

Interview With Bob Cooper: Bringing Heart and Soul into Healthcare Boardrooms

Bob Cooper and I connected on LinkedIn when he responded to a question in a way that I thought was quite different from all the other answers. That inspired me to view his profile, see his book and contact him about answering some questions about his book for MMP readers.



1. How did you get started working in the healthcare field?

I was recruited by an executive search firm to work for an academic medical center in the fields of Human Resources and Organizational Development.

2. How much of your business is in the healthcare market?

Approximately 80% of my clients are in the healthcare field.

3. What are the types of issues you are called upon to help resolve for healthcare clients?

I am frequently called upon to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration on patient care units and other departments using my Organizational Huddle Process,,¢, improve patient satisfaction, enhance staff satisfaction and retention, develop leadership competency, executive coaching, and strategic planning.

4. What is the most common issue you see healthcare entities struggling with?

The most common issue I see healthcare entities struggling with is maintaining effective staffing ratios in an

environment of shrinking reimbursements.

5. If you use your crystal ball, what types of issues do you see healthcare entities facing with the full impact of healthcare reform hitting in 2014?

The greatest issue I see is how to effectively run the business during a time of great uncertainty. Healthcare leaders will need to be great change agents. They will need to engage staff at all levels to understand and embrace the changes as they evolve, and incorporate recommended strategies that will continue to grow the business. Healthcare organizations will need to stick with business strategies that are viable, and know when to get out of businesses that are not going to be profitable.

6. You say your new book "Heart and Soul in the Boardroom" helps leaders to inspire employees to new heights of engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty. We know that healthcare employees (providers, administration, nurses, clerical staff) are all struggling with burnout, change, and economic issues. Give us advice on leading employees in a very difficult time in healthcare,

My advice is to engage staff in running the business, show concern for their career aspirations and development, and work hard to serve their needs. It's true that many people are working harder to just keep up with the pace of change. Our job as leaders is to show every member of our team how much we truly value them "" and really mean it!

7. What is the secret to managers taking care of themselves when they are responsible for keeping the business going, keeping the physicians happy, keeping the staff happy and keeping the patients happy?

Managers must seek to keep themselves happy. This means that they find joy and meaning in their work. Learn to appreciate every interaction with every internal and external customer.

For example, find joy in looking at the smile on an employee's face after you give a sincere compliment. Find happiness in everything you do, including drinking your favorite cup of coffee. Say good morning and thank you to all. Show concern for everyone you deal with. And perhaps the most important thing you could do is to learn to detach. This means that you give everything you have to achieve a positive outcome, but you also recognize that you do not "control" the outcome. Be grateful for what you have "" make a gratitude list every day.

8. You and I talked about living an authentic and integrated life. What does that mean to you and how can managers achieve this?

An authentic and integrated life means that you live your values everyday, and at all times. You understand that who you are at work is no different from who you are outside of work. Your values should come from a place of service, always exhibiting behaviors that are kind and considerate to others. You "brand" yourself as someone who is consistent, reliable, and everyone knows what you stand for at all times. Others know that your intentions are pure and good.

9. When can we expect your next book and what will it be about?

Heart and Soul in the Boardroom is my third book, and I don't know when I will write my next one. What I can say for sure is this "" the next book will be a result of my being inspired to be of service others.



Bob Cooper is the founder and president of **RL Cooper Associates**, an innovative healthcare organizational and management consulting firm. With over twenty-five years experience in people and organizational development, Mr. Cooper's focus is placed on identifying strategies that

maximize organizational effectiveness and fundamental transformation by enabling individuals and groups to reach their full potential. In addition to **“Heart and Soul in the Boardroom”**, Mr. Cooper is the author of **“Huddle Up ”“ Creating and Sustaining a Culture of Service Excellence”**, and **“Leadership Tips To Enhance Staff Satisfaction and Retention.”** Mr. Cooper holds an MS in Human Resource Management and a BA in Economics. He is also a member of Strathmore’s Who’s Who. Bob can be contacted at rlcooperassoc@aol.com.