

# **Talent Management at York Central Hospital**

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## **Introduction**

York Central Hospital (YCH) is a full service, 472-bed community hospital located in Richmond Hill, Ontario serving primarily the Richmond Hill and Vaughan areas of York Region. Services include Emergency, Acute Inpatient, Complex Care, Rehabilitation, Diagnostic, Palliative, Ambulatory, Rehabilitation and Long Term Care services. YCH is also a regional leader in Chronic Kidney Disease/Dialysis and Stroke Care.

The YCH catchment area of southern York Region is and will continue to be for the foreseeable future, one of the fastest growing areas of the province. Care volumes reflect this demographic pressure. In 2009-10 YCH had total admissions of 18, 427, emergency room visits of 76,655 and ambulatory visits of 234,284.<sup>1</sup>

To respond to this current and expected growth, the province is planning to build a second hospital. This new facility would operate within the YCH corporate structure.

## **Talent Management Key to Human Resources Strategy at YCH**

This is an important aspect of the context for the current approach to talent management at YCH. YCH view of talent management is a broad systemic approach to the strategic recruitment, retention and development of a highly skilled and optimally prepared workforce. The Hospital's approach to talent management is intended to ensure employees are engaged and utilized to their maximum capacity both now and into their two-site future.

The current Human Resources Strategic Plan, 2011 – 2014<sup>2</sup>, reflects this emphasis. Planning objectives include:

- To employ best practice tools and techniques to support an effective and strategic talent management program;
- To support an environment where appropriate and progressive professional growth and development is available to all employees;
- To produce a robust succession planning process focused on strategic developmental needs to generate an effective leadership pipeline;
- To redesign career paths to provide non-traditional access to new opportunities – lateral progression, delayed retirement, full-time mentorship; and
- To ensure all employees have a development plan.

Span of control for clinical leadership and effective support for the middle management group is an additional key factor that informs the planned direction.

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<sup>1</sup> York Central Hospital Quick Facts, 2010-11, York Central Hospital

<sup>2</sup> Miller, J, Human Resources Strategic Plan 2011-2014, York Central Hospital

Jen Miller, Chief Human Resources Officer notes, “Downsizing in healthcare and flattening of the organizational structure has resulted in ever growing portfolios for managers. In order to effectively deal with the enlarged spans of responsibility, it is increasingly important that managers are provided with the infrastructure that will support their success. A systemic talent management strategy will provide these leaders with the tools and education they need to effectively manage the demands of a complex and demanding environment.”

This article highlights selected aspects of YCH larger talent management approach that serve to position them for the future and builds capacity throughout the organization. The graphic below indicates the selected strategies and tools for each group that will be discussed here.

Group	Talent Management Enablers		
Executive Leadership Team	360° Assessment & Development	Extended Disc Individual, Pair and Team Analysis	
Middle-Level Leadership and Management			Simplified Performance Appraisal
Staff			

The three goals for the use of these enablers are to:

- Identify and build leadership competency
- Improve inter-personal communication and team effectiveness
- Simplify staff development planning

While the entire organization is expected to benefit from the approach, the enablers are aligned with attention to assist the lynch-pin “sandwich group” of middle managers who, as previously noted, have the pressure of both significant leadership accountability and significant span of control responsibility.

## **Goal One: Identify and Build Leadership Competency**

In 2008, YCH became one of the seven sites selected to be a pilot group for the development of the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) Leadership Talent management competency framework.

An element of the process was the utilization with the leadership group of the multi-rater feedback tool based on the OHA competency model. This experience established the value of the framework itself and since that time the competency framework has been significantly integrated in the organizational management and accountability approach. In particular, the competencies serve as an integral part of the annual leadership accountability agreements. “The competency framework that we have adopted provides a valuable benchmark against which we are able to assess leadership performance. It serves as a critical enabler for our evolution as a knowledge based organization and supports our cultural transformation quite effectively,” states Miller.

Significant change in the leadership group within the last two years has been a catalyst to the next stage in the integration of the competency framework. Specifically, a plan is now in place to roll out the 360° assessment throughout the entire leadership group. This will provide a foundation for a more robust but focused succession and leadership development process to address the significant growth required for a two-site future.

To date, assessments have been completed with the Executive Leadership Team. A roll-out to directors, managers, coordinators and selected informal leadership roles as well as board members will be completed this fiscal year.

