

Transcript Details

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Finding the Innovator in Each of Us

Innovation - it is important to change healthcare, but is there an innovator in everyone? Welcome to a focus on the future of medicine on ReachMD XM 160, the Channel for Medical Professionals. I am Bruce Japsen, the healthcare reporter for the Chicago Tribune and with me today is Philip Newbold who is the president and CEO of Memorial Hospital and Health System in South Bend, Indiana. In his role, operating this mid-sized health system, Mr. Newbold is credited with changing the corporate culture at Memorial, forging alliances with a long list of companies from Wal-Mart to Whirlpool, entities that are often not top priorities for linkages negotiated by hospital executives. Among Newbold's other projects include health works, kids museum and the innovation cafe, an on-site deli converted into unique teaching lab for hospital staffers, outside visitors to learn how to use innovation to revitalize the daily work.

MR. BRUCE JAPSEN:

Dear Newbold, welcome to ReachMD XM 160, the Channel for Medical Professionals.

MR. PHILIP NEWBOLD:

Bruce, it's great to be here and I am excited about the topic of innovation.

MR. BRUCE JAPSEN:

Yes. So, tell us, you know, I find it interesting you have these linkages. A lot of people think of hospital CEOs pretty much worried about the health insurance companies, the patients, and their doctors, but you guys are reaching out into bunch of new ideas and you are going to tell us a little bit about this and how there is indeed an innovator in everyone, when let's face a lot of people don't think there is always innovation at healthcare.

MR. PHILIP NEWBOLD:

Well, that's absolutely right because we haven't really formalized innovation and we haven't really invested in it like almost every place else in America and the good news is everybody can get better in innovation. It's not something you're born with. Some people are obviously better than others at it, but everybody can get better if they have some training, if they have some skilled sets that get worked on a little bit over the weeks and months and years and if they have methodologies and tools that they can rely on. So, there has never been a better time than right now to engage our workforce and all of management at every level in the whole discipline of innovation and that is exciting and that is also a little bit daunting and scary for people who don't think they are particularly creative or they are particularly imaginative.

MR. BRUCE JAPSEN:

Well, you bring up an interesting point because you know we are in the throws of recession and some people think it might even be worse or get worse. So, how do you prepare, I mean how do you discover these innovation capabilities personally and before your company?

MR. PHILIP NEWBOLD:

Well, I'll go back to something that somebody taught me from Chicago, Larry Keeley, from an organization called Doblin. He always says innovation is about the 3 Cs and I will cover those individually and then talk a little bit about some examples. The first C is competency. Innovation is really a competency. It's something that you can learn and need to learn and that means that you have to go to some classes or school and so on we have at Memorial what we call a Wow Wizard School. It's a 4-hour class on introduction to innovation and become a little bit familiar with the tools and why it's important and so on and we actually use the methodology from the

Tom Peters' Group called Wow Projects and there is a book that supports all of this and so on, but that is an important skill set that is really, really key and if people think about innovation as a competency, then they begin to think about it just like they do quality or customer service or finances. There is something to read. There is a body of literature. There is some tools and so on that were needed and so that's the first C is this competency. The second C is culture. The way we do things around here and innovation works best in an innovate kind of culture where there is some risk-taking people dial up the clock speed of the organization to do things a little quicker, experiment prototype and so on and so the whole idea of having a more innovate culture where ideas are valued and instead of being shot down and Oh! Gosh we tried that last year, it didn't work and so on. Ideas are valued and people encourage folks to get into project teams and to get their projects rolling and put teams and prototypes together and that sort of thing, that is really important to change the culture and the last C, the third C is courage and I think that's really what you put your finger on. This is a tough time right now economically and financially for a lot of organizations. It takes a lot of courage to hang on to go the good people that you think are going to lead the innovation efforts, to hang on to a budget that is suspect because things like innovation seems soft and risky and so on and we don't really see the benefits of those quite the same way we do, may be some other project priorities and it takes a lot of courage to make sure that this weather is the storm and that we have some momentum, we have some good ideas as we come out the other side, they can be quickly implemented and grow new products, new services, new business models.

MR. BRUCE JAPSEN:

Could you give us some examples in healthcare of something that you have done and perhaps involved your medical staff in creating some innovation at Memorial or perhaps some other organizations that have used something that may be our listeners could adapt in their communities or at their hospitals and even physician groups.

MR. PHILIP NEWBOLD:

Sure, about 3-1/2 years ago, we had a group of folks that have gone to one of our Wow Wizard Schools that heard about this radical new approach of having urgent care centers inside retail settings and they actually heard about one that was in a retail setting in the twin cities up in Minneapolis and it wasn't even staffed by a physician. It was a nurse practitioner.

MR. BRUCE JAPSEN:

You mentioned this beyond the retail clinic concept.

MR. PHILIP NEWBOLD:

Yes, this is the retail clinic concept, but this is the first one in America that's set up. So, instead of just wondering about it, they jumped on an airplane, went up, mystery shopped it, went through the whole experience, came back, and said that's a great idea, but a horrible experience. We can do better. They use the tools of innovation because they have been through Wow Wizard School and so on and we went down then to Bentonville, Arkansas and made the pitch using the tools and so on and Wal-Mart liked it, spent 2-1/2 hours with us with 4 every senior people and we opened the first 1 in 2 urgent care centers in Wal-Mart in the United States here in South Bend and in Valparaiso, Indiana. So, those are examples where you can hear about somebody else's good idea, but just improve upon it and of course we took clinicians with us because medical staffs are very interested in what's going to happen with all of those people with upper respiratory infections, are going to be seeing nurses, not doctors and so on, but once they saw the whole concept because they went on a site visit and actually saw the results, they were much, much more accepting, much more comfortable and that's how you engage clinicians on the site visits and then have them involved in the design of the urgent care centers and we have many of them not only in Wal-Mart, but also in regional grocery store chains around South Bend and other places. So, that is a good way I think to break down any barriers and to get clinical folks very involved in the innovation process.

