



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department



BRIDGING ORGANIZATIONAL DIVIDES

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2019 Project Management Symposium

Session Objectives

- Describe organizational design models that support increased collaboration across teams
- Demonstrate benefits of organizational design in aligning program teams to achieve strategic goals
- Describe how a One Team approach can be used to increase collaboration

Most projects span multiple departments and organizations.

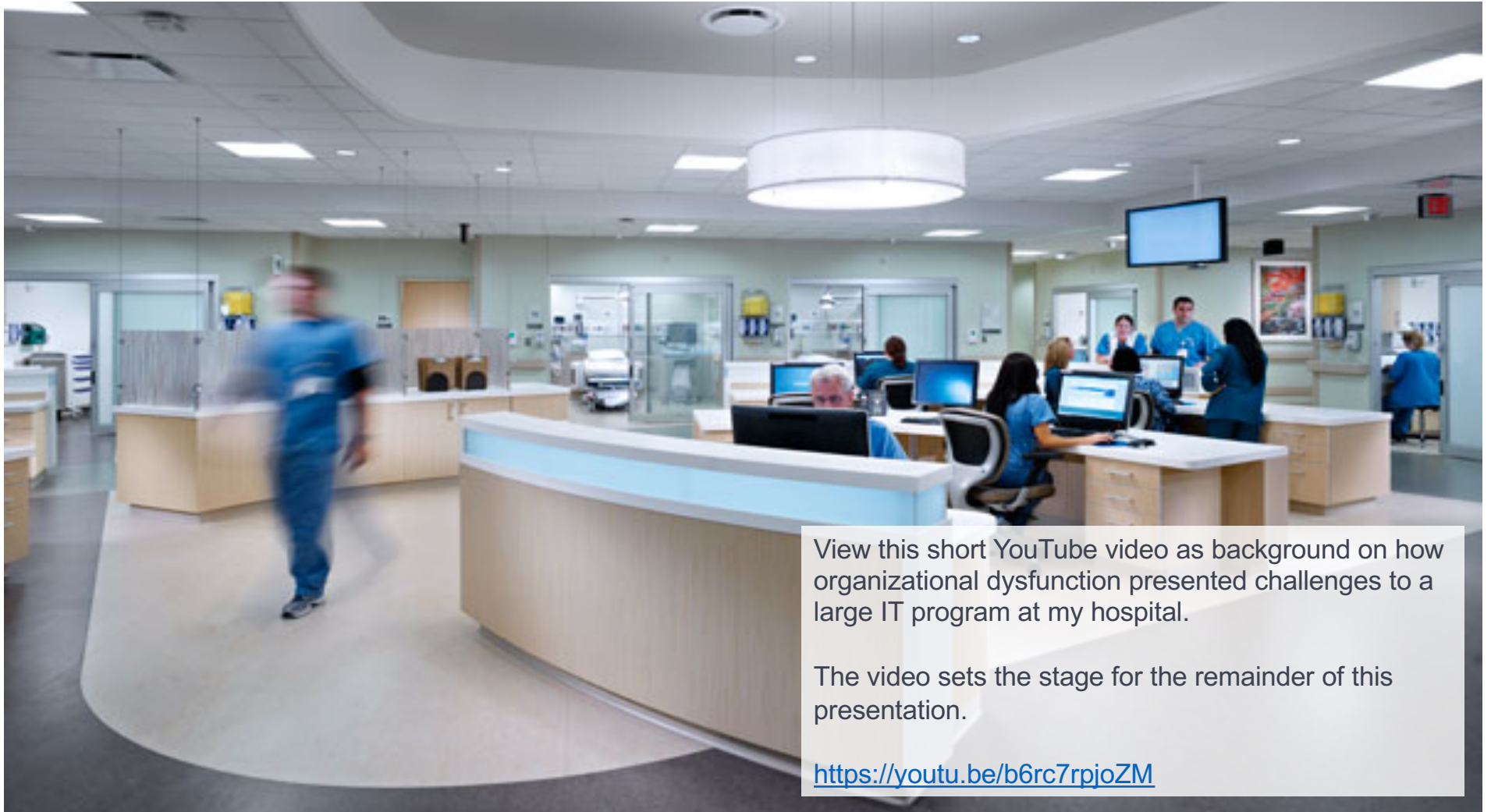
We are increasingly challenged to align teams with differing business objectives, contradictory working cultures, and work with teams in developing best practices for collaboration.

