Organizational Culture Change
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Summary
Passionate about their missions, many nonprofit organizations attempt to make changes with the goal of enhancing their social impact. Additionally, organizations in the social sector are often compelled to make changes in response to demands from their customers, funders, regulators, and other stakeholders for more effective, affordable, accessible, and consumer-friendly services. However, despite the best of intentions and efforts, sustainable change is challenging for organizations in general. The literature consistently cites a 60-70 percent failure rate for organizational change initiatives starting in the 1970's through the present (Ashkenas, 2013). For this reason, examples of successful organizational transformation that occur within the complexity of the social sector are particularly noteworthy.

Woods Services, Inc. (Woods) is a dynamic and thriving nonprofit population health, human services, and advocacy organization, headquartered in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, that addresses the social determinants of health and the special needs of more than 22,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and complex medical and behavioral health conditions. Woods' continuum of care includes innovative, comprehensive, and integrated medical, behavioral health, education, housing, workforce, and social services and support. Building upon Woods' more than 100 years of experience and expertise, a new leadership team that was formed in 2016 developed an ambitious strategic directions and transformation plan to implement long-overdue organizational, programmatic, and infrastructure changes that were needed to better meet the needs of the individuals served, to respond to mounting stakeholder expectations, and to succeed in today's business, regulatory, funding, and sociopolitical environments. As a result of these efforts, Woods has become one of the largest premiere intellectual disabilities organizations in the country.

Woods is in the process of writing a book that shares the story about how it was able to accomplish in less than two years what it took other organizations decades to build, if they had built it at all. The book is intended for business leaders who are seeking valuable insights and practical strategies and tools about how to successfully drive organizational change. This article focuses on one critical aspect of the change process, organizational culture change.

Woods' Vision for Change
Recognizing the need for transformational change, Woods turned to the concepts, principles, and practices of population health management as a strategy for enhancing care, reducing health

inequities and disparities, addressing social determinants of health, and improving individual and organizational outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and complex medical and challenging behavioral health conditions. An integral component of Woods' vision is the concept of a comprehensive and coordinated continuum of care for life, which is consistent with the population health paradigm that Woods adopted as its overarching business model. This concept is based on the fervent belief that addressing the whole person and their physical and behavioral health throughout their lifetime enhances the quality of services, saves lives, and reduces costs. Woods' vision for sustainable change also includes strategically positioning the organization for the growing move among states and insurers toward managed care and value-based funding for services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Toward this end, Woods made significant investments in its infrastructure, workforce, and programs.

Recognizing the dynamics of changing market forces and the need for organizations to be nimble, Woods uses an agile planning process to help drive its transformational initiatives. Rather than developing long-term strategic goals, which have a tendency to become obsolete over the life of a plan, Woods develops three-year strategic directions that help steer the organization in the direction of its vision. For each strategic direction, one-year measurable tactical objectives are developed and updated annually. This planning process enables the organization to break-down large long-term goals into achievable short-term objectives, discontinue objectives that became obsolete and develop new ones based on current data and market intelligence – all while maintaining a steady and consistent course toward its vision. Woods' 2017-2020 Strategic Directions Plan was developed around four organizational priorities: 1) Mission-driven Growth and Improved Services; 2) Employee Engagement; 3) Enterprise Shared Services; and 4) Strategic Position, Policy and Thought Leadership.

Culture Change Initiatives
Successful change requires more than a vision and well developed strategic and tactical plans. Transitioning an organization from a current state to a desired future state, regardless of the scale, magnitude, or duration of the project, requires that people at all levels of the organization understand, support, and adopt the changes. The human element of any change process is one of the most challenging to manage because human beings inherently do not like change. This truth is brilliantly captured in the axiom attributed to management consultant and author Peter Drucker, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." This familiar adage is often cited because it resonates with the experience of most business leaders.

The Business Dictionary has this to say about organizational culture, "Organizational culture includes an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold it together, and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations. It is based on shared attitudes, belief, customs, and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time and are considered valid. Also called corporate culture, it is shown in the ways the organization conducts its business, treats its employees, customers, and the wider community and how committed employees are toward collective objectives. It affects the organization's productivity and performance, and provides guidelines on customer care and service, product quality and safety, attendance and punctuality, and concern for the environment. Organizational culture is unique for every organization and one of the hardest things to change."

