



HIRING A LONG-TERM PHILANTHROPY EXECUTIVE: ALIGNING WITH C-SUITE LEADERSHIP

Retention of development professionals in health care philanthropy is disheartening. With the average tenure of a health care philanthropy officer at 16 months and the cost to replace one averaging \$127,000, it's understandable why hiring these philanthropy leaders is a source of angst for many organizations, even without turbulent times.

Hiring a successful philanthropy executive is a daunting task in a field where there is only one qualified candidate for every five available positions. A successful track record of managing a team, fostering volunteers, developing donor relationships and increasing philanthropic resources is not enough. These skills are critical, but they need to be complimented with a strong ability to work well with other executives beyond their department or foundation. These extended capabilities help solidify long-term tenure and success and are a must to effectively lead during times of

uncertainty and shifting priorities in health care. Although these skills are essential in finding the right leader who can navigate and build healthy, productive partnerships with C-suite executives, they are seldom vetted during the search process. Successful philanthropy is the result of being

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strategically aligned with these crucial partners to create game changing impact. Understanding each executive's specific areas of responsibility, what matters most in achieving their goals and how to best partner are core ingredients for a unified philanthropic vision. This success often results in long-tenured leadership and team members.

Let's consider a few of the C-suite team. Finding a leader who will ensure their needs, goals and visions align with philanthropy is a tremendous step in hiring the right candidate.

Key Executive Partners

- **The chief medical officer (CMO)** articulates the clinical impact of philanthropy, provides access to medical leadership and staff, helps identify and secure access to potential physician champions and supports a culture of gratitude. They build relationships between the health care organization and medical staff and serve as mentors for physicians at a time when burnout has reached epidemic proportions. Engaging the CMO as a partner in advancing philanthropy, providing organizational funds to build an ideal clinical care environment and serving as an ally in building a patient-centered culture has valuable impact.
 - **The chief patient experience officer (CPXO)** focuses on the continuum and entirety of the patient care experience. They ensure all facets of a complex delivery system meet or exceed patient and family needs, expectations and preferences. They enable seamless integration of patient experience efforts with philanthropy, while modeling and supporting a culture of gratitude. Cultivating this relationship helps to align expectations and efforts in patient and family interactions within all areas of the organization, while working to exceed patient experience.
 - **The chief nursing officer (CNO)** maintains clinical care and patient care standards while overseeing the entire nursing staff. The CNO is a valuable partner to philanthropy by facilitating access to the nursing frontline,
- supporting efforts to build a culture of gratitude and aligning existing recognition programs with foundation efforts. Your leader can develop this partnership by establishing and maintaining continuous communication among the philanthropy team and clinical staff, ensuring there is a united approach to patient and family interaction and by building a positive, patient-centered culture.
- **The chief compliance officer (CCO)** ensures organizational compliance with laws, regulatory requirements, policies and procedures, including HIPAA. The CCO is often the linchpin in securing the philanthropy department's access to patient information such as name, birthdate, area of service and treating physician name, all allowable under the March 2013 HITECH updates. To strengthen this relationship, philanthropy officers should know the rules of HIPAA and keep ongoing dialog around the data and its impact on philanthropic efforts, always erring on the side of being respectful and conservative about the use and storage of data.

Finding a qualified candidate who has a proven track record in cultivating donor relationships and securing funding resources, as well as valuing and prioritizing partnerships with the entire leadership team, is crucial for long-term sustainability. Experience has shown that having recruitment expertise in only health care or solely philanthropy leadership just isn't enough. Relying on resources who bring both health care and philanthropy expertise, as well as extensive networks, results in efficiently and effectively finding the best candidate to elevate mission impact.

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