We expect teams to work together effortlessly, but in reality, collaboration across teams and organizations is not altogether successful. 😞

In this presentation, we will discuss obstacles to cross-organizational collaboration, share techniques from Organizational Design and related collaboration models that project leaders can use to establish **lasting alignment across teams**.

Successful Collaboration is Hard!





View this short YouTube video as background on how organizational dysfunction presented challenges to a large IT program at my hospital.

The video sets the stage for the remainder of this presentation.

<https://youtu.be/b6rc7rpjoZM>

Why is it hard for teams to work together?



- Disagreement on objectives
- Disagreement on actions to take
- Lack of trust
- Reticent to sharing ideas
- Different cultures
- High turnover of key staff

Large gap between the product & operational teams



Radically Different Team Cultures



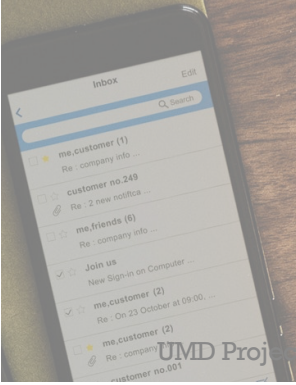
Poor Hand-offs Between Teams



Low Organizational Trust

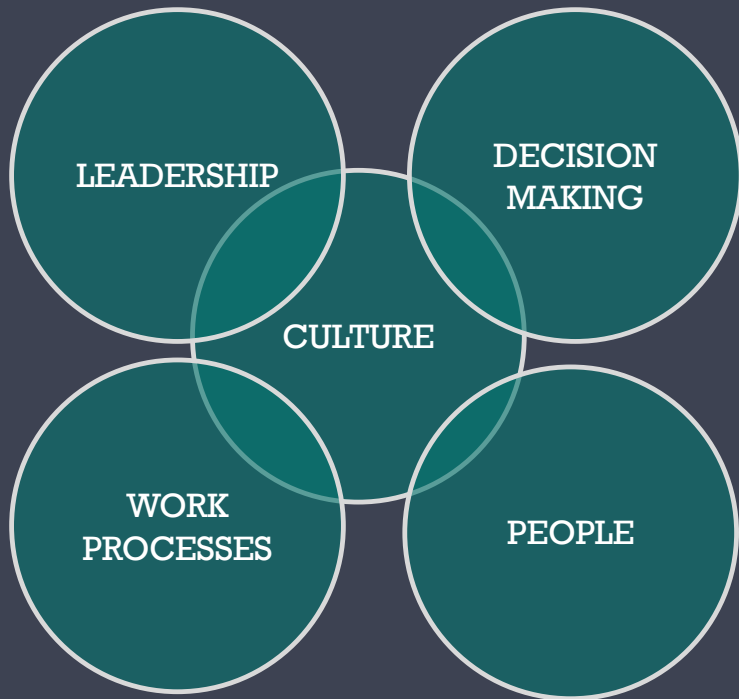


Organizational Design



Organizational Design

- Factors in existing workflow and processes of the business
- Similar to an architectural blueprint, used prior to building
- Stresses the importance of integration through the concept of "linking"
- Investing time thinking about organization design during the Initiation Phase will produce benefits later
- Could be run as Pre-Charter activity offering a governance structure for the project team



Five Interrelated Components of Organizational Design



LEADERSHIP

- **Clear vision and priorities**
- **Communication of priorities**
- **Cohesive leadership team**



DECISION MAKING

- Clear roles
- Accountability for decisions
- Structure supports objectives



- Talent necessary for success
- Aligning measures to priorities
- Performance assessments and consequences