MR. BRUCE JAPSEN:

Well, if you are just joining us or even if you are new to our channel, you are listening to ReachMD and it's a special focus on the future of medicine on this network XM160, the Channel for Medical Professionals. I am Bruce Japsen, the healthcare reporter with the Chicago Tribune and I am talking today with Philip Newbold, who is the president and CEO of Memorial Healthcare System in South Bend, Indiana and he's bought a culture of innovation to his organization and we were just talking about how Memorial started one of the first urgent care centers that are now proliferated across this country.

I read a lot about this because Walgreen is based in the backyard of Chicago here and there is over a thousand of these and so you said, which is interesting, is that you got the physicians involved because there are some physicians that feel threatened by these urgent care centers. So, that seems to be a key to get the physicians involved in your innovative efforts there.

MR. PHILIP NEWBOLD:

And the way all do that, of course through site visits and getting involved that way, but also to see that if they get out ahead of some of these trends and get to stir up the way they think makes the most sense, they are much more likely to be in control and see the benefits than just being on, you know, reactionary stance, you know, with your, you know, back on your heels waiting for things to happen one place or another and, you know, urgent care is about, now about 30 years old or so and here's this new wave without physicians, think ahead 10-15 years from now what's going to be the wave that replaces the nurse practitioners in retail settings, will there be some other type of practitioner in some other settings and so we are always going to see these changes and if you can get your medical staff out ahead of that, see and participate in them, they are much more likely to be supportive and help grow it in some new ways than just be on a reactionary mode.

MR. BRUCE JAPSEN:

Yeah, that is a great example. Are there others as well that you are working on or that you have done or seeing elsewhere?

MR. PHILIP NEWBOLD:

Well, certainly everybody now is thinking about how do we create better experiences in our organization and one of those has to do with safety. Are you the safest hospital in your community or in your region or in your state and safety turns out to be a big deal as well and there have been organizations that have been leaders in safety for decades and so we need to go spend time with the DuPonts and Alcoas and an organization called BFT and so on. These are really very, very good organizations and so we need to go take those lessons learned and they may come from nuclear power, they may come from airlines, they may come from chemical and automotive and bring those in the healthcare. We'll modify them to fit certainly, but to create much safer organizations and again that's more innovative and creative than just trying to sit back and defend the way we do things and so that we think is the next big wave that's going to hit or the big safety initiatives that crop up and the more creative, the more innovative, the more they create a better patient and healing experience. Then, I think those are going to be very, very well embraced not only by the clinicians, but the patient's, the visitors, their family, and loved ones alike. So, creating exceptional experiences that are very, very safe, I think it's going to be one of those next big frontiers most every hospital in America will be after.

MR. BRUCE JAPSEN:

And what would do you if you're a listener, either a consumer or a physician and you had an innovative idea, what would you have them do in their organization?

MR. PHILIP NEWBOLD:

Well, #1, I would try to find a methodology that I could fit in. If I have an idea, there are some steps that you should go through to prototype, to develop it, to put a team around it and so on. That's the discipline in the methodology that surrounds innovation. I would line up some champions or sponsors, could be C suite people, could be other members of the medical staff or even a board member and so you have lot of support for this idea and then I move it through that with some resources and I would do it in such a way that I minimize the risk, that's what rapid prototyping does and I'd get through the various stages and if it continues to look better and better and better, it will earn a lot of resources and support with your organization, but you got to get into a methodology that enables you to make it more successful and have a greater likelihood that it is going to actually work in the real world.

MR. BRUCE JAPSEN:

And where do you see this headed, you know, in an era where, you know, reimbursement maybe getting cut from economic downturn, you know, hopefully congress would pass healthcare reform and there would be more money to go around, but we never know where that's going to head. What would you do if you were a physician or a healthcare professional in this climate relative to innovation, would you think small and ideas that cost anything or would you, what would you do?

MR. PHILIP NEWBOLD:

Well, if you look at whose going is to being successful or whatever happens in Washington or in our state capitals, if those organizations excel in 3 areas, #1 world class quality, #2 astonishing customer service and experiences, and #3 an innovation pipeline that's full of new ideas, new models, and so on. So, I would make sure that we had as much investment in quality as we do in customer service as well as we do in innovation. Those 3 need to move in tandem and work with each other, but I would focus those efforts around quality and safety meaning better outcomes and more safer environments around better patient experiences and I really would up my investment in innovation as a way to re-imagine whatever happens down the road to regulation changes in Washington, policy, payment schemes, and whatever. If things change a lot, those that are more innovative, creative are going to do better, whatever the system is and that's really what you have to bank on.

MR. BRUCE JAPSEN:

Well with that, I would like to thank Philip Newbold who has been our guest. He is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Memorial Hospital and Health System. He has joined us from his offices in South Bend, Indiana. I am Bruce Japsen with the Chicago Tribune. I have been your host and you have been listening to a special focus on the future of medicine on ReachMD XM 160, the Channel for Medical Professional.

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