

Engaging with the C-Suite

“ What are YOU doing to ensure that your CEO and the entire leadership team are engaged and partnering with you?”



*“I’m starting with the man in the mirror
I’m asking him to change his ways
No message could’ve been any clearer
If you wanna make the world a better place
Take a look at yourself and then make the change”¹*

I recently made a trip to New York City and enjoyed seeing a couple of Broadway shows. *MJ The Musical*, about the life of Michael Jackson, was phenomenal and a must see if you are a fan of his music. As the song “Man in the Mirror” was performed, I couldn’t help but think of an upcoming presentation I am giving about engaging with the C-Suite. While I realize this song is about doing more personally to make the world a better place for all, it also reminded me of the role we personally have to ensure that we as health care professionals have the attention of our C-Suite.

Philanthropy executives are often frustrated by what they perceive as a lack of interest in philanthropy by their hospital executives. I hear from many clients that their standing meetings with their CEOs frequently get pushed or canceled altogether (understandably due to COVID-19 over the past couple years). When you have a list of items that requires critical input from your CEO, it can be difficult to delay discussion and easy to feel that philanthropy

isn't a priority. Others explain the challenge of not being included in leadership team meetings. But what are YOU doing to ensure that your CEO and the entire leadership team are inclusive of, engaged with and partnering with you? Consider the following questions as you examine how you can strengthen your engagement and partnership with your C-Suite:

1 Does the C-Suite understand the benefits of gratitude and its impact on culture?

Philanthropy is no longer something nice to have. It is a critical revenue source that should be included in the strategic budget of your organization. To help your C-Suite better understand this, learn how gratitude can positively impact many of the challenges that keep executives awake at night. We are finally seeing some empirical data to support what we have suspected—gratitude does move the needle on patient satisfaction and employee engagement scores. Through the facilitation of gratitude, philanthropy can support and strengthen a values-based culture.

2 Are you able to demonstrate the impact of philanthropy on the bottom line?

Be sure you understand and can explain the return on investment (ROI) for philanthropy and operating margin when compared to hospital operations. This comparison is powerful and an excellent method of engagement with your hospital leadership, especially the CFO.

3 What can you offer through philanthropy to help executives reach their goals?

Demonstrate to your executives what you can do to support them in their work. If you are always asking them to help you through donor visits, grateful patient referrals, participating in videos and other activities, it's time to offer help and support to them. Discretionary effort is key as you help them see the value of your partnership, knowledge and expertise.

If you are yearning for a stronger engagement from your C-Suite, look in the mirror and determine what you can do to build trust and partnerships. We all know the value of philanthropy to our organizations, and you can help your executives recognize that value through proactive approaches that help philanthropy and your organization shine.

About the Author: [Pamela Ronka Maroulis, CFRE](#), is a Principal Consultant with Accordant. She can be reached at Pam@AccordantHealth.com or by connecting through [LinkedIn](#).

“ We are finally seeing some empirical data to support what we have suspected—**gratitude does move the needle on patient satisfaction and employee engagement scores.** Through the facilitation of gratitude, philanthropy can support and strengthen a values-based culture.”

¹ Source: Musixmatch, Songwriters: Glen Ballard / Siedah Garrett, Man in the Mirror lyrics © Yellowbrick Road Music