

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT OR SERVICE LAUNCH

Build leverage to motivate staff, increase buy-in, and create your story.

BY JOEL GASLIN

"Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum upon which to place it, and I shall move the world." —Archimedes



Although progress begins with change, enacting change is hard, and sustaining it is even harder. What do you do if you are the owner or administrator of a practice considering adding a new offering to your cataract or LASIK programs? How do you introduce the new service or technology?

You could send out a company-wide email telling everyone what to do and pray for success. This might work, if you are lucky. You could have the people involved in selling you the product or service execute an adoption scenario and deliver it to your team. Sometimes, this works out okay.

The best way, as suggested by Archimedes, is to build a lever to place upon a fulcrum in your practice and move your world with your own team. This way builds culture and engagement and yields long-term dividends.

MOVING YOUR WORLD

In my 25-year career in the business of ophthalmology and math education, I have launched products and services with teams, individually, and with practices. Over that time, I have developed a five-step plan for a successful launch of any product or service.

STEP
1

Gather Data. Researcher Brene Brown, PhD, said, "Stories are data with a soul." Before beginning anything new, start with analysis. Where are you today? What metrics are you following? What is the market you are breaking into? Who is the competition? Have you tried this in the past? What do you need to help you? Who can and will participate? Examine any other data that are relevant to assessing your present state.

STEP
2

Craft Your Vision. With data in hand and a select few team members, clearly lay out what you want to accomplish with this new service or product. Where do you see it in 1, 3, and 5 years? When you succeed, what effect will it have on your enterprise? Think clearly, look broadly, and dream big, because you are building your lever in the form of a good story, based on data, and communicating your "why."

STEP
3

Share Your Vision. People want to follow leaders who paint an inspiring image of why they believe change is necessary, where they want to go, why everyone should follow, and how they will get there. Passionately describe



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a new world created when successful change is enacted. An ophthalmologist friend of mine told me how his staff got on-board with his new laser cataract surgery program after he told them how he believes it is the future of cataract surgery. He invited each staff member to watch a live case to see the technology in action. After visits to the OR, the staff members excitedly told patients about the program, and patients' acceptance rates took off.

STEP
4

Involve Others in the Project. Once people catch the vision, it is time to build the fulcrum. Involving everyone in the organization with a meaningful, identifiable role in the change process helps them feel like a part of the larger whole, and they take responsibility for making progress. Each person is effectively playing his or her role adds up to a fulcrum on which to place the lever and move your world.

STEP
5

Launch. This may seem like the end of a long road, but it is actually the beginning of what can be a transformational, team-building project for your enterprise. The key to any successful product or service introduction is the work leading up to the actual launch date. Celebrate the launch, make it an event, recognize all of the people who helped to make it happen, and remind them of where the process is taking them. Then, follow the diagram on the previous page, because you are only getting started.

CONCLUSION

Adding new services and products to an enterprise is vital to the long-term health of the organization. Following the simple, five-step plan I have outlined in this article will help to make your next endeavor a success. ■

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