

# What if you provide care, but you don't feel cared for?

**F**ounded in 1892 to provide health services to Atlanta residents, regardless of their ability to pay, **Grady Health System** has long taken its mission to heart. As one of the largest safety-net academic health systems in the nation, it's seen as the premier level 1 trauma center in the North Georgia region.

But in the midst of a changing and challenging healthcare environment, how could the organization keep top talent and continue to engage them in providing the highest levels of care?

In its first employee engagement survey in 2012, Grady found employees were feeling disconnected from the organization and turnover was unacceptably high. The challenge: address critical areas for improvement around trust in leadership, pride in the organization, and effective communication, as well as an overall sense of feeling respected and being recognized for doing great work.

## **JOURNEY TO RECOGNITION**

For many years, service awards and certificates were presented at 5, 10, 15 years and above, with a luncheon off-site to celebrate those who had given 20 years or more. By 2007, only the luncheon was held. From 2007 to 2012—years of serious financial struggles and constant changes in senior leadership—first-year turnover increased dramatically. The 2012 engagement survey put Grady's 'Overall Commitment Score' well below the national healthcare average, and communication, trust, confidence in leadership, and satisfaction with recognition all scored low.

## **PARTNERING WITH O.C. TANNER**

With an eye towards Grady becoming one of Atlanta's "Best Places To Work," senior leadership developed a comprehensive employee engagement plan. Key to the plan's success was staff appreciation. The new Chief Human Resources Officer turned to O.C. Tanner—a

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**In 12 months, the "Overall Commitment Score" of Grady's Press Ganey percentile ranking improved from 9<sup>th</sup> to 46<sup>th</sup>.**

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### **Grady Health System**

- 5,000+ staff members
- Georgia's largest safety-net healthcare provider
- Licensed for 953 beds, Grady Memorial Hospital is internationally recognized for its trauma and emergency services, research, medical education, and training
- In 12 months, the "Overall Commitment Score" of Grady's Press Ganey percentile ranking improved from 9th to 46th

partner he had brought into other organizations—for help. Armed with data from the engagement survey and with full executive team support, a comprehensive recognition solution was put in place.

Now, day-to-day efforts are easily recognized with creative and fun thank you cards and buttons—available on and offline. When staff members truly go above and beyond they can be nominated for awards. To further encourage great work and inspire others, these awards are presented in front of peers and leadership. Career achievement and service is celebrated, starting with gifts and certificates at the critical first year.

Pre-launch, speakers from O.C. Tanner came out to train 275 leaders on why recognition is important and how to do it right. Grady then sent 8 people to O.C. Tanner’s Trainer Certification course and further enlisted 200 employee ambassadors to get the word out.

## KEY LESSONS

- » Having baseline data becomes critical for measuring success and uncovering opportunities for continual improvement.
- » Establishing a separate presence for your recognition program, one that aligns and complements the overall brand, helps create a needed identity.
- » Finding effective ways to communicate with your offline population is key.
- » Adopting an ongoing sustainment strategy is just as critical as taking the time for pre-launch education, training, and communication.

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**“Without a doubt, our employees are the great differentiator that will lead to the overall transformation of the Grady Health System.”**

**—Larry A. Callahan, Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer**

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## RESULTS DELIVERED FOR GRADY

- » In 2013, there were 21,062 appreciation moments.
- » 86% of employees received performance recognition in the same year.
- » An intense 12 month focus on employee engagement and recognition brought the “Overall Commitment Score” in the Press Ganey percentile ranking up from 9th to 46th. Not a single item went down.
- » In 2013, recognition was the third most improved item on the annual engagement survey, higher than their 2012 score and their healthcare comparison group.

### Outcomes are everything

We’d love to share what we’ve helped Grady and our 1,100 other healthcare clients achieve.

**Contact us today at [info@octanner.com](mailto:info@octanner.com).**

**Visit our Web site at [octanner.com](http://octanner.com).**

**Give us a call at 1-800-453-7490.**

**O.C. TANNER**  
appreciate.