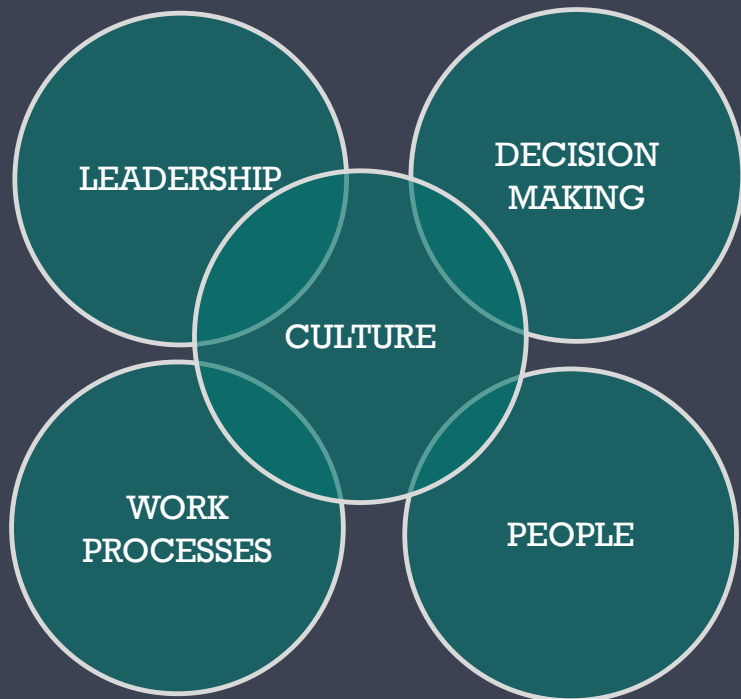


**WORK
PROCESSES**

- **Effective and efficient support processes and disciplines**
- **Relevant information in the right place at the right time**



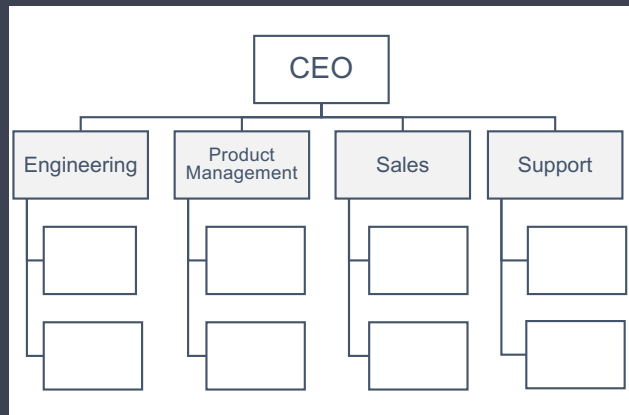
- **Winning culture (values & behaviors)**
- **Inspires and promotes values**
- **Individuals who personally engage**
- **Capacity to change**



Effective Organizational Design Considers All Five Interrelated Components

But there are no “right answers”, each organization will have unique strengths and weaknesses

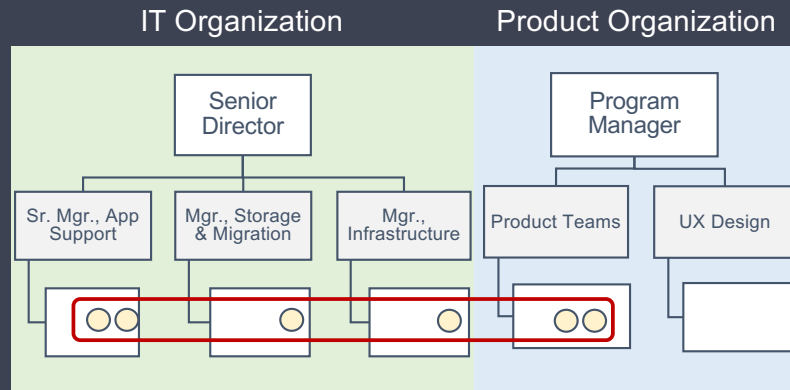
Organizational Grouping



Vertical Functional
organizational structure

- Individuals, jobs, functions or activities are differentiated and aggregated
- Optimizes information flow within the group but often creates barriers with other groups (aka organizational “silos”)

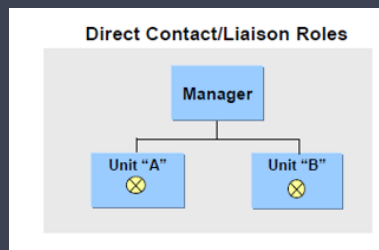
Organizational Linking



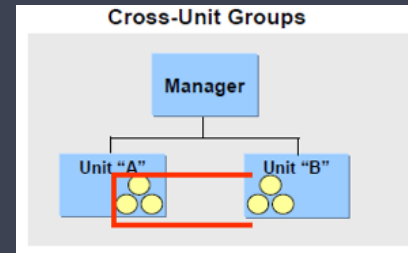
Cross-Divisional Group example

- “Linking” are integration mechanisms used to coordinate and share information across groups
- “Linking” enables leadership to provide guidance and direction across the organization

