Transforming Relationships for High Performance: A Relational Model of Organizational Change

Jody Hoffer Gittell
Professor, Heller School, Brandeis University
Director, Relational Coordination Research Collaborative
Flight departure process: A coordination challenge

Operations Agents

Baggage Agents

Gate Agents

Cabin Cleaners

Fuelers

Flight Attendants

Pilots

Mechanics

Ramp Agents

Ticket Agents

Caterers

Freight Agents

Pilots

Cabin Cleaners

Fuelers

Flight Attendants

Pilots

Mechanics

Ramp Agents

Ticket Agents

Caterers

Freight Agents
Relationships shape the communication through which coordination occurs ...
For better...

- Shared goals
- Shared knowledge
- Mutual respect

Frequent communication
Timely communication
Problem-solving communication
Functional goals
Specialized knowledge
Lack of respect

Infrequent communication
Delayed communication
“Finger-pointing”

... Or worse
This process is called relational coordination.

“Communicating and relating for the purpose of task integration”
Relational coordination and flight departure performance

Quality/efficiency performance index

Relational coordination
Patient care: A coordination challenge
Institute of Medicine report

“The current system shows too little cooperation and teamwork. Instead, each discipline and type of organization tends to defend its authority at the expense of the total system’s function.” (2003)
Relational coordination and surgical performance

Quality/efficiency performance index

Relational coordination

Hosp1 Hosp2 Hosp3 Hosp4 Hosp5 Hosp6 Hosp7 Hosp8 Hosp9
Why does relational coordination matter?

Relationships of shared goals, shared knowledge and mutual respect provide an *organizational culture* that supports process improvement.
Why does relational coordination matter?

Relationships of shared goals, shared knowledge and mutual respect help workers to connect *around* the patient.
Relational coordination: Connecting around the patient

Case Managers
Attending Physicians
Physical Therapists
Technicians
 Administrators
Referring Physicians
Nursing Assistants
Social Workers
Nurses

Patient and family
Organizational structures that support relational coordination

- Select for teamwork
- Measure team performance
- Reward team performance
- Resolve conflicts proactively
- Invest in frontline leadership
- Make job boundaries flexible
- Create boundary spanners
- Develop shared protocols
- Broaden participation in team meetings
- Develop shared info systems
- Partner with suppliers

Relational Coordination
- Shared goals
- Shared knowledge
- Mutual respect
- Frequent
- Timely
- Accurate
- Problem-solving
- Communication

Quality Performance
Efficiency Performance
Worker Well-Being
A Relational Model of Organizational Change

**Structural Intervention**
- Selection
- Training
- Conflict resolution
- Performance measures
- Rewards
- Meetings
- Boundary spanners
- Protocols
- Information systems

**Relational Coordination**
- Shared goals
- Shared knowledge
- Mutual respect
- Frequent communication
- Timely communication
- Accurate communication
- Problem-solving communication

**Performance Outcomes**
- Quality
- Efficiency
- Worker well-being

**Relational Intervention**
- Psychological safety
- Relationship mapping
- Coaching/role modeling

**Work Process Intervention**
- Process mapping
- Goal and role clarification
- Structured problem solving
A Relational Model of Organizational Change

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- Selection
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**Relational Coordination**
- Shared goals
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- Frequent communication
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**Performance Outcomes**
- Quality
- Efficiency
- Worker well-being

**Executive leadership**

**Relational Intervention**
- Psychological safety
- Relationship mapping
- Coaching/role modeling

**Mid-level leadership**

**Work Process Intervention**
- Process mapping
- Goal and role clarification
- Structured problem solving

**Front line leadership**