



LMH manager exemplifies what managers should be

CNHI News Service

— BY KEVIN LILLY

Pharos-Tribune business writer

The name of Susan VonTobel was nominated for the Pharos-Tribune's first story recognizing outstanding managers in the area .

The nominator, who wishes to remain anonymous, is one of 22 people working under VonTobel's supervision. VonTobel deserves the recognition because of how fair and honest she is, especially through the "tough times" of 2005, according to the individual who submitted her name.

"She never skated around the issue," the nominator said.

Surprised by the comments, VonTobel said she was "very honored." She is the director of cardiopulmonary and specialty services at Logansport Memorial Hospital and has been managing five departments for the past four years.

In response to the compliments, VonTobel said, "That's how I work. There is no hidden agenda."

She said she operates under the assumption that if respect is given, it will be returned. The method seems to be working.

"It is much easier to manage if your employees trust you," she said.

Niranjan Pati, dean of the School of Business at Indiana University Kokomo, agrees.

"Good managers are honest."

Pati said oftentimes managers have the status of leaders, where in the past there was a separation of sorts.

"We need more leaders than managers," Pati said. "People really build trust when they think their leaders are not hiding things."

Pati spoke of the recent scandals of corporate executives who violated that trust by breaking the rules.

"Honesty, integrity, sincerity I think should be the main characteristics that all the managers and leaders must have."

In VonTobel's line of work, she and her department's employees deal with people when they are at their most vulnerable, when they are trying to recover from an illness or disease. Trusting each other is vital to serving the patients.

As health-care providers "we set the pace with our enthusiasm," VonTobel said of keeping patients on the road to recovery.

She tells her staff it is a waste of energy to have a negative attitude at work. "It doesn't take any longer to do your job with compassion."

"Like it or not, you have to have fun."

She said she has been blessed with a top-notch staff. Many have an average of five to 10 years experience. One employee has 40.

"There is not much turnover," VonTobel said. She said her staff is knowledgeable, has great bedside manner and personalities to match.

Pati points out that having a good team can be beneficial to the organization and, more importantly in VonTobel's case, the patients.

"Leaders cannot do everything," Pati said. "You need to have credible people around you that you can trust and delegate tasks to."

When VonTobel prioritizes, she said she always keeps in mind that the patient is "first and foremost."

"Everything else will fall into place."

She said she knows who does the legwork.

"They do the work and make it happen."

VonTobel said they make a good team. She does cover shifts from time to time and is available for her employees 24/7. She said she would come into work anytime she was needed.

“I think it’s just the way it should be.”

Kevin Lilly can be reached at 722-5000, Ext. 5117, or via e-mail at kevin.lilly@pharostribune.com

Copyright © 1999-2005 cnhi, inc.