The Woods leadership team concurs with the premise that an organization's capacity to achieve its goals correlates with its ability to shape its culture in support of them. Toward this end, Woods created an Employee Culture and Community Committee (EC^3) and a chief culture officer role to drive cultural initiatives designed to attract, engage, and retain a high-performing and collaborative workforce supportive of Woods' mission and strategies. The following abbreviated case studies provide examples of the ways in which Woods set out to create an intentional organizational culture to fit with its strategies. The culture shaping initiatives described in these case studies demonstrate the concerted efforts Woods made to align its corporate culture with its strategic and transformational goals in the areas of employee engagement and development; innovation; quality standards and behavioral guidelines; and equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Employee Engagement and Development
Woods and its affiliate organizations employ approximately 6,000 people and like most health and human service organizations in the country, are experiencing an industry-wide workforce crisis characterized by employee recruitment and retention challenges. Staff fatigue, burnout, and dissatisfaction, the by-products of not enough staff and excessive overtime, perpetuate employee retention problems, not to mention their impact on the quality of care. Additionally, as Woods organized its system of care around the principles and practices of population health management, it soon recognized that it has far more influence over addressing the conditions in the places where people live, learn, work and play for the people it serves, than it does for the people it employs. Subsequently, Woods began making concerted efforts through its employee engagement and development initiatives to address some of the social determinants of health that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes of its employees.

The Woods Employee Culture and Community Committee (EC^3) is charged with helping to create and sustain an organizational culture that promotes the personal well-being and professional growth of Woods employees. The Committee works in partnership with the organization's executive leadership team and together they have made significant progress toward these goals through several initiatives, including enhanced employee benefits; career pathways; and highly discounted, on-site college cohort programs, tuition subsidy, and student loan payment programs.

Enhanced Employee Benefits
Employee benefits are meaningful ways of communicating to employees that they are valued and that the organization cares about their personal well-being and professional development. Woods is committed to continuous reviews of its employee benefits to ensure that they address employee needs and deliver the highest possible impact. As part of its culture shaping initiatives, Woods added or enhanced the following employee benefits.

- **A new retirement plan.** After nearly a year of studying the issues and considering options, Woods replaced a defined benefit pension plan for which only about half its workforce was eligible with a defined contribution retirement plan in which all employees are eligible to participate. Some of the savings resulting from freezing the defined benefit pension plan were used to fund the new retirement benefits, including employer contributions and employer matches. In addition to these financial benefits, the new retirement plan offers other advantages over the old one as it is portable, allows employees to direct deferments and investment choices, and enables employees to save on a tax-deferred basis. The introduction of the new retirement benefit was tremendously successful as evidenced by the fact that 93 percent of all employees enrolled in the plan shortly after its rollout with an average salary deferral of nearly four percent.

- **A new reference-based employee health insurance plan.** Many employees are at risk for a range of preventable and treatable chronic illnesses, but often do not have easy access to health care because of work schedules, transportation issues, and financial concerns. Additionally, many employers are mitigating escalating health care expenses by shifting costs to their employees in the form of higher premiums, deductibles, and co-pays. For these reasons, Woods made it a priority to improve the health of its employees by containing health care costs and enhancing access to health care. One of the ways in which Woods accomplished this was through a partnership with Homestead, an innovator in the health insurance business sector that is helping to disrupt the market through reference-based

pricing. Unlike traditional insurance networks, which negotiate fees with health care providers that are upward of 350 percent of Medicare reimbursement rates, reference-based pricing typically pays 120 to 170 percent above Medicare-negotiated prices. The prices negotiated by Medicare are used as a reference point because they are typically much lower than the prices negotiated by traditional health insurance networks due to Medicare's purchasing power and its access to actual cost data. In addition to saving employers and employees between 20 to 30 percent in health care expenses, reference-based pricing enables employers to customize their employee health insurance plans. Woods worked with Homestead to design a plan with no employee premiums, minimal co-pays, no network restrictions, no required referrals, freedom from balance billing, and a very low-cost prescription plan. Because of stagnant funding, intellectual and developmental disabilities service organizations must work with partners to find creative ways to save money. As a result of its partnership with Homestead, Woods saved over one million dollars in employee health care costs in the first year it offered its employees a reference-based health insurance plan. Woods used the savings it realized through the referenced-based health insurance program to fund many of its employee engagement and development strategies, including increased compensation for targeted positions, discounted college cohort programs, tuition reimbursement and student loan payments, and on-site health care to all employees at no cost, through the Medical Center at Woods.

