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Worklife



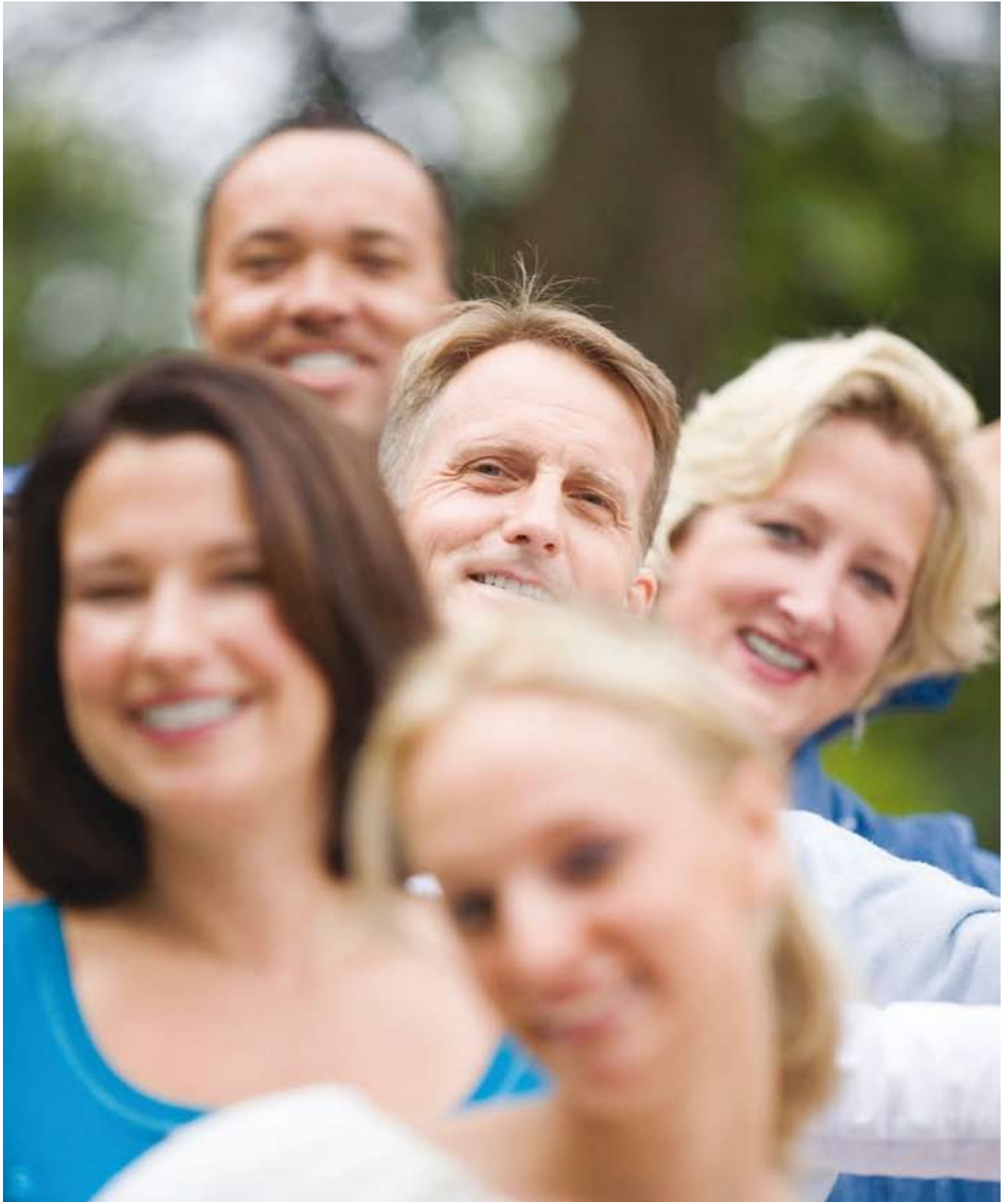
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*Driving Quality Health Services
Force motrice de la qualité des services de santé*



RICHARD McCONNELL

Changing the FACE of VON Canada



Two fundamental drivers for success in any organization are engagement and commitment. They are at the root of worklife quality and are critical elements of any effective change process.

When people feel valued, when they feel that leadership understands and appreciates their effort, when they believe that their work contributes on a daily basis to the viability of their organization, they take personal ownership in its success or failure. This means that we must find creative ways to recognize individual contributions and celebrate team success.

One common thread through satisfaction research is people's need to be recognized for the good work that they do. Yet when asked the question, "What happens to you when you do good things?" staff most frequently reply "Nothing." This is unfortunate because people at work crave recognition for the things they do at work. In focus groups at VON, people at all levels indicated that they need to believe that someone actually cares, that leadership appreciates the dedication they bring to their practice and their clients.

In 2007, VON staff told us on a comprehensive opinion survey that they did not feel sufficiently recognized at work and they did not see a direct connection between their work and the overall success of our organization. We wanted to change this. The problem is that it is not easy. It's all about "catching people doing things right" and this is very difficult in community-based settings where staff are dispersed and frequently work alone. The large spans of control in health care add to the problem because front-line managers have limited direct personal contact with their staff in the field and they tend to use these occasions to fix problems. Problem solving, while critically important, does not create an environment for positive recognition.

In the whitewater and churn of today's health care enterprises, people expect their leaders to walk the talk. It is not sufficient to simply tell staff what we want. Each person—from the executive to the front-line manager—must continually work to improve his or her performance. This is difficult and it will not happen without a systematic, concrete, evidence-based staff engagement process. In addition, the VON Canada Care and Service Model asks that we value respect, participation, responsiveness, and courage in an organization supported by a learning culture, innovation, leadership, integration, and partnerships with the quality of care at its core. Everything we do must be filtered through this lens. All changes to our workplace must fit completely within the context of this model.