## **Goal Two: Improve Inter-Personal Communication and Team Effectiveness**

The next step was to introduce an assessment tool that could both support team and individual development and improve team communications and dynamics.

From 2006 to 2010, supported by HTLP Project funding, YCH used Personalysis as a key aspect of its assessment strategy. Personalysis is a proprietary personality assessment tool that was developed in the 1970’s by behavioral scientist James R. Noland specifically for application in the corporate and business community. Personalysis outlines the personality on three levels: the rational, socialized and instinctive and depicts each in a simple four-color chart.<sup>3</sup>

In this four year period, most of the leadership team completed the Personalysis assessment and attended several Personalysis-focused development workshops. In total, approximately 200 Personalysis profiles were administered to leadership members.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.personalalysis.com/About\\_Us/](http://www.personalalysis.com/About_Us/)

Many participants found the simplicity and accuracy of the tool compelling. The language of Personalanalysis became a common and helpful shorthand within the leadership group.

While the tool was embraced by the leadership team it simply was not a cost-effective solution to administer organization-wide. This became a strategic impediment to the continued use of the tool.

To remedy this, YCH recently made the decision to move to the Extended Disc tool with the support of HTLP Project funding. Extended Disc was a strong choice because it proved to be cost effective organization-wide, and, like Personalanalysis, Extended Disc is a four-quadrant assessment tool that has been developed based on the work of Carl Jung and William Moulton-Marston who “defined a four dimensional behaviour map”.<sup>4</sup> The foundational similarity between the two will allow for an easy transition for previous Personalanalysis users.

Extended Disc, developed in Finland in the 1990’s, has grown to become one of the top three companies in the field of personality assessment.<sup>5</sup> Extended Disc theory does not classify people as “good” or “bad”. Rather, it describes the person’s natural relation mode or behavioral style in different situations. This knowledge provides the ability to understand one’s own behaviours and communication styles as well as those of others. Adjustment of one’s own behaviour to better suit the needs of the situation can improve understanding and proactively circumvent communication problems.<sup>6</sup> The Personal Analysis is the foundation of the tool set. From this, Work Pair Analysis and Team Analysis can be compiled.

Two recently hired YCH employees are certified in the Extended Disc tool and will lead the facilitation efforts in the organization. This in-house expertise will provide additional significant cost savings to the alternative of retaining external consulting support as was previously required with Personalanalysis.

While roll-out is in its beginning stages, the tool was recently used on a large interdisciplinary Lean Kaizen process improvement team with good success and several team sessions are also scheduled in the near future.

### **Goal Three: Simplify Staff Development Planning**

An effective companion to the 360 leadership process and Extended Disc assessment is the introduction of a simplified performance appraisal process to be used organization-wide.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.extendeddisc.com/Extended-DISC-R/History>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.extendeddisc.com/Extended-DISC-R/Our-Company>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.extendeddisc.com/Extended-DISC-R/Unique-Features>

While the most recently used tool had significant strengths, it was a narrative-driven, multi-page document that was generally viewed by both managers and employees as too long and time-consuming to complete effectively. The result was a below-target completion rate and the resultant lack of performance planning and documentation.

The need for a more effective approach was evident. A significantly streamlined tool has now been developed and is in the pilot stage. This tool is a hybrid of several models developed both internally and shared by YCH with other facilities. The new tool is not only more user-friendly but it will allow for more effective roll-up and trending. Once fully implemented, the expectation is that 80% of employees receive performance appraisals and follow up yearly.

Miller underlines the importance of this process. “The performance appraisal is likely the most misunderstood tool in the Manager toolbox yet. Best practice confirms that it is one of the most meaningful and supportive managerial strategies. If done correctly, it can have a strong impact on an employee’s commitment to organizational goals while reinforcing the link between individual and organizational performance. It is also a relationship builder - regular feedback helps promote continued improvement and builds trust. A simplified tool gives managers the ability to assess every employee annually, and ensures that staff are receiving the feedback and developmental opportunities they need to support our mission to be the best community hospital in Canada.”

## **Conclusion**

YCH has been on a capacity building journey with the assistance of the HTLP Project for a number of years. It remains committed to implementing a broad and robust talent management strategy to ensure quality service to patients and customers now and into the future. As discussed, current key goals include, to:

- Identify and build leadership competency
- Improve inter-personal communication and team effectiveness
- Simplify staff development planning

The Hay Group / OHA 360° assessment, the Extended Disc tool-set and a streamlined approach to performance appraisal are among the current strategies to achieve these goals.