- **An on-site medical center available to employees free of charge.** Woods launched a state-of-the-art onsite medical center that became a core component of its transformation as a population health management organization for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and significant behavioral challenges and complex medical conditions. Woods leveraged its Medical Center to remove barriers to health care for its employees, who are able to use the Medical Center for urgent as well as for primary health care needs free of charge. The Medical Center is not only accessible to Woods employees in regard to location and cost, but also in regard to hours of operation, which take into account employee work schedules. Woods is confident that by removing barriers to health care for its employees it will have a positive impact on the overall well-being and health of its employees. The response to this benefit has been overwhelmingly positive as evidenced by nearly 200 employee medical appointments, more than 1,000 initial and annual employee health screenings, and 275 workers compensation appointments the Medical Center conducts per quarter.

- **Financial literacy education and counseling services.** Recognizing that financial health is a factor to overall personal well-being, Woods partnered with Clarifi, a not-for-profit financial counseling organization, to provide Woods employees with free on-site financial literacy workshops and individual financial counseling sessions. Employees were surveyed to identify topics of interest and overwhelmingly expressed interest in the topics of credit and debt, homeownership, and retirement planning. These workshops and counseling sessions, which were made available at the worksite free of charge, were particularly appreciated by staff because they demonstrated that Woods not only values them as employees but also cares about them as individuals.

- **Discounted auto programs.** As a perk to its employees, Woods negotiates discounted pricing for its employees with various vendors, such as Verizon Wireless. Recognizing that many of its employees struggle with transportation issues, Woods partners with regional car dealerships to extend their Family and Friends Discount Program to Woods employees. Many employees take advantage of this benefit and report high levels of satisfaction with their car buying experiences.

Career Pathways

Much in the same way that Woods applied its population health management approach as a service provider to its benefits programs as an employer, the Employee Culture and Community Committee (EC^3) expanded Woods' vision for the people it serves to include the people who support them. Responsible for helping to create and sustain an organizational culture that promotes the personal and professional growth of Woods employees, the Committee turned to the organization's vision statement for inspiration and motivation,

"We envision a world where an individual has opportunities and supports that promote self-determination, the joy of achievement and a fulfilling life."

Heartened by this vision, the Committee embarked upon a planning and implementation processes to ensure that opportunities and supports for personal and professional growth exist at Woods for its employees. This was accomplished in part by the creation of career pathways and highly discounted on-site college cohort programs and other educational benefits.

One of the first initiatives that the Committee tackled was the development of career pathways to create progressive professional advancement opportunities at Woods. The Committee developed

six career paths in the following areas: 1) adult habilitation and vocational services; 2) behavioral health; 3) care coordination; 4) education; 5) management; and 6) nursing. Each career path provides four to nine steps of advancement, which correlate with increased responsibility and compensation. For example, the nine progressive steps in the area of nursing are: 1) direct support professional; 2) medication trained staff; 3) certified nurse assistant; 4) licensed practical nurse; 5) registered nurse; 6) bachelor of science in nursing; 7) master of science in nursing; 8) certified registered nurse practitioner; and 9) doctorate of nursing. In developing the career pathways, the Committee decided to start each with the direct support professional so that all employees, including the largest constituency -- employees starting at entry level positions, may see themselves in these career trajectories. The Committee designed informative promotional materials to market the career paths both internally to active employees and externally to prospective employees. The brochures illustrate the opportunities for advancement in each of the six areas and specify the experience, education, and licensure required at each step. But just as importantly, these marketing materials were leveraged to communicate Woods' investment in the personal and professional growth of its employees, its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, as well as other employee benefits designed to promote personal and professional growth, including benefits in the area of education, health, and wellness, work/life balance, and retirement. These materials also provide examples of staff who have built careers at Woods by advancing through the career pathways as a way of inspiring hope. The career paths were rolled out with much fanfare as part of an internal employee career expo and are used on an ongoing basis as resources to mentor and develop employees, as well as to recruit new employees. The construct of the career paths and the benefits that Woods built to support employees on their personal and professional journeys are powerful and effective ways in which Woods is creating an intentional culture and distinguishing itself as an employer of choice.

