

Ten Habits That Lead To Success

by MICHELE MEYER

Your success depends on more than your vision and long-range planning. What you do in the short term — indeed, each day — can make you a more effective leader and colleague, help the bottom line, and tilt probabilities toward your success.

Top healthcare executives shared 10 surprising ways to up your game daily with *Managed Healthcare Executive*®.

1

Write thank-you notes

Jennifer Vachon, executive vice president at Blue Cross Blue Shield Association in Chicago, ends her workday with emails thanking staffers. “We tend to quickly move to the next thing,



VACHON

but this forces me to reflect,” says Vachon, who may commend a small gesture or a major effort. “It doesn’t take long but means so much to my team, making it a great time investment.”

2

Learn staff members’ names and special traits

A casual conversation led to a daily resolution for Mooyeon Oh-Park, MD, MS, senior vice president and chief medical officer at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital. Oh-Park had just joined the physi-

cal rehab center in White Plains, New York, when an employee revealed knowledge about what her job required.



OH-PARK

“Our strength as an institution is the diversity of our people,” she says. “I develop closer connections and know who can troubleshoot creatively.”

3

Hold morning huddles to problem solve

At Stanford Health Care in Palo Alto, California, leaders hold daily 15-minute meetings with their teams to brainstorm solutions for the day’s challenges. “It helps formalize touching base with your team each day,”



VYAS

says Alpa Vyas, vice president of

patient experience. “Leaders understand what needs to be done, and employees are less reluctant to report problems because they know there’s a mechanism to solve them.”

4

Use your commute to hone up on business skills with audiobooks

Alexander Ronzino, founder and CEO at Coalition Recovery, a substance abuse treatment center in Tampa, Florida, listens to nonfiction management and finance books en route. “I find the perspectives of CEOs and entrepreneurs most candid and useful versus those of management consultants.”



RONZINO

Military strategy and priority-setting audiobooks are most appealing to Oh-Park. Her recent favorites are “Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less” by Greg McKeown and “The Art of War” by Sun Tzu.

5

Smile and breathe deeply

“During moments of high anxiety, I noticed my mood could be felt by those around me — and was

infectious," says Oh-Park. "That didn't help anyone." Smiling eased her distress and the distress of others. "A positive mindset helps us find the best solutions."

6 Get in early, before the members of your team

It pays to arrive a half-hour to an hour before anyone else, say several healthcare executives. "I never was a morning person — until I opted to become one," quips Ronzino. The extra time and clear head give him a chance to prepare mentally and adjust his schedule to face potential challenges. "It's made a tremendous difference in my overall productivity," says Ronzino. Likewise, Ernie Schwefler, chief contracting officer for the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine, arrives early to focus "before fires have to be put out. Knowing my priorities enables me to be nimble." Rhonda Mims, executive vice president and chief public affairs officer at Well-



MIMS

Care Health Plans in Tampa starts her workday at home with her eyes shut and mind open. "That helps balance me," she says, adding that as a mother it's her sole chance at solitude. "I run through any talking points mentally."

7 Prepare for the next day before leaving the office

Karen Murray, MD, physician in chief of Cleveland Clinic Children's and president of the Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital for Rehabilitation, ends her day by getting ready for the next one. She might study an applicant's CV, review the topics to be discussed at a meeting, or reserve time to talk with influencers. "I walk into the office with clear goals and the security of knowing people's likely decisions," says Murray.



MURRAY

8 Truly listen

Talking can be so easy, especially if others believe

they must listen to you because you're the boss. But Murray strives to listen — and listen intently. "Ultimately, everything is my responsibility," she says. "So, if someone comes to me with an opportunity or concern, I try to really hear what they're saying and what they're not saying."

9 Touch base with subordinates informally

Don't wait for organized meetings to check in with your team, suggests Schwefler. He keeps his door open and regularly strolls through the workspace to speak with his team. "You have a view [of what's happening in your organization], but those in the trenches may have a different one," Schwefler says. For Ronzino, "casual chats foster a culture of collaboration and result in projects getting completed faster."



SCHWEFLER

10 Schedule tasks for when you will do them best

With so many roles at Cleveland Clinic, Murray is careful to block out time for each function, whether it is an administrative task, a clinical visit, or writing papers. "I block time for when I'm most productive at that task," she says. She also checks in with staff beforehand. "Medicine is a team sport, and the workflow needs to be best for everyone involved." ■

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