

Physician Allies

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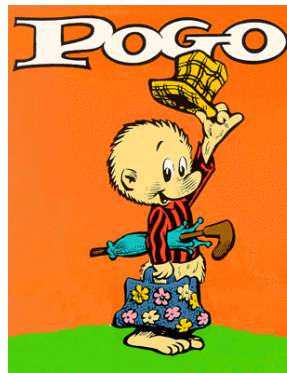
The Enemy

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*We have met the enemy,
and they are ours.*

Oliver Hazard Perry



*We have met the enemy,
and he is us.*

Walt Kelly



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Medical Staff Relationships

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The health leader's most important job is developing and nurturing good medical staff relationships.

BKD LLP

Source: Personal conversation with John Sheehan, CPA, MBA



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Strained Relationships

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CEO Quotes

- This job would be a helluva lot easier if it weren't for those damn physicians.
- They've got pediatric personalities!
- I'm going to drive that SOB out of town.
- The medical staff meeting will be held at the local hotel – we don't want blood on our conference room walls.

Or

- I'm blessed by my physicians.



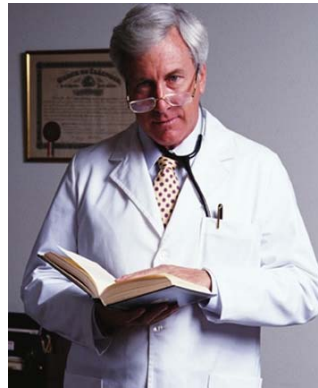
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Why bother?

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- Provide most medical care
- Deliver intrinsic value
- Knowledgeable and influential
- Powerful potential ally
- Apathy or antagonism will undermine a CEO's best plans
- Without them, hospitals are expensive hotels!



Physicians

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- The socialization of a physician
 - Culture (and behavior) is the residue of success (Edgar Schein)
 - Cultural anthropology (Ian Montgomery)
- Highly individualistic
 - Like Fight Club!
 - Generating patients and revenue
- Physicians inculcated: independent, autonomous, and in control!
 - The antithesis of teamwork
 - "Individuals play the game, teams beat the odds" (Navy Seals)
 - "Need fewer cowboys, more pit crews" (Atul Gawande)



Top Gun Physicians

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- The aviation evolution
 - Chuck Yeager to John Glenn
- Safer, but boring and commoditized medicine?
 - No! Practice science as teams, art as individuals
- Clinical systems require physician construction and upkeep
- Hospital-physician alignment is essential to delivering **value**



Sources: Wachter, RM. Expected and Unanticipated Consequence of the Quality and Information Technology Revolutions. *JAMA*. 2006 Reinertsen and Schellekens, *10 Powerful Ideas for Improving Patient Care*. IHI. 2005.



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Rural Physicians

- More need
- Reduced oversight
- Less integrated
- Fewer colleagues
- Distant backup
- Burdensome call
- Multiple work venues

The result?

- **Independence**
- **Autonomy**
- **Iron man mentality**



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How Docs Resist Change

- Don't pay attention
- Attack the data
- Maintain absolute confidence
- Follow the pack
- Defer to experts
- Bring in the lawyers
- Blame patients
- Pull rank
- Simply refuse



Source: Shaughnessy, AF and Slawson, DC. Easy Way to Resist Change. *BMJ*. Vol. 329. December 2004.





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Herding cats

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Never the Twain Shall Meet?

 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Physician</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Doer</p> <p>Solution-oriented</p> <p>1:1 interaction</p> <p>Always "on"</p> <p>Decision-maker</p> <p>Autonomous</p> <p>Patient advocate</p> <p>Professional ID</p> <p>Immediate gratification</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CEO</u></p> <p>Planner/designer</p> <p>Process-oriented</p> <p>1:N interaction</p> <p>Some down-time</p> <p>Delegator</p> <p>Collaborative</p> <p>Organization advocate</p> <p>Organizational ID</p> <p>Delayed gratification</p>
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Source: Adapted from "The Dual Role Dilemma," by Michael E. Kurtz, MS

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Yesterday's Promises

- Autonomy
- Protection
- Control



Adapted from: Silversin, J. *Leading Physicians Through Change: How to Achieve and Sustain Results*. American College of Physician Executives. 2000.

Today's Imperatives

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- Patient safety
- Quality improvement
- Patient satisfaction
- Cost reduction
- Electronic health records
- Physician recruitment
- Team work
- Community health



Adapted from: Silversin, J. *Leading Physicians Through Change: How to Achieve and Sustain Results*. American College of Physician Executives. 2000.



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Differing Views Lead to Mistrust

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CEO view

I'm concerned about quality of care;
docs are only concerned about their income

Physician view

I'm concerned about quality of care;
CEOs are only concerned about money

No shared vision!