College Cohorts Programs and Other Educational Benefits
Woods partners with several regional colleges to provide highly discounted, on-site college degree cohort programs to support the growth and development of its employees. This is not solely an act of altruism because in addition to supporting staff, these programs benefit Woods in several meaningful ways. These programs are offered partly as a way of appealing to prospective employees and encouraging active employees to continue working at Woods. But more importantly, these programs are considered culture-shaping initiatives that are designed specifically to fit with and buttress Woods' transformational goals and to develop high performing employees as well as the next generation of leaders at Woods. These strategically constructed educational experiences are designed to provide employees with knowledge and experiences that align with Woods' vision, values, and goals and to build teams of current and

future leaders who are equipped to help drive and execute Woods' mission and strategies. Woods believes that the return on its investment in these programs and individuals will be manifested in the form of a well-prepared and loyal workforce that is invested in building a future together.

In much the same way that the career paths target direct support professionals, Woods' initial partnerships with institutions of higher learning also focused on this largest constituency of staff, many of whom do not have college degrees. A partnership was established with Harcum College to provide Woods employees with an associate degree program in human services. Woods and Harcum College designed this program, which reinforces the principles and practices of evidence-based human services, specifically for working adults in regard to location, class schedules and formats, and cost. Classes are offered on the Woods campus in the evenings and during the weekends. Supervisors work with staff to adjust work schedules when conflicts occur, and employees are eligible for paid release time to attend classes. Harcum College discounts its tuition fees and in return Woods guarantees a minimum number of students per cohort. As a result of the discount provided by the school and tuition subsidies provided by Woods, as well as scholarships for which students receive help in applying, employee out-of-pocket expenses rarely exceed more than $1,000 per semester. The Harcum College associate degree cohort program at Woods continues to gain momentum in regard to its popularity among staff as evidenced by the growing number of cohorts since its inception in September 2017.

A year after launching the associate's degree in human services program at Woods through its partnership with Harcum College, Woods partnered with the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine Department of Organizational Development and Leadership to develop a master's degree cohort program in Nonprofit Leadership and Population Health Management for its current and emerging leaders. Like the Harcum College cohort program, this program is designed for working professions in regard to location, class schedules and formats, and cost. Classes are offered on the Woods campus in the evenings and on weekends and employees are eligible for paid release time to attend classes. The school offers Woods employees a discount and Woods subsidizes 50 percent of the remaining tuition costs. In return, employees make a commitment to work at Woods for at least two years post-graduation. This master's cohort program offers a textbook example of how an organization can align its culture and strategies. Not only did Woods contribute toward the development of the program curricula in regard to population health management and non-profit leadership, but some of its senior leaders teach classes as adjunct faculty and guest lecturers. Through this unique collaboration with the College, Woods is able to influence the content of the courses and impact the experiences of the students, who are current and future leaders of the organization, in ways that are conducive not

only to its transformational vision and strategies, but also to the organizational culture it is intentionally creating.

Building upon the success of these programs, Woods continues to partner with colleges and universities to offer its employees significantly discounted and highly accessible bachelor's and master's degree programs. In addition to the two college cohort programs discussed, Woods currently offers its employee eight other discounted bachelor's and master's programs, which align with Woods' strategic and transformational plans, through partnerships with other colleges and universities. Additionally, Woods offers its employees a tuition reimbursement program, as well as a student loan repayment program. The impact of these educational benefits on employee retention is compelling. Woods experiences a 90 percent retention rate among employees participating in one of its discounted college programs and a retention rate of 81.5 percent among employees receiving any one of its educational benefits, including tuition reimbursement and student loan payments. These indicators compared very favorably to an overall employee retention rate of 73 percent.

When Woods launched the college, cohort programs it took note of the various challenges and barriers many employees faced in navigating the college application process and accessing financial assistance. It was hard to watch employees who made the courageous decision to pursue advanced degrees get stuck in a web of bureaucracy. For this reason, Woods created an employee benefits specialist position that is dedicated to providing employees with career counseling using the career pathways discussed earlier, assisting employees through the college application process, and helping employees apply for financial assistance through various grant programs. This resource is extremely valued by employees. In the first year, the benefits specialist helped many employees through the college application and admissions process and to access nearly $300,000 in tuition grants and subsidies.

