

Chapter 6

Intensive Care

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer-centric organizations are those firms that seek to gain a strategic advantage by focusing on the customer (as opposed to the firm, product line/service(s), processes, financial statements, etc), thereby more effectively offering goods/services that meet the needs and wants of the customer. As an industry, healthcare has the added challenge of needing to offer customized products/services that not only address the needs/wants of customers, but must also do so in an ethical and sensitive way. Patients availing the products/services of healthcare professionals, more-often-than-not, require psychological support in addition to the requisite physical care and/or treatment. It has been well established that one's psychological state has dramatic impact on the physical and vice versa. This case is set in the Middle East, and centers around the two main concepts of: 1). Customer-centric business practices, and 2). ethical healthcare behavior, respectively. The case, itself, is closely based on the author's first-hand experience. Identifying information has been modified so as not to reveal the identities of the institution, managing enterprise, or employees.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The Royal Women's Infirmary is located in a major city in the Middle East and has been operating for more than three decades with a current labor force of over 1,000 employees (nearly 20% of which are doctors and nurses). The Royal Women's Infirmary specializes in the areas of obstetric and neonatal care. With the capacity to

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handle well over 200 inpatients, a large ICU, outpatient care, and specialty clinics, the infirmary is viewed as being large by Middle East standards. As is common for hospitals seeking to maintain international standards, the Royal Women's Infirmary is a 'jointly commissioned' venture, owned by the local government, and managed/operated by a Western specialist organization. Due to growth, the Royal Women's Infirmary recently expanded its Neo-natal and Urgent Care units, in addition to its ambulatory services.

SETTING THE STAGE

Like most organizations, the Royal Women's Infirmary has 'mission' and 'vision' statements, which they proudly display to the public. These statements speak of 'compassion' and 'family centeredness'. The infirmary further declares 'core values' including: 'care and compassion,' 'ownership and accountability,' 'respect and cultural sensitivity,' 'integrity,' 'commitment to quality,' a holistic and patient-centered approach,' 'quality,' and so forth.

The Royal Women's Infirmary maintains memberships in several international healthcare organizations, not the least of which is the University Healthcare Consortium (UHC). The UHC was formed in 1984 (Chicago), for the self-stated purpose of:

Providing the lens through which the organization assesses all it does, UHC's mission is to create knowledge, foster collaboration, and promote change to help members succeed.

Moreover, the UHC's vision maintains an objective to:

...help members attain national leadership in health care by achieving excellence in quality, safety, and cost-effectiveness. (About university hospital consortium, n.d.)

Although the international healthcare industry represents great potential for profitability; especially in the private sector, Western healthcare professionals have been guided, for centuries, by a code of ethical conduct known as the 'Hippocratic oath'; see the sample of a modern version below:

I swear to fulfill, to the best of my ability and judgment, this covenant:

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