

Find your strategic vision and own it

It's easier to lead from the front. When our Chief Experience Officer position was created, I had no playbook to guide me except knowing that I needed to make patient-centered relationships a priority. Being on the front lines of patient care helped me understand customer pain points and set my strategic priorities. Lead with the mindset of 'How does this impact our patients?'—or customers, for that matter—and success will follow.

You can't execute without vision. All businesses must understand their mission before putting action plans into place. Ours is putting the patient first, so we're constantly asking ourselves, 'What are we doing to address the three P's—Process, People, and Patients?' When everyone has a clear understanding of why they come to work every day, it becomes much easier to execute upon and accomplish your objectives.

It's okay to walk away from good ideas. New endeavors, such as developing a Patient Experience strategy, can sometimes require experimenting with pilot programs to address underperforming areas. People can get emotionally attached to good ideas, however, that can end up taking you in the wrong direction. There is nothing wrong with shifting gears and undoing what you've started if necessary. The key is staying focused on what you're ultimately trying to achieve before pushing forward.

Reputations come from unlikely places. A company's brand should project a positive image that extends beyond the front doors of its buildings. For example, our parking garage associates may not be direct Cleveland Clinic employees, but our patients don't always realize that. This is important since any interaction—no matter how big or small—can factor into a patient's overall care experience and level of satisfaction, which will ultimately reflect back upon us.

Distance is relative. Customer inclusiveness is vital to our Patient Experience strategy, and we constantly look for new ways to bring more patients into the fold. There are plenty of opportunities to grow distance health services beyond building more physical locations, such as through social media or with health service kiosks that connect remotely to physicians. Healthcare's future will reward those who can engage a wide variety of patient populations in as many ways as possible.

Your partners should reflect your purpose. If you can help me achieve my goals, then I will want to do business with you. An



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ideal supply chain partner is one that understands our vision—that all good ideas must be patient-centered—and that we own this philosophy. The best suppliers frequently ask themselves, 'How can we make our people look and act more like our customers?' and can identify those characteristics from top to bottom.



Dr. James Merlino, author of the new book *Service Fanatics: How to Build Superior Patient Experience The Cleveland Clinic Way*, is facilitating the Patient Experience Summit at HIDA's 2014 Streamlining Healthcare Conference, September 30-October 2, Chicago, to explain how providers are making healthcare safer, more effective, and patient-friendly.