



Let's make sure execs are held accountable

The healthcare industry is hungry for advice from leaders who are driving their organizations to quantifiable and sustainable operational success in this unbelievably tough environment.

Over the past months, I have read several interviews with current and recently retired CEOs of large health systems offering their sage advice. Under their tenure, their systems' net incomes deteriorated significantly. I was anxious to hear the answers to your reporters' probing questions as to why this was the case so we can learn what not to do. Unfortunately there was no probing and these executives were given an undeserved pass.

Recently one interviewer accepted "focus on transformation" as one CEO's excuse for his system's "margin deterioration." Those of us in the trenches know better. As Peter Drucker said, "Only three things happen in an organization: friction, confusion and underperformance; everything else requires leadership."

To ensure we are getting information from true achievers vs. "third-basers" (people appointed to third base of a health system and think they hit a triple), I suggest that when a senior industry executive is interviewed or quoted, the article includes a footnote summarizing the system's three-year performance trend. What good is a leader's advice when their leadership resulted in a deterioration in operating performance, and the only reason the organization is not in trouble is because of a favorable stock market?

This certainly applies to consultants and industry experts as well. When we present an idea or strategy, we need to demonstrate that it works using previous examples in similar situations and actual performance data.

*Nathan Kaufman
Managing director
Kaufman Strategic Advisors*