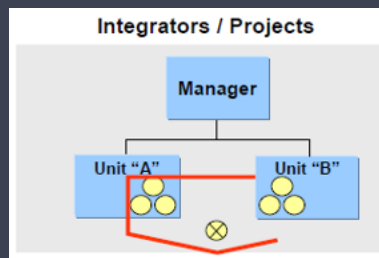
Four Types of Organizational Linking



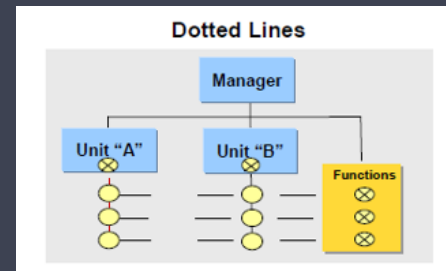
Liaison Roles



Cross-unit Groups



Integrator Roles



"Dotted Lines"



© Shawnhemp/Dreamstime

“ Organizations tend to spend the majority of their energy on grouping activities but very little on linking. ”

- The Bridgespan Group

Research shows that coordination and linkages are the primary structural problems facing organizations.

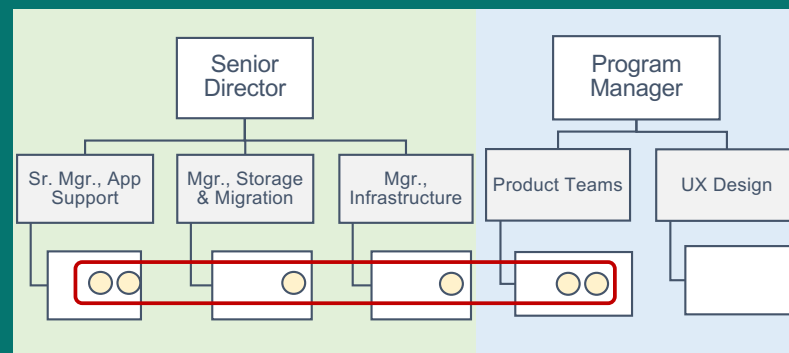


So How Do We Address This?

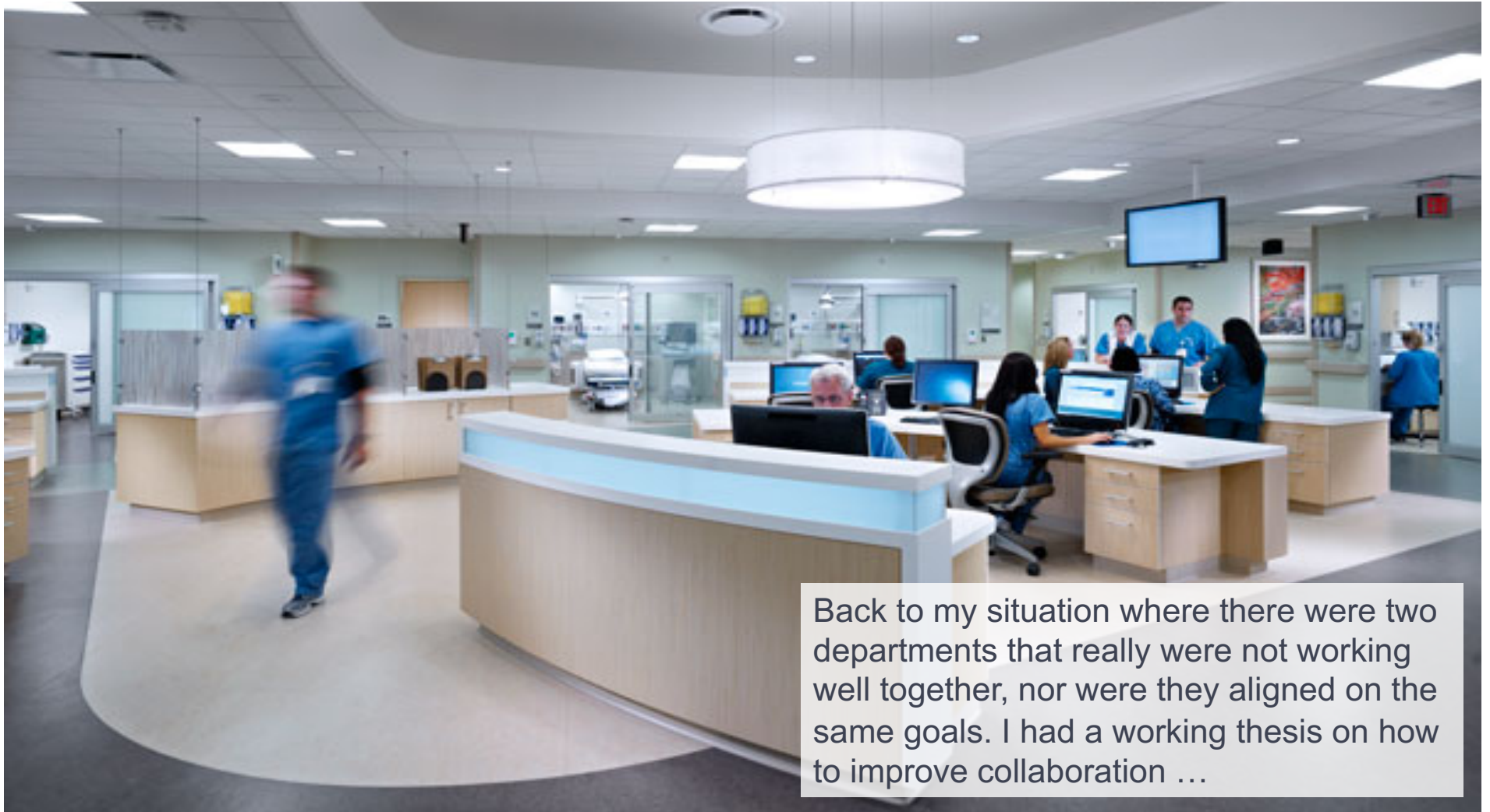
Be **proactive** in building structural linking mechanisms
across the teams we work with and manage.



