

New Report Offers Transformational Roadmap to Bridge Strategy and Action

By Diana Mahoney

With the understanding that “more of the same” is not a viable road to success in today’s value-based, consumer-driven health care marketplace, health care executives and senior leaders are being challenged to think differently about how to achieve the rate and magnitude of system-level transformation needed to consistently deliver safe, high-quality, patient-centered care. A new [report](#) from Press Ganey provides strategic guidance for mapping this course and accelerating progress toward the destination.

Guided by key Transformational Principles™ and supported by new data linking workforce engagement with clinical and patient experience outcomes, the report, *Accelerating Transformation: Translating Strategy into Action*, outlines the key elements of a transformational roadmap and defines the following three steps health systems must take to see it through to fruition.

1. Align under one enterprise-wide transformational vision.
2. Build a change-ready culture by engaging the workforce and empowering leaders.
3. Adopt an integrated data and management strategy.

The approach encompasses several foundational considerations, including an understanding of the performance interdependencies across safety, quality, patient experience, and workforce engagement; the need for leaders across each of these domains to work together to advance integrated improvement efforts; and an appreciation of the fact that there are no short-cuts to excellence. Sustained performance improvement requires honest and critical organizational self-reflection and a willingness to make the structure, process, and culture adjustments needed to support transformational change.

The first step described above, aligning under a transformational vision, requires senior leadership to define and clearly communicate system-wide performance expectations. This demands active thinking and thoughtful action around outcomes. Performance across of measures of safety, quality, patient experience and engagement, is the yardstick for strategy in health care. Organizations need to analyze these data to understand where they are on the transformation spectrum and where they need to go. Moreover, because outcomes across these measures are highly interrelated, optimizing improvement

At a Glance

- The 2019 Press Ganey Strategic Insights report, [Accelerating Transformation: Translating Strategy into Action](#), offers a roadmap for executing a strategic vision built around integrated performance data and cultural readiness.
- New data presented in this report linking workforce engagement with Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades and HCAHPS Summary Star Ratings adds to the growing body of research demonstrating interdependencies across patient and workforce outcomes and points to the pivotal role of organizational culture in health care.
- Leadership development, cross-functional partnerships, and an integrated data and management are key considerations for delivering on the patient promise of safe, high-quality, patient centered care and achieving and sustaining transformational change.

opportunities requires cross-functional collaboration among business units and a high degree of visibility into each other's efforts, which can be facilitated through the development of an integrated performance dashboard.

In order for transformational change to take root, the culture into which it is sewn must be ready to receive it. Cultural readiness can be evaluated by collecting structured and unstructured feedback of stakeholders at every level of the organization. Structured feedback around employee, nurse and physician engagement and resilience can be gathered through comprehensive annual engagement surveys and regular pulse checks, and unstructured feedback can be obtained through interviews, roundtable discussions, focus groups, and a review of survey comments.

When the workforce assessment uncovers potential transformation roadblocks—low engagement, lack of alignment with the transformational vision, and low confidence in managers' ability to lead change, for example—time and effort must be focused on fortifying the culture to engage the workforce in the improvement journey.

New research described in the report reinforce the importance of workforce engagement in achieving integrated performance objectives by examining associations between organizations' percentage of units with high or low engagement and key performance outcomes. Using workforce engagement data, Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades, and HCAHPS Summary Star Ratings for 253 health care facilities for which safety, patient experience, and workforce engagement data were available, researchers showed that substantially more organizations with a high percentage of highly engaged units earned the top Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade and higher star ratings compared to organizations with a high percentage of lowly engaged units.

In addition, longitudinal analyses showed that improving engagement in Tier 3 work groups resulted in meaningful improvement in both safety and patient experience outcomes. These data highlight the importance of identifying and improving the engagement of Tier 3 work units to prepare the workforce for transformation. One of the most powerful tools for achieving this is leadership development. A culture defined by a highly engaged workforce doesn't develop on its own. It's created by the leaders, then cascaded throughout the organization so everyone feels empowered to help the organization achieve its mission, setting the stage for sustainable success. For this reason, a systemic and explicit approach for evaluating and enhancing the readiness of leaders to become true change agents should be part of the transformational plan.

The third step in building the bridge from transformational vision to execution is the development of an integrated data and management strategy. As noted, performance data are the centerpiece around which perspectives, processes, and priorities converge. In this regard, an integrated strategy brings all the pieces together is a key consideration. Although the specific strategies will differ by organization based on needs and resources, all of them should be built around the following core features:

- High-quality data
- Integrated analytics
- Shared key performance indicators
- Cross-functional input
- Clear and proactive communication
- Accountability

Organizations that incorporate these considerations into their data strategies are well positioned to accelerate transformation and sustain continuous improvement.

To a large degree, true transformation involves mastering and marketing—internally and externally—system-level change that supports progress toward a unified vision. In today’s dynamic health care environment, this requires moving away from siloed strategies that drive short-term, incremental performance improvements and toward collaborative initiatives that leverage the interdependencies between safety, quality, patient experience, and workforce engagement.