

# CHARACTERISTICS OF NURSE DIRECTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO HIGH REGISTERED NURSE SATISFACTION SCORES

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## BACKGROUND/SIGNIFICANCE

- Attracting and retaining Registered Nurses (RNs) is important to ensure excellence in patient care delivery.
- Nurse Directors (NDs) have been described as “chief retention officers” for RNs, and studies show that RN satisfaction is directly linked to experience with their manager.
- Identifying the positive characteristics of NDs that contribute to RN satisfaction is important for RN satisfaction and in the recruitment and role development of NDs.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Explore RN and ND perceptions of positive ND characteristics that contributes to high work environment satisfaction scores.

## METHODS AND ANALYSIS

- Thirty three units invited to participate based on high scores on the Practice Environment Scale – Nursing Work Index (PES-NWI) survey in the component of “Nurse Manager ability, leadership and support of nurses”.
- Qualitative study, utilizing one-on-one interviews with RNs (n=9) and NDs (n=9).
- Appreciative inquiry framework guided the questions. Appreciative inquiry is intended to identify strengths, best practices and successes of NDs.
- Qualitative content analysis of transcribed audiotapes identified themes within each RN and ND group.
- Across case analysis identified areas of congruency between groups.

### Registered Nurse Interview Questions

The satisfaction scores on your unit in the area of “RN manager ability, leadership and support of RNs” indicate that staff seems very satisfied with your Nurse Director.

- What do you believe are your ND’s strongest leadership qualities? Please describe two or three positive strengths.
- Do you think that your ND’s leadership contributes to your own job satisfaction? How?
- Can you give any examples of when you observed qualities in your ND that you admired? Do you have a story to share that captures his or her qualities that you admire?
- What are the strengths of your ND that are most important to you?
- What do you value about your ND most?

### Nurse Director Interview Questions

Your staff nurse satisfaction scores in the area of “RN manager ability, leadership and support of RNs” seem to indicate that you are a successful nursing leader.

- What do you believe are your strongest leadership qualities that contribute to your staff nurse’s job satisfaction? Please describe two or three positive strengths.
- How do you incorporate these qualities into your leadership practice? Can you share a story or an example?
- Which of these strengths do you think are most important?
- What do you value most?
- Which qualities do you think are most important to your staff?

## RESULTS

### Characteristics Identified by RNs:

#### Empowerment

- “Why don’t you show me what the problem is, how you think we can solve it, and you may own that...”

#### Visibility

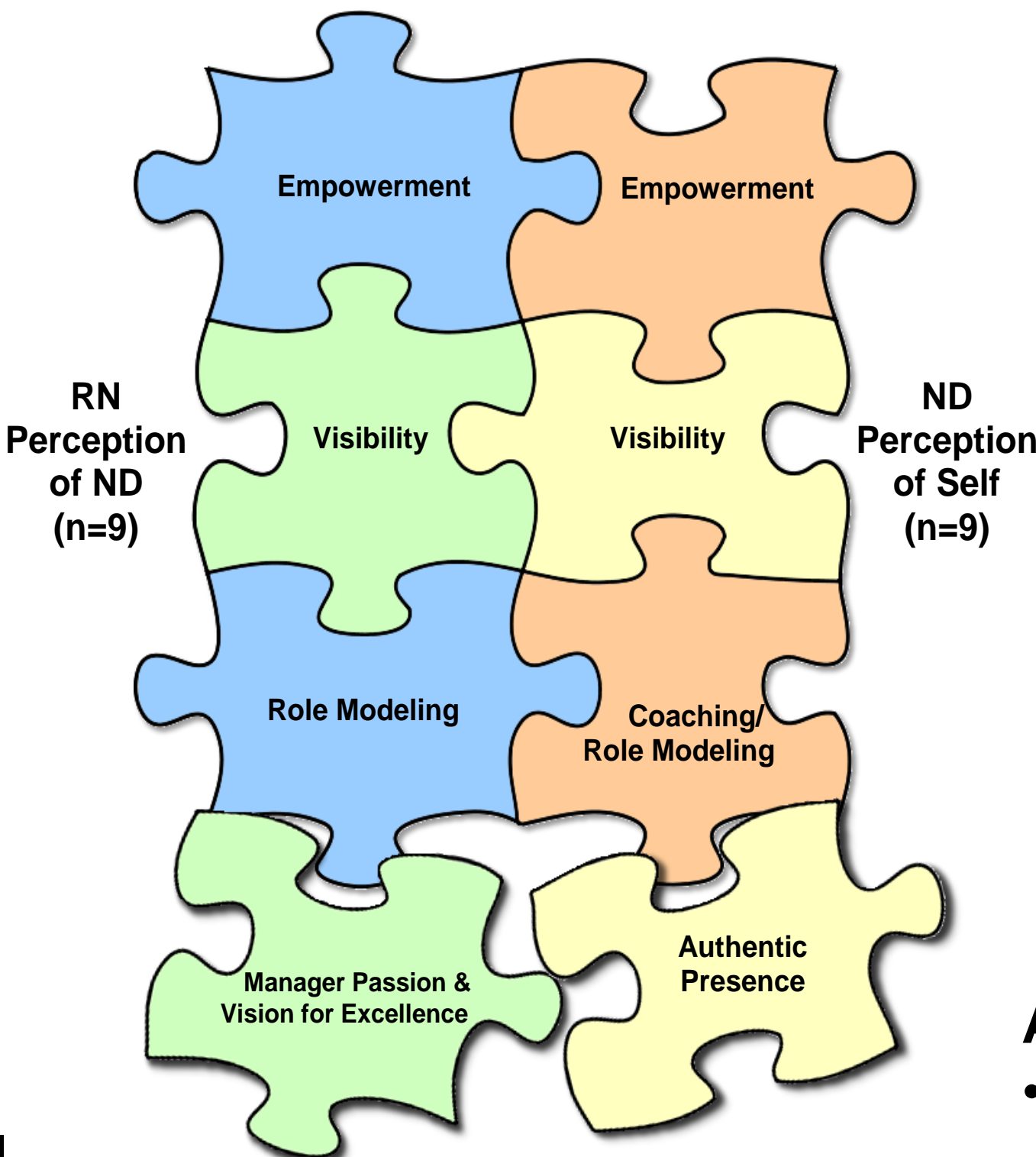
- “She always connects with you...”
- “In a very positive light, her presence is felt”