Organizational "**Linking**" should be a tool in the toolbox for everyone managing teams across organizational units.



Cross-Divisional Group example



Back to my situation where there were two departments that really were not working well together, nor were they aligned on the same goals. I had a working thesis on how to improve collaboration ...

Thesis

- 1) Increased collaboration and organizational “linking” would bring about greater alignment and more efficient execution of project activities.
- 2) Address cultural differences by promoting a "One Team" mindset across the teams.

What did we do?

- Spent time to plan and implement increased "linking" mechanisms between organizations
- Deployed cross-unit grouping and integrator roles to increase collaboration and knowledge sharing
- Promoted a sense of shared vision and goals across the teams

In Summary: We spent time building effective relationships



One Team

Share the Big Picture

Everyone knows and plays their part in a bigger picture

Share the Reality

Be open and honest about performance so we can learn and grow

Share the Knowledge

Take other's ideas, expertise and energy

Share the Load

Work together while playing our individual parts

Share the Wins and Losses

Everyone wins, loses and learns together

While facing this organizational challenge, I learned and changed in the following ways...

- ✓ Embedding within the other team helped to build trust and break down walls
- ✓ Increased “Linking” improved hand offs, communications and task execution
- ✓ I discovered that everyone wanted to do their best for our users and ultimately for the patients at our hospitals
- ✓ Lastly, the path toward increased collaboration was not linear. Expect “blowups” to happen occasionally which require some attention



Let's recap the organizational dysfunction before the changes...

- Different working cultures
- Walls separating teams
- Poor handoffs
- Low trust
- Low collaboration

Results

- ✓ The teams achieved a sense of shared vision and goals
- ✓ People were saying: "We are in this together!" - "We are One Team!"
- ✓ Increased collaboration and alignment
- ✓ Higher levels of trust, better handoffs and division of labor
- ✓ There were now multiple linkages at various levels across the two organizations to reinforce the collaboration and teamwork

Success was achieved!



Call to Action

- Become better educated about Organizational Design
- Take time to think about organization structure and collaboration mechanisms
- Be proactive and deliberate about building bonds and relationships
- Hold a “Session Zero” to define and communicate roles, responsibilities, etc.
- Go the extra mile to break down silos (take on the integrator role, be a diplomat, try collocation, roll out a “One Team” mindset, etc.)
- Be willing to help the other teams when they are “in a pinch”

Thank You.

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