Source: The Advisory Board Company. Physician Survey. Washington, DC. 1999



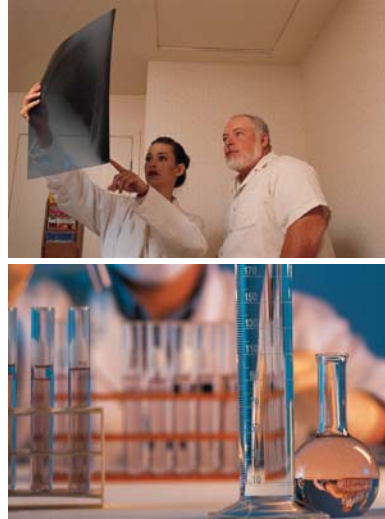
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The Consequences of Mistrust

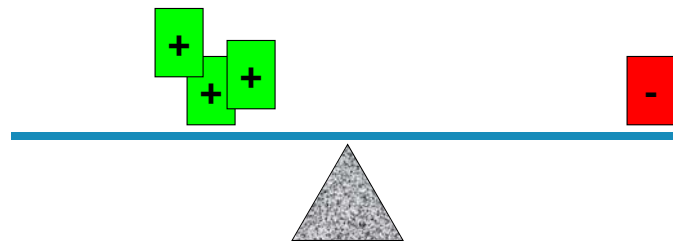
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- Physicians set up office labs and x-ray
- Hospitals set up urgent care centers
- Mistrust = competition
- Duplication = ↑ costs
- ↓ community confidence
- ↑ patient outmigration



The Balance of Trust

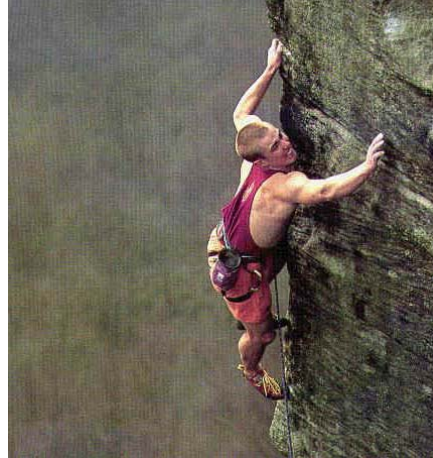
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Our Challenge List

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- Differing personalities
- Absent shared vision
- Collaboration unnecessary
- Cottage industry obstacles
- Physicians not invited
- Health system boards
- Competition

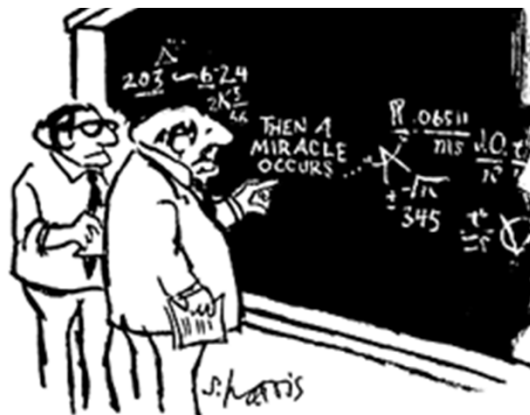


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Discussion

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"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

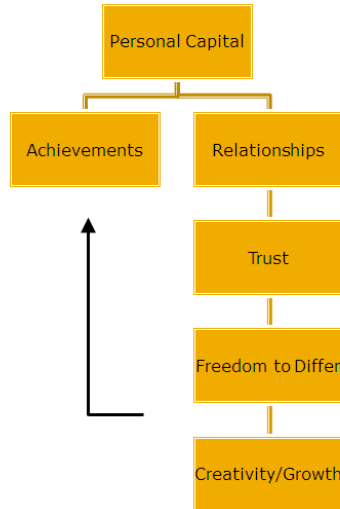


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Creative Problem Solving

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Source: Discussions with Hartzell Cobb, Mountain States Group



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Mutual Interest

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- ❑ Develop a philosophy of mutual benefit / shared vision
- ❑ Keep the hidden agenda out
- ❑ Solicit meaningful physician input early and often, and then act on it
- ❑ Engage physicians in balancing business and patient priorities
- ❑ Set realistic goals together, go for early wins, **celebrate!**



Adapted from: LeTourneau, B. From Co-opetition to Collaboration. *Journal of Healthcare Management*. 49:3. May/June 2004.



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Physician Leadership

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- ❑ Identify, mentor, and educate physician leaders
- ❑ Invest in physician leaders
- ❑ Reward physicians in ways they value
- ❑ Attend a leadership conference together
- ❑ Get to know physicians on a personal level – meet one-on-one



Adapted from: LeTourneau, B. From Co-opetition to Collaboration. *Journal of Healthcare Management*. 49:3. May/June 2004.



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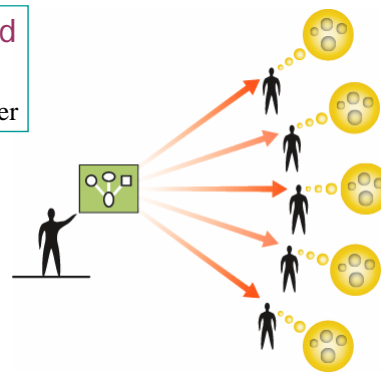
Communication

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During times of change, leaders should triple their efforts at communication

Peter Drucker

- ❑ Ask how, when, and where
- ❑ Multiple media, multiple times
- ❑ Get out and about (MBWA)
- ❑ Focus on interest, not position
- ❑ Provide data transparency, but do not overstate discrete measure importance



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Meetings

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- ❑ Invite physician input early
- ❑ Involve physicians in strategic and capital planning
- ❑ Schedule meetings and select venues appropriately
- ❑ Present actionable information, not data
- ❑ Delineate next steps
- ❑ Always follow-up as promised



Engage Physicians!

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Physicians can be astonishing allies

Starts and ends with **relationships** built on **trust**

- Trust – engages the mind
- Truth – engages the heart
- Teamwork – realizes the vision



Healthy People and Places

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