelines	
Post bid documents	3-6 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bidders conference• Supplier questions	
Review bid responses	2-4 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask bid clarification questions• Supplier presentations and demonstrations	
Select preferred bidder	2-4 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Score responses based on evaluation criteria• Compare pricing	
Award business to preferred bidder	2 weeks

By spending more time up front in the planning process and the development of the bid documentation, you will ensure higher quality, better responses from bidders, thus achieving better value for your organization.

DON'T FORGET: When making a change to your organization's culture, stakeholders will be concerned with "what's in it for me?" You need to be prepared to identify the benefits and impacts for all stakeholders.

This newsletter was provided to you by Andrew Miller. Andrew is President of ACM Consulting Inc and helps clients improve organizational efficiency and communication. He has been providing sustainable solutions, consulting and coaching services to clients and their employees for more than 10 years, leading to a positive impact on their financial position.

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