In addition to these college programs and the stellar in-service training that is developed and provided by a dedicated training department, Woods launched other professional development initiatives that align with its transformational vision and strategies, particularly in regard to staff roles and responsibilities in relation to new program and service delivery models. For example, because of the fundamental role that care coordinators play in a population health management environment, Woods contracted with Rutgers University to provide all of its care coordinators with case management training and certification. Likewise, nurses play an imperative role in population health management. In a concerted effort to support the professional development of nurses, Woods developed a nursing mentoring program through a grant it received from the Foundation of National Student Nurses, in which nurse mentors are matched with medication

trained staff and nurses to promote the number of bachelor-prepared nurses. Since the inception of this program, more than half the number of mentees are enrolled in Bachelor of Science Nursing programs.

Innovation

As a means of developing dedicated employees and great teams and fostering a culture of innovation, Woods joined forces with Social Innovations Partners to provide its staff with social innovation lab experiences. These labs are designed to strengthen innovative thinking and entrepreneurial skills by taking participants through a process of idea exploration, testing, business model development, and execution. Woods opens the lab experience to staff across the Woods enterprise, including affiliate organizations, as a way of breaking down organizational silos and giving employees opportunities to work with colleagues from across the organizational structure and hierarchy. The labs are not only a great way to engage employees and support their development and creativity, but also serve as a way of identifying potential talent that might not otherwise get recognized.

The social innovations labs stimulate creativity and cultivate entrepreneurial skills and capacity by taking participants through the following five stages of developing innovative products and services: 1) idea formation and exploration; 2) design thinking and rapid prototyping; 3) financial modeling and raising start-up capital; 4) scaling and scaling impact and system and policy influence; and 5) execution strategy. A series of six social innovations labs are offered over a 12-week timeframe and culminate in a pitch event, in which lab participants present their innovations and business plans to an enthusiastic audience of their peers and a panel of judges comprised of members of the Woods Services Board of Trustees, Woods Services Foundation Board, and executive leadership team. Proposals are judged based upon the following criteria: 1) Likelihood that the venture is going to create social impact; 2) Likelihood that the team is able to execute the venture; 3) Likelihood that the venture is financially sustainable; and 4) Quality of the pitch presentation. The top proposals receive seed funding from the Woods Services Foundation and ongoing technical support from management. Each year the Woods Foundation supports this highly effective culture shaping program and reinforces innovative and entrepreneurial ideas by pledging $100,000 to fund the most promising innovations that emerge from the social innovation labs. Winning proposals receive ongoing technical support from members of the executive leadership team. Many innovations birth through the social innovation labs have been successfully launched, including several social enterprises that provide employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and innovative employee engagement and development initiatives, including an emotional intelligence leadership and mindfulness training program and an employee sanctuary room that

addresses the devastating impact of secondary trauma that is often experienced by social service professionals.

Quality Standards and Behavioral Guidelines

In addition to cultivating the creativity of its employees by promoting an organizational culture that encourages and rewards innovation, Woods looks to other organizations and experts for ideas and inspiration. A prime example of this is the investment Woods made in sending staff to the Disney Institute to learn about Disney's approach to leadership excellence, employee engagement, and quality services. Through the Institute, Disney's renowned parks and resorts serve as living laboratories that enable professionals from industries and sectors from around the world to experience lessons taught by Disney leaders with first-hand observations in the field. These lessons and experiences were instructive and motivational and resulted in Woods adopting many of Disney's time-tested business principles and insights. Based on a self-assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, Woods developed an overarching organizational culture shaping initiative based on the tenets of the Disney Institute's Chain of Excellence paradigm, branded internally as the 3 Keys to Unlocking Potential.

