Strategic Leadership

When thinking about strategic leaders, one of my former bosses comes to mind. Her name is Gerry, and she is the DON (Director of Nursing) at a nursing and rehabilitation center in which I was previously employed. The characteristics that are unique to her are that she is well-liked and respected by all of her employees. She is very knowledgeable; she keeps her cool under pressure, and has the ability to make strategic decisions in stressful situations. She respects all of her subordinates and truly cares about their success. I recall one moment in particular when a Speech Therapist was in the presence of Gerry and talking not so respectfully about another employee in which she stated, “She is just a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant)”. Gerry very quickly put her in her place and said “Nobody here is just an anything. We are all mothers, daughters, sisters, employees, and we are all important”. She treats the janitor with just as much respect and admiration as she does every single employee.

Gerry shapes the formation of the organization’s vision and mission by taking the mission statement very seriously and pouring the values into every decision she makes. The mission statement reads “Our family, your family, ONE FAMILY, Committed to loving, giving, and caring. United in making a difference.” Gerry treats every patient and their family with empathy and dignity. There are tough decisions and circumstances that occur in nursing homes and rehabilitation centers, and she truly cares about helping the families we serve.

Her communication style is very direct. She is a great listener, she encourages communication, she encourages questions if you do not understand something, feedback on what is and what is not helping you perform your job effectively, and she is a wonderful teacher.

Gerry influences successful strategic actions and the competitiveness of the firm by continually tracking other nursing and rehabilitation centers progress and numbers. We would have a morning meeting every morning at 9:30 sharp in which we would discuss numbers, patient’s stories, and always set a goal on what we were going to improve for that day and every day moving forward. She has a very friendly competitive nature about her that would help push us all to be the best facility in the region. She continuously asked for feedback and ways in which we could improve. She never settled for average or meeting the bare minimum. Strategic leadership is defined as the ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, and empower others to create strategic change as necessary, and Gerry possessed all of the right characteristics and leadership qualities to achieve just that.