Innovation in Leadership and Management

Each year, the International Hospital Federation (IHF) allocates awards to new and innovative ideas in hospital and health service delivery systems. In this issue of the World Hospitals and Health Services Journal, we showcase some of the winners of the IHF innovation and recognition awards from the most recent round of applicants with a focus on innovation in leadership and management.

Business schools and schools of health policy, leadership and management throughout the world have seen an explosion in new and innovative ideas during recent years.

From hospitals to high-tech firms, innovation drives sustained success. Whether you're building a new business, transforming an established one, or leading a product R&D team, you'll need to create and nurture a culture of experimentation, with an inherent tolerance of failure, and innovation thereby evolving a more agile business.

According to a recent review by McKinsey Global Institute, almost half the jobs people are currently hired to do may be automated in the near future. Health care, despite its traditional human-labor intensiveness, is not immune from this trend. From health care delivery systems, to insurance companies to pharmaceutical and medical technology firms, harnessing robust data science processes and other techno-economic trends first drive survivability and then sustained success. To thrive and advance in this new world, health care professionals require different skill-sets, mindsets particularly around risk and ambiguity tolerance, and tool-sets that enable deeper management of the health care enterprise. Whether you're building a new business, transforming an established one, or leading a product R&D team, you need to create and nurture a culture of experimentation and innovation. Doing things the same old way won't work any longer.

Forbes Magazine recently featured an article by Robert B. Tucker which highlighted “Six Innovation Leadership Skills Everybody Needs To Master” Forbes, 2017 (Feb 9).

The following are the six critical leadership skills that will help adapt your career path in the coming years:

1. Continuously Embracing an Opportunity Mode Of Thinking
2. Being Adept at Assaulting Outdated Assumptions
3. Developing Empathy for The End Customer
4. Proactively Thinking Ahead of The Curve
5. Continuously Fortifying New Ideas

6. Being Adept at Building Buy-Ins

The articles featured in this issue of the WHHS Journal discuss some of these innovative ideas in leadership and management.

First, they include advances in precision medicine, also known as personalized medicine, which has the potential of transforming disease management based on the ability to transform massive data sets into actionable treatment plans. But, inefficiencies and stale approaches in leadership and management are often an impediment to the advancement of this breakthrough treatment approach. To overcome this shortcoming, precision medicine programs must be more closely aligned with the health care, scientific, technological and business communities to leverage results and speed progress in this growing area. This requires novel business solutions for building productive partnerships in ways previously neglected by health care and reducing bottlenecks in the development, approval and clinical use of targeted immunotherapies.

Second, today's health care leaders and managers need to respond to the intense pressure of delivering greater value and efficiency while guaranteeing high quality of care and services to broader populations. This requires health care professionals to innovate, build new capabilities and to provide quality and compassionate care in a cost-effective, coordinated, and integrated manner. All of this needs to be done in the face of shifting health policies, new expectations for improved outcomes and dwindling resources. Simply put: we have to do more with less.

Third, many of the articles in this issue emphasize the concept of Disruptive Innovation, a concept developed over 30 years ago by Clayton Christensen from the Harvard Business School and a term that now has become widely used in the business community from Wall Street to the Silicon Valley. It encourages decision-makers to understand how disruption works and determine when to invest in successful core versus disruptive business models While the extent to which true core disruption is currently occurring in health care may be debate, the convergence of multiple change forces is unmistakable and unparalleled in recent history.

The International Hospital Federation is committed to working with its membership in fostering a positive leadership and management approach focused on harnessing such disruptive innovation, while ensuring quality care for patients.