The program, which was developed with input from more than 100 individual Woods employee interviews and dozens of employee focus groups, was designed to create an intentional organizational culture by aligning Woods' mission, vision, and core values with a clear and consistent framework and common language in regard to quality service standards and behavioral guidelines for everyone who works at Woods. The 3 keys (*Safety, Comfort and Engagement*) were rolled out in the context of a new brand promise, *Support with Heart*, and new logo in the shape of a heart, all of which exemplify Woods' purpose and core values. The Safety Key has three service statements associated with it, each with corresponding defined behaviors, so that services are consistently delivered safely. The Safety Key encourages employees to always put safety first, to ensure the safety of self and others, and to protect the emotional safety of others. The Comfort Key encourages employees to do their jobs with heart and to make relationships matter. The term "comfort" is used to align The 3 Keys to Unlocking Potential initiative with a trauma-informed crisis management program Woods adopted to intentionally shift away from a culture of control toward a culture of comfort. The Comfort Key has two service statements associated with it, each with corresponding defined behaviors, so that services are consistently delivered with comfort. The Comfort Key encourages employees to always support with heart and make relationships matter. The Engagement Key encourages employees to perform their jobs with courage, integrity, and ownership, to proactively engage with everyone, to work as a team and build partnerships, and to communicate effectively. The

Engagement Key has four service statements associated with it, each with corresponding defined behaviors, so that services are consistently engaging.

The 3 Keys to Unlocking Potential initiative is a driving and unifying force for culture change at Woods. Training of the three keys occurs through facilitated workgroups that meet over the course of several weeks and challenge staff to think about how to operationalize the keys and how they can personally help to influence the culture in their work areas. The keys are constantly reinforced through other forums, including new employee orientation, ongoing employee education and training, staff meetings, individual supervision meetings and employee performance feedback, employee recognition, as well as through various communication forms. Additionally, the Woods Employee Culture and Community Committee (EC³) works to ensure that the tenets of the 3 Keys to Unlocking Potential initiative is infused into the fabric of everyday life at Woods.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Woods is very fortunate to have an active and dedicated Board of Trustees comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and expertise. One Trustee, Ron Davis, serves as the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at Parx Casino and encouraged and supported Woods to adopt best practices in the area of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Organizations with intentional cultures that embrace EDI principles and practices are effective and impactful and consistently outperform organizations that do not. The social sector should be a place where diverse populations can gain meaningful employment, feel valued, and have opportunities for advancement to leadership roles. The principles of EDI are directly aligned with the mission, vision, and values of Woods and its belief that people thrive when they are welcomed, respected, and included. As a corporate citizen that is committed to fair and inclusive social systems and workplaces and as part of its culture shaping initiatives, Woods responded to a competitive request for proposals and was selected by the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities (the Alliance) to participate in a national cohort program designed to build organizational capacity for EDI. The Alliance is a strategic action network of thousands of committed social sector leaders who through their influence are working to achieve a healthy and equitable society. They aggregate the very best sector knowledge and serve as an incubator for learning and innovation to generate new solutions to the toughest problems. They accelerate change through dynamic leadership development and collective actions to ensure policies and systems provide equal access and opportunity for all people in our nation to reach their fullest potential through improvements in health and well-being, educational success, economic opportunity, and safety and security. The Alliance network envisions a healthy and equitable society that is just, fair, and inclusive, enabling all people to participate and reach their full potential. Building on this vision,

the Alliance, backed by grant funding from American Express Foundation, launched the Building Organizational Capacity for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion cohort to advance specific, significant change for leaders, organizations, and the human services sector. Fifteen organizations, including Woods, and 30 leaders, comprised of a senior and emerging leader of color from each organization, were selected for the EDI cohort. The 15-month cohort experience included lessons, case studies, virtual study tours of best practice and promising organizations, leadership development opportunities, and the sharing and dissemination of success stories and lessons learned. Participating organizations deepen their capacity to attract, develop, and retain diverse talent and advance the knowledge base in the sector and beyond.

