

**WHAT REALLY MATTERS  
TO HEALTHCARE EMPLOYEES?**

*The Top Drivers of Employee Satisfaction*



## Discovery Paper

### What Really Matters to Healthcare Employees?

Every day HealthStream Research works with healthcare leaders who want to bring a more positive employee experience to their organizations. We are frequently asked, “Where do we start?” To assist our clients as they begin to answer this question, we looked to our national database to identify factors critical to healthcare employee satisfaction.

In HealthStream Research’s Employee surveys, there is a summary question in which employees are asked to rate their Overall Satisfaction. Working with this question, HealthStream Research performed a 2-step analysis to determine the following: What should a healthcare facility focus on to create very satisfied employees?

Below, we have listed the top four items we found from this analysis to be most highly predictive of Overall Satisfaction. Listed below each of the top four predictors of overall satisfaction are the underlying drivers of each predictor.

#### One: **Morale**

- **Morale of Others:** Other people’s attitudes about working here
- **Sense of Belonging:** The degree to which you feel you are an important part of the hospital
- **The Work Itself:** The extent to which you enjoy the work that you do
- **Supervisor Communication:** How openly and honestly your supervisor communicates

#### Two: **Service Quality**

- **Customer Service:** The extent to which patients are treated as valuable customers
- **Technical Ability:** The technical expertise of the staff who provide direct patient care
- **Communication:** How openly and honestly administrators communicate
- **Safe and Secure Environment:** The hospital’s effectiveness in providing a safe and secure environment for patients

#### Three: **Sense of Belonging**

- **Value of My Work:** The degree to which what you do is valued by the hospital
- **Employee Recognition:** How well administrators treat, appreciate, and support employees
- **Your Morale:** Your attitude about working here
- **Job Protection:** Freedom to complain or tell leaders what you think without fear of losing your job

#### Four: **Employee Recognition**

- **Communication:** How openly and honestly administrators communicate
- **Sense of Belonging:** The degree to which you feel you are an important part of the hospital

- **Personal Recognition:** The amount of recognition your supervisor gives you for a job well done
- **Promoting Fairness:** Fairness of system for promoting people to better jobs

We often see organizations trying to improve employee satisfaction with social activities, employee of the month programs, etc. Others think satisfaction is a direct function of pay and benefits and feel hopeless to make improvements because of financial constraints. We think employees are sending a much different message. They want to feel they are a part of building something good. They want honest, open lines of communication with supervisors and administrators, and they want a sense of fairness in how corporate recognition and job advancement is handled.

### **Action Items for Healthcare Corporations**

1. The number one predictor of overall satisfaction is the **employee's attitude** about working at the hospital, and we see that this attitude can be directly influenced by the attitudes of others, the employee's sense that he or she is important to the hospital, work enjoyment, and supervisory communication.
2. Secondly, employees want to feel good about the **quality of care** that is provided by the organization. They want to make sure patients are treated as valued customers and are provided with a safe environment. They also want to know that patients are being cared for by staff who have the appropriate levels of expertise.
3. We also see that **sense of belonging** is strongly influenced by administration. Employees want to feel appreciated and supported by administration and be able to **communicate honestly** with leadership without fear of retribution.
4. Finally, we are particularly intrigued by the items that emerged as underlying influences under Employee Recognition. Rather than the "employee of the month" programs we so often encounter, our analysis indicates that employees most value **personal recognition** from their supervisors and honest communication from senior leadership. They also want to feel there is an equitable process for granting promotions within the organization. Employees perceive this type of recognition as "proof positive" that they are important to the hospital and that there is an inherent sense of fairness in the way things are done.

It is interesting to note which survey items do *not* emerge as strong predictors of employee satisfaction. **Neither pay nor benefits** appear as Top Predictors or as underlying drivers of the Top Predictors.

### **What Does It All Mean?**

By focusing on these top predictors and the key factors that influence them, senior healthcare leaders will positively impact employee satisfaction in their organizations.