At VON, we developed a three-stage process called FACE Performance to help us. FACE stands for Focused, Aligned, Competent, and Engaged:

- *Focused Performance* occurs when everyone knows what they must do personally to enhance the viability of their group and the organization. Focus comes from a detailed concrete understanding of expected results and the behaviours necessary to deliver those results.
- *Aligned Performance* occurs when every person shares a common purpose and sees the impact of his or her behaviour on everyone else. Alignment comes from an understanding of the relationship between individual behaviour and results, team results, and the organization's strategy.
- *Competent Performance* occurs when all have the skills, support, and tools necessary to accomplish what is expected of them. Competence comes from relevant training, able supervision, and the belief that the organization will provide the tools necessary for each individual to be successful.
- *Engaged Performance* occurs when everybody is personally committed to the success of their team and the organization, and each feels a sense of urgency. Engagement comes from the feeling that each person's contributions are recognized and rewarded, and the team's results are celebrated in a timely fashion.

It provides people with a set of concrete tools that help them to optimize performance while at the same time building a better place to work.

The FACE Performance process is a proactive approach that helps leaders build commitment at all levels, and focus teams and individuals on what is critically important for the organization. It provides people with a set of concrete tools that help them to optimize performance while at the same

time building a better place to work. It establishes a new context where teams share common goals, people are recognized for the good work that they do every day, and everyone takes the time to celebrate success when it is achieved.

The process has three phases:

1. **Context Setting and Planning:** Leadership specifies the critical few priorities for the organization, area managers state them as goals, and groups of staff at all levels validate the goals and determine the critical behaviours necessary to achieve them. This phase is founded on the principle of applied behaviour analysis whereby people engage in undesirable activity because, consciously or unconsciously, the undesirable activity is being reinforced and the desirable activity is being punished. For success to occur this paradigm must be reversed. Central to the context setting and planning phase are
 - **ABC Analysis:** This is a root cause analysis tool where the people who actually do the work identify (a) the

Antecedents driving or enabling the current and desired situations, (b) the discrete Behaviours that are supporting both situations, and (c) the Consequences that are sustaining the behaviours. This is a structured dialogue.

- **Performance Enhancement Plan (PEP):** The PEP is used to plan implementation. It details precisely what people are expected to do in order to transform intent into impact, and provides a clear accountability process. It shows the expected result and supporting activities, outlines the measurement that will be used to identify success, describes the feedback process that will be used to communicate with individual staff and teams, establishes goals and sub-goals, and lists what will be done to recognize individual contribution and celebrate team success. The PEP also includes a demonstration of the deployment of strategic issues through all levels of the organization.
2. **Training:** Leaders attend a two-day workshop that provides them with necessary skills. They learn how to pinpoint the critical results and behaviours, develop measurement tools that will provide the indicators necessary to describe success in concrete terms, build feedback systems that allow for quality evidence-based communications, engage staff in change initiatives, recognize individual contribution, and celebrate team accomplishment.

At this workshop, leaders work in teams to develop meaningful Performance Enhancement Plans using data provided from staff focus groups. They then plan an engagement process that involves meeting with all staff to explain the PEP and request staff input on measurement, goals and sub-goals, and feedback, and committing to recognition and celebration.

3. **Follow-up Practice and Support:** Using the workplace as a real-time learning lab, leaders implement meaningful projects supported by trained coaches. The goal is to improve organizational outcomes, build a positive work climate, and learn to use the skills introduced in the workshop.

Critical to this phase is overcoming resistance to measurement. Measurement at work has become, for many, a punitive process. Organizations commonly measure to identify problems, assign blame, and put corrective action in place. It is done to people by someone else and is an antecedent for punishment; understandably, people hate it. With FACE, measurement becomes a participative process, an antecedent for recognition, a source for meaningful feedback, and a trigger for team celebration.

Using FACE: A Brief Example

Front-line service providers believe that nothing compromises their practice more than measuring the time spent with their clients. However, managing time per visit is critical to the viability of our organization. When we developed a PEP to optimize time per visit, it was predictably met with considerable resistance. At the VON Cape Breton branch in Nova Scotia, nurse managers Liz MacDonald and Lois Mac Neil decided to stay true to the FACE process during the rollout. They frequently met face to face with small groups of staff, and first identified and removed as many barriers as possible. They then developed job aids based on real staff practice and encouraged active participation from all staff. When things started to improve, they gave credit one on one and celebrated milestones with the group. Providers took ownership and achieved a 10% improvement.

At VON Canada, we continually witness the commitment, professionalism, and enthusiasm that our staff members bring to their critically important practice every day. Accompanying a front-line service provider during a work day is a humbling experience for anyone fortunate enough to be able to do so. With FACE, we are attempting to recreate this experience on a daily basis so everyone at every level is constantly aware of the vital importance of the work we do, and everyone believes in their hearts that our mission is a living reality. Q

FACE was selected as a Leading Practice during Accreditation Canada's review of VON in October 2007. If you would like more information on FACE, please e-mail richard.mcconnell@von.ca.*

Richard McConnell, BA, MAdEd, is Vice President, People and Organization for VON Canada. Prior to joining VON, Richard was Vice President and Canadian Lead for ADI, specializing in the deployment of change. He served as Vice President, Education and Organization Enhancement at VIA Rail Canada, and was a Director at Canada Post's Learning Institute. Richard has devoted a twenty-five-year career to helping organizations build quality workplaces and optimize the contributions of the people who work in them.



* As part of the on-site survey process, Accreditation Canada surveyors identify leading practices which they find to be commendable examples of high quality leadership and service delivery. Leading practices are linked to Accreditation Canada standards.