



HCA Reaps the Rewards of an Integrated, Though Diverse, Culture

THE COMPANY: An experienced U.S. healthcare management company with 163 hospitals in 20 states and 111 outpatient surgery and imagery centers.

THE GOAL: Reward employees for their ideas, share those ideas, and connect front-line employees to the whole company.

THE RESULTS: More than 2,000 ideas in the first year that connect to business goals of service delivery, financial impact and patient safety.

Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) is one of the first hospital companies in the U.S. Since its founding in 1968 HCA has grown to locally managed facilities that include about 163 hospitals and 110 freestanding surgery centers in 20 states and England, employing approximately 199,000 people. A geographically diverse workforce poses many challenges, and one of the most daunting for leadership is connecting front-line employees to the strategic and cultural goals of the larger organization.

In 2010, HCA launched a program that rewarded employees for their innovative ideas provided they align with one of three strategic areas: financial impact, service excellence and patient safety. The goal was to reward employees who have innovative ideas that make a difference in the workplace, then share those ideas at a broader scale. Because hospitals are somewhat autonomous, the leadership at HCA wanted this program to connect front-line employees to the larger organization. With Imaginatik, it did.

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Seeking new ideas

HCA initially considered building an idea-submission platform in-house. With its IT department busy running programs for the company's hospitals, it sought an idea management platform that could be customized to fit the needs of HCA's diverse workforce.

The primary concern of those designing the system was ease of use. With employees' time at a premium, a simple web site with easy processes was vital.

With Imaginatik's Innovation Central platform, the team was able to set up the system the way it wanted. Employees participated through a simple interface and contributed more than 2,000 ideas in the first year. Through a sophisticated back-end review process, HCA leaders were able to identify the best ideas that lined up with their strategic goals and awarded prizes of \$1,000 to \$10,000 at the facility and corporate levels.

Managing a program at scale

Every full-time HCA employee (about 180,000 people) is eligible to participate in its rewards program. That scale is significant, company officials said, especially when sharing those ideas back throughout the organization.

The winning ideas of the event were captured online and shared throughout HCA. If employees wanted to connect with the idea submitters to help with implementation, they were connected through the online environment.

BY THE NUMBERS

180,000
people eligible to participate

2,000+
Ideas collected in Year 1

\$10,000
Top prize for ideas

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Winners were promoted internally through HCA's corporate magazine, but a lot of the recognition was handled at a local level. HCA's leadership heard back from people who were thankful their thinking was rewarded, and they were grateful for an environment where ideas could be shared. Facility management felt empowered with another way for rewarding local employees for creative thinking.

"To us this isn't just an award program," said Jeff Prescott, AVP Corporate Communications. "It's more about culture and connecting local employees to the broader organization and rewarding them for sharing their ideas."

CONNECTING EMPLOYEES

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