Chapter 5

Developing Clinical Leaders: The Impact of a Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing MBA

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ABSTRACT

Complex 21st century healthcare systems require leaders capable of making strategic decisions grounded on sound medical and healthcare knowledge and practices. Traditionally, these two domains have been viewed through a binary lens. In the 21st century, these domains are best viewed through a unitary lens. Consequently, several medical and business schools have developed joint programs to train physician leaders who receive both medical (MD) and master of business administration (MBA) degrees. St. Joseph’s University in partnership with Lancaster General Health (LG Health) system developed an Executive MBA program for aspiring healthcare system leaders who previously trained for only one domain. This chapter examines the impact of the Executive MBA on clinical leaders and the organization they serve.
INTRODUCTION

Program impact is an outcome measurement, “a systematic way to assess the extent to which a program has achieved its intended results” (The Evaluation Forum, 2000, p.9).

Performance, value and impact are important for all involved in planning, designing, implementing and delivering a new program. Any individual or organization investing resources such as time and money in their personnel expect to receive a positive return in today’s financial and political economy. Shrinking budgets and rising expenses place an emphasis on gathering data, which documents program impact. Examining impact serves as a way to build and maintain program credibility as well as justify use of limited resources.

A variety of methods and techniques can be used for program evaluation. This chapter describes how program graduates of a bespoke (personalized to organizational needs) Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing MBA for Executives developed by St. Joseph’s University (SJU), Erivan K. Haub School of Business in partnership with Lancaster General Health (LG Health) reflected on their change in skill, competencies, knowledge, and attitudes toward leadership, collegiality, and organizational strategic planning.

COMPLEMENTING CLINICAL ACUMEN WITH BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE

An essential requirement of today’s complex healthcare system is that clinicians, administrators, policymakers, and insurance companies work together to ensure adequate health care access and quality at a reasonable cost. As the system evolves in complexity, there is a growing need for physician leaders who can bring a clinical perspective to managerial challenges (Stoller, 2009). Insightful healthcare systems and independent physicians seek to address this need through the completion of a professional development course, often online, from one of the plethora of courses currently offered in the market place. One increasingly popular option is to complete a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree or a MD/MBA.
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