#### Role Modeling

- “She never looks stressed... I’ve never heard her raise her voice”

#### Passion for Excellence

- “I love what I do, and I think half of it’s because of the environment that I work in. She (ND) maintains that environment”.



### Characteristics Identified by NDs:

#### Empowerment

- “They don’t feel that they need to run all of those decisions by me and they feel pretty confident... that I will support their decisions”

#### Visibility

- Opportunity to be available to help staff with any needs they may have

#### Role Modeling

- “I try to role model and problem-solve issues without doing it for them... because I know it’s a 24/7 operation” and I’m not here all of the time.

#### Authentic Presence

- Creating “meaningful” connections with staff. Know them personally, know their practice, and know their strengths.

### Registered Nurse Demographic Data

Gender		Highest Nursing Education		# of years employed at hospital	
Female	9 (100%)	Associate Degree	1 11.1	1-3	1 11.1
		Bachelors Degree	8 88.9	4-6	1 11.1
Age		Certification		10-12	
20-24	1 11.1	Yes	3 33.3	13-15	2 22.2
40-44	2 22.2	No	6 66.7	16-18	1 11.1
45-49	1 11.1			35-40	3 33.3
50-54	1 11.1				
55+	4 44.5				
Basic Nursing Education		Hours worked at the time of survey		# of years on current unit	
		20-24	1 12.5	1-3	2 22.2
		25-29	1 12.5	4-6	1 11.1
Associates Degree	1 11.1	30-34	5 62.5	10-12	1 11.1
Bachelors Degree	8 88.9	35-40	1 12.5	13-15	2 22.2
		Missing 1 data point		16-18	1 11.1
				19+	2 22.2

### Nurse Director Demographic Data

Gender		Highest Nursing Education		# of years as ND on the identified unit	
Female	9 (100%)	Bachelors Degree	3 33.0	1-3	2 22.2
		Masters Degree	6 67.0	4-6	1 11.1
Age		Certification		7-9	2 22.2
40-44	1 11.1	Yes	4 44.4	13-15	2 22.2
45-49	1 11.1	No	5 55.6	16-18	1 11.1
50-54	0 0			35-40	1 11.1
55-60	5 55.6				
61-65	2 22.2				
Basic Nursing Education		# of years employed at hospital			
Diploma	1 11.1	13-15	2 22.2		
Bachelors Degree	3 33.3	16-18	2 22.2		
Masters Degree	5 55.6	20-43	5 55.6		

## DISCUSSION

- Characteristics identified support previous studies about qualities of exemplary leaders
- Characteristics describe Transformational Leadership styles of NDs
- Strong correlation between views of RNs and NDs; which is different from other studies

## LIMITATIONS

- Study was conducted in a Magnet designated hospital, so the findings may not be generalizable.
- RNs were not asked what shift they worked or their clinical setting. Findings could be different between practice areas or shift worked.

## PRACTICE AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

- NDs need to develop structures that position RNs to have a strong voice in practice and quality of work life decisions
- NDs need “best practice” tool kits to optimize the engagement and satisfaction of RNs
- ND leadership development programs should be tailored to the development of Transformational Leadership characteristics
- Development of satisfaction instruments to measure leadership qualities of NDs, identified by RNs

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