

## **What if you could boost productivity by 5000 %?**

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Raising productivity by 10% or 20% usually means that you can cut your costs. What if your productivity soars by 5000%? Impossible?

### **Raise productivity by listening to business leaders**

In his latest book, *The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit*, Stephen Covey cites the following suggestion by Peter Drucker: You can raise workforce productivity fifty-fold by viewing employees as knowledge workers instead of as manual workers. Drucker points out, “The most valuable asset of a 21<sup>st</sup> century institution... will be its knowledge workers and their productivity.” (Covey, 2004, p.15).

Converted into a percentage, Drucker’s fifty-fold increase becomes 5000%. You will enjoy consistently high productivity if you choose to treat your staff as knowledge workers, whether or not you achieve the high levels cited by Drucker. Staff members, who are treated as knowledge workers, will reward you by providing your patients with safer, more cost effective patient care.

### **Raise productivity by reading Smart Nursing**

Learn a variety of useful strategies in my upcoming book, *Smart Nursing—How to Create a Positive Work Environment that Empowers and Retains Nurses*. *Smart Nursing* shows that the solution to nursing crisis is not to ask, nor expect, nurses to work faster; rather, we must enable them to work *smarter*, by removing obstacles that interfere with their productivity. It encourages clinical nurses and managers to work together using conceptual, communication, and leadership approaches.

*Smart Nursing* will be released by Springer Publishing Company, NYC on April 1, 2005. You can quickly pre-order *Smart Nursing* by typing Fabre in the search box or by viewing the list of new and forthcoming books at [www.springerpub.com](http://www.springerpub.com). You will then receive your book as soon as it comes off the press. The following suggestions are a few of the more than 500 no-cost strategies mentioned in *Smart Nursing*

### **Raise productivity by building relationships**

Healthcare is a relationship business. It is built on relationships between caregivers and patients, as well as on relationships between caregivers and healthcare providers. Positive relationships

among healthcare professionals generate energy and raise productivity. However, nursing productivity is often just measured in the number of tasks a nurse can accomplish. That's like going to the store and buying apples, but then trying to judge your success by counting how many oranges you have.

Productivity requires a sense of trust among nurses, managers, physicians and others. Trust is necessary for patient safety, nurse recruitment and teamwork. When nurses trust physicians and managers, they feel comfortable with autonomy. This enables them to be fully engaged in caring for patients without having to waste time wondering if they will be supported. This raises nurse productivity the right way, without burning them out.

How do you build trust? You build trust by respecting yourself and others. You build it by being a good role model, by courteous communication, by sensitivity to the needs of others. Staff members pay attention when you seek them out and ask for their input. Nurses are more likely to trust you when you are

consistent, and when you make decisions according to what is right rather than what is easy.

**Raise productivity by using the *full professional capacity* of your nurses.**

Negative environments interfere with productivity and have become obstacles to nursing excellence. The lack of courtesy and respect chips away at a nurse's sense of self, sapping his or her energy and motivation. This prevents nurses from using their *full professional capacity*.

What is a nurse's full professional capacity? In addition to fulfilling their clinical work, nurses who use their full professional capacity solve patient problems with critical thinking. They are empowered to act in time to prevent medical errors. They will improve their facility's general operation by sharing nursing perspectives with managers. Nurses who use their *full professional capacity* are able to deliver safe patient care in a variety of clinical settings. Smart nursing strategies empower managers to work with

staff more effectively. Indeed, the wisdom behind these strategies is that they blend healthcare knowledge with business expertise. More than helping nurses to maximize the “nursing process” with commitment, competence, and compassion, the Smart Nursing strategies also address the bottom line for managers. In short, the dollar difference between the present level of nurse productivity and a nurse's full professional capacity is the potential cost savings that Smart Nursing offers. Organizations often justify their treatment of nurses by suggesting that financial constraints are forcing their actions, but research and experiential data show the opposite. The Advisory Board, Washington, DC, has found that a 500-bed hospital can save \$800,000 a year by cutting its nurse turnover by a mere 3 percent.

Healthcare must make good use of its scarce resources. Raising productivity by treating healthcare staff members as knowledge workers is an excellent way to start. Consider making this important change.

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