As a cohort participant, Woods learned about the principles and practices of EDI and is working to achieve a healthy and equitable workplace that promotes access, opportunity, and prosperity for all of its employees. The creation of a Woods EDI Planning Committee, comprised of diverse representatives from all levels of the organization including the board, emerged from an initial EDI plan that drove the creation of a vision statement, a common understanding of key terminology, an organizational assessment, and development of EDI strategic goals and objectives. Woods' EDI plan not only addresses building diverse and representative talent pipelines, but also fosters an organizational culture that supports the long-term sustainability of equity, diversity, and inclusion. In the area of human resources, the Committee set the goal of establishing a diverse workforce at all levels of the organization by ensuring equity and inclusion in recruitment, hiring, and professional advancement policies and practices. The Committee identified four strategies toward this goal: 1) Analyzing employee demographic data to identify trends in employee applicants, new hires, promotions, and disciplinary action; 2) Diversifying employee recruitment approaches to under-represented groups; 3) Promoting EDI via interviewing and hiring practices; and 4) Promoting the Woods Career Paths through an EDI perspective. In the area of policies, the committee set the goal of incorporating EDI objectives into the organization's policies by: 1) Developing an EDI policy; 2) Conducting a comprehensive review of organizational policies from an EDI perspective; and 3) Engaging the Employee Council to identify effective and meaningful employee feedback mechanisms. In the area of education and training, the Committee set the goal of providing employees with opportunities to develop knowledge and skills to work effectively within a diverse environment. The Committee identified four strategies toward this goal: 1) Incorporating EDI content and curricula in as many employee training classes as possible; 2) Identifying and providing training courses that would help level the playing field for all employees, (e.g., technology for older adults and ESL); 3) Diversifying marketing of education cohort programs to under-represented groups; and 4) Providing the Board with information about EDI initiatives at Woods. In the area of organizational culture, the Committee set the goal of demonstrating a strong commitment to

EDI by promoting a welcoming and inclusive work environment and by incorporating EDI principles and perspectives in the training and rollout of the 3 Keys embedded in the Unlocking Potential culture-shaping initiative.

Several of the Committee's strategies tie in with other change initiatives, such as the educational cohorts, career paths, and the 3 Keys to Unlocking Potential initiative. The more change initiatives are aligned with one another, the more successful and sustainable they become. After the EDI Strategic Plan was approved by the Executive Leadership Team and Board, the EDI Planning Committee formed subcommittees around each of the four focus areas. The subcommittees are comprised of Committee members and other interested staff and are responsible for implementing the strategies. The subcommittees are a way of expanding the Committee's circle of influence and driving the EDI action plan. The EDI Committee monitors progress, successes, and challenges.

Concluding Remarks

In addition to the ways an organization conducts business and treats its employees, corporate culture is also manifested in the quality of its services. The concerted efforts Woods made to align its corporate culture with its strategic and transformational goals in the areas of employee engagement and development; innovation; quality standards and behavioral guidelines; and equity, diversity, and inclusion have had direct and indirect bearings on the services that Woods offers, the ways in which it provides services, and its service outcomes and impact.

Woods has experienced remarkable success in implementing significant programmatic changes, which it attributes to its organizational culture initiatives resulting in an engaged workforce that is receptive and supportive of innovation and change. For example, Woods successfully adopted the Ukeru Method, a proactive, trauma-informed, restraint-free crisis management system that was developed by the Grafton Integrated Health Network and is recognized as a best practice in restraint reduction by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Since its implementation of the Ukeru Method, Woods has achieved a 53.3 percent reduction in the use of restraints. Additionally, Woods adopted the nationally recognized evidence-based School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Program. Since its implementation of this program, 60 percent of Woods students had one or fewer significant behavioral incidents. These and other transformational programmatic changes, which have had significantly positive effects on the individuals served by Woods, would not have been nearly as successful without the impact of Woods' organizational culture change initiatives.

Organizational Culture

Lessons Learned

o The collective values, assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs of an organization influence the way people think, feel, behave and interact in that environment.

o Successful organizations create intentional cultures that are aligned with their purpose, values and strategies.

o An organization's capacity to achieve its goals correlates with its ability to shape its culture in support of them. An organization's culture can make or break change efforts.

o Organizational culture is unique for every organization and one of the hardest things to change.

o In regard to employee engagement and development, organizations may consider enhanced employee benefits and opportunities for professional development and advancement as part of their culture-shaping initiatives.

o The innovation lab experience is an effective and creative way of engaging employees and promoting a culture of entrepreneurship and innovative thinking.

o A clear and consistent framework and common language in regard to quality standards make expectations clear to all employees.

o Organizations that embrace the principles and practices of equity, diversity and inclusion create fair, diverse, and welcoming cultures that benefit everyone.

o The more change initiatives are aligned with each other the more sustainable they become.

Author Bio

Peter Shubiak currently serves as the Regional Director for Rehabilitation and Recovery Division for the Sheppard Pratt Health System. He previously served as the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Culture Officer for Woods Services.