

CEO NEWS & VIEWS



Dear Colleagues:

I am sitting here on Monday morning waiting “patiently” to be called for or released from jury duty. As many of you know, I don’t tolerate waiting very well so I am trying to be productive – get caught up on reading, get some work done – while I do my civic duty. It’s actually kind of nice just to sit down for a couple of hours. We’ve had a million things swirling around and I’ll take a few minutes where I can find them.

It is hard for me to believe that Thanksgiving is next week. I love Thanksgiving and I have what I consider to be *the* most important job of the day: cooking the turkey (other than *being* the turkey, which is actually the starring role) and I do a great job – just stating the facts here! We have what I have always referred to as a “secret” family recipe that guarantees the bird will be moist and perfectly browned every time. The process begins when I slather on a stick or two of butter and put a special spice rub under the skin. I add a bit more butter on top before cooking it. My mouth is watering as I write! For some reason, my youngest son, Jesse, thinks he cooks a better turkey than I do, so we also have the tradition of elbowing each other all around the kitchen each Thanksgiving morning. Clearly my CEO title only takes me so far...

This time of year also reminds me to stop and think about all that I am thankful for. Like so many, I am most grateful for my wife of 30-plus years, my two boys and my daughter-in-law, who has made my son, Jonathan, an even better person than we made him and in a lot less time! Given the business we are in and all that comes through our doors every day, I remain grateful for good health and the caregivers who help me maintain and sustain the hospital throughout the year.

I know I have said it before, but I am passionate about this so I am going to repeat myself; I am grateful for all of you. I am not sure there is a CEO in the country blessed with as dedicated, passionate, hardworking, innovative and determined staff as I am. We have been through so much change and transition this past year, but you just keep going, growing, getting better and pushing yourselves and each other.

Thanks to you and your loved ones who share you with us every day!

Culture Club... I enjoy reading a regular feature in the Sunday *New York Times* called “Corner Office,” which features an interview with a successful CEO or business person about their leadership and management style, lessons they have learned or secrets of their success (it’s never too late to teach an old dog new tricks). This past Sunday, Robert L. Johnson, founder and president of the firm RLJ Companies and founder of Black Entertainment Television, was interviewed. I found his comments smart and thoughtful and wanted to share some of what he said about culture.

Culture is one of those things that can be hard to define, but building one that is strong and healthy is essential to business success. Johnson says that “If you really want to build something that is going to be around for a very long time and be stable and grow, culture has to be paramount.” When asked if there was anything unique or unusual about the culture of his companies, he replied,

“The one thing is that I will not get angry, and I won’t let people get angry and lash out at somebody personally.”

He went on to link this philosophy to a very basic business principle: the bottom line. Johnson said that in a culture of anger and resentment people do not work up to their potential; it’s hard to be a successful team when there is unproductive conflict. I could not agree more and have always tried to adhere to this philosophy, although I would not be honest if I said I had never lost my temper in the office. But age does bring a certain amount of wisdom and experience. You learn that what our mothers always told us about getting more flies with honey than vinegar was spot on. And, while I think we have a great team, we still have some work to do in the “unproductive conflict” area.

Johnson went on to say that he thinks really great companies are populated by people who are confident, secure and do not fear others. Those companies naturally have lower turnover rates because most of their employees are satisfied with their jobs. While this may not seem like a particularly profound philosophy, it did give me pause to think about our culture, particularly in light of our recent EOS scores. As reported in last week’s *UCH Insider*, UCH improved its national ranking, moving from the 66th percentile in 2010 to the 83rd percentile among organizations surveyed by Morehead Associates, the company that has administered the survey for us for the last several years.

The results showed that while we have our fair share of areas to improve upon, we are also a workforce that feels connected, has confidence in the abilities of senior management, and has a disciplined focus on working together. The results from this year’s survey are particularly impressive given the amount of change we have experienced and the stress we are under from an organizational, as well as an individual, standpoint.

I think a lot of our culture is revealed in our employee opinion survey results. I probably oversimplify how I think about culture, because I think it’s mainly about our values and beliefs – not only how the “we” that make up the UCH family behave every day, but also our attitudes, the rules we live by and our interactions with others as we do our jobs. But most of all, I think of culture as being a reflection of all of you and what you bring to UCH, our patients and their families every day.

While things aren’t always perfect here, I do think we have a caring, compassionate culture. If you ever doubt it, all you have to do is listen to any one of the stories we heard at last week’s annual President’s Awards dinner, which honored the recipients of the President’s awards over the past year. These stories are, in one word, remarkable. There is inspirational and aspirational work going on all around us. It was nice to pause and recognize our friends for all their fine work and for what they bring to, yes, our culture. Congratulations again to all our recipients.

Keeping Ben Meyerhoff in Our Thoughts....In keeping with my theme of family and positive culture, I want to provide you with an update about a member of our UCH family who needs all of us now more than ever. On November 7th our colleague and friend, Ben Meyerhoff, practice manager for the Pain and Integrative Medicine clinics, suffered a serious injury. For those of you who do not know the details, Ben and his wife Erin have given us permission to share.

Ben was biking to work that day, as he normally has for many months. He was hunkered down against the cold as he cycled and did not see a parked RTD van. Ben slammed into the van with full

force, shattering his helmet and breaking the C6 and C7 vertebrae in his neck. He also suffered a severe spine injury.

Our hearts go out to Ben, Erin and their three children. There has been a personal online "Care Calendar" for the Meyerhoff family set up where you can sign up to help with child care or to bring meals. You can also purchase and donate gift cards the family can use at different restaurants.

To get started simply access the site <http://carecalendar.org> and enter the following information in the appropriate box: Calendar ID: 93421; Security Code: 5687. Erin has also been so very generous with her time and energy by posting updates on Ben's condition on Facebook at "Ben Meyerhoff Update."

A small team is also working on developing a longer-term, organized assistance effort. We'll keep you posted on that, here and in the *Insider*.

I am never more proud of the UCH family than when they band together to help, as well as care for, one of their own. Ben and his family need us now, as they will in the weeks and months ahead, so please keep them in your thoughts and help in any way you can.

Have a very Happy Thanksgiving – be safe...and be thankful!

Bruce

P.S. Wednesday's Update: I got out of jury duty so I was able to participate in the annual turkey give-away Tuesday. Thanks to all of you who donated your turkey. They will be given to our families at Park Lane Elementary and Metro Care Ring.

Your feedback is important, so if there's something on your mind, write to me at talktome@uch.edu