CASE STUDY | HEALTHCARE

How a Fragmented Hospital Executive Team Transformed Into a Force Multiplier



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SUMMIT
EXECUTIVE ADVISORY GROUP



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following a complete executive leadership team turnover of a large community hospital, we were engaged by the leadership of a national healthcare system to help the executive leadership team of a high-profile hospital move from operational stability to breakthrough enterprise performance.

By strengthening the effectiveness of the executive team, through improved leadership alignment, clearer communication of priorities, more disciplined meeting structures and stronger accountability, the hospital achieved its strongest performance period on record while improving quality, length of stay, throughput, and financial performance.

> ***2025 was our best year*** *for quality, throughput, and financial metrics.*
>
> **// Hospital Executive**

When hospital leadership teams operate as a **cohesive enterprise leadership system**, rather than a collection of functional leaders, they become **powerful multipliers of organizational performance**.

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THE CHALLENGE

The Hospital

Community Hospital is a large, 500-bed flagship hospital within a large healthcare system, operating one of the largest emergency departments, a Level I Trauma Center, a comprehensive stroke center, and is nationally recognized for cardiovascular services. It plays a critical role in the region's care delivery system and operates in a highly complex clinical and financial environment. The hospital was facing three critical challenges leading to this engagement:

Executive Turnover

Following a period of executive leadership disruption, the hospital's entire Executive Leadership Team (ELT) was replaced. While the CEO and COO had been with the hospital a little over a year, the rest of the **executives had been in their roles for less than 9 month**s, and several were first-time executives in expanded enterprise positions. The **Chief Medical Officer position was also vacant**, creating additional clinical alignment challenges.

Incremental Improvements

During the ELT's short tenure, the hospital had regained operational stability. However, **performance improvements remained incremental and were largely driven by individual effort rather than coordinated enterprise execution**. Although the hospital had strong individual leaders, the ELT often operated in functional silos rather than as an integrated enterprise leadership team, limiting its ability to execute a unified strategy and drive significant impact across the organization.

Performance Expectations Were High

Due to the high-profile nature and complexity of the hospital, there was **significant pressure on the new executive team to perform**, and to elevate and accelerate their impact and effectiveness.

> *The organizational structure and meeting discipline have **helped the team think more proactively about planning and execution**.*
>
> // Healthcare System Executive

CRITICAL CHALLENGES FACING THE TEAM

- Operating as a cohesive ELT rather than a collection of departments
- Limited alignment around a clear enterprise strategy and priorities
- Inconsistent decision-making systems, accountability and execution discipline
- Unstructured operating rhythms
- Alignment between the ELT and the broader Senior Leadership Team

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THE WORK

Accelerating Impact

Over 6 months, we worked with the ELT through a four-phase process to accelerate the impact of the team, and to help them position the hospital to move from **stabilization to exceptional and sustainable performance.**

Phase 1: Diagnosis + Assessment

Insights from leadership and team effectiveness assessments and executive interviews revealed several patterns in how the ELT members operated individually and as a collective team, shaping their effectiveness in leading the hospital. Some of these insights included:

- Strong execution orientation paired with limited strategic focus and high-performance expectations
- Limited emphasis on relational leadership and bringing other leaders along during change
- Need for clearer priorities, expectations, and follow-through across leadership levels
- Feedback from SLT leaders calling for greater consistency, accountability, and unified messaging
- High trust within the ELT, but insufficient structure to fully scale leadership impact

Phase 2: Performance Breakthrough + Levers of Impact

During two retreats, the team used insights from the leadership and team assessments, and executive interviews, to identify a small set of high-impact priorities—***Levers of** Impact,* which were supported by an **ELT Charter** that articulated the team's purpose, goals, behavioral commitments to one another, and operating guidelines. The ELT then established outcome-based goals and a work plan to execute each *Lever* of *Impact* over a 90-day timeline.

LEVERS OF IMPACT	
Levers of Impact are a small number of critical priorities—what the ELT needs to *execute exceptionally well*—to accelerate their impact on the hospital and convert strong individual leadership into coordinated enterprise execution.	**Lever 1: *Vision, Strategy, and Priorities*** Clarify enterprise strategy and cascade priorities across the hospital. **Lever 2: *Calendar Control and Meeting Effectiveness*** Align and gain control of executive calendars, carve out *protected* executive time, establish disciplined ELT and SLT agendas and follow-through. **Lever 3: *Elevating Talent and Performance*** Strengthen leadership expectations, delegation, and accountability at Director and Manager levels and elevate performance expectations throughout the hospital.

Phase 3: Accountability + Sustained Learning

Following the retreats, we conducted five months of 1:1 coaching along with structured monthly accountability sessions to reinforce focus, strengthen execution discipline, and provide continued leadership development.

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THE RESULTS

Over the course of the engagement, the hospital experienced its **strongest performance period on record**, with sustained improvement across **quality**, **throughput**, and **financial** outcomes. The leadership team established a more disciplined operating rhythm, reduced reactive leadership behaviors, and strengthened alignment across leadership levels.

Operational and Performance Outcomes

- Strongest performance period in hospital history across quality, throughput, and financial metrics.
- Sustained performance improvement over 6–8 months rather than short-term spikes.
- Exceptional throughput performance with minimal patient flow holds and high reliability.

The hospital Executive Leadership Team moved from stabilization to exceptional and sustainable performance.

Leadership and Execution Outcomes

- Increased ELT *protected* time and agenda-driven weekly ELT and SLT meetings.
- Faster decision-making and reduced leadership rework.
- Improved alignment between executive and senior leadership teams.
- Greater clarity and alignment around organizational priorities.

Human Sustainability Outcomes

- Reduced reactive leadership behaviors under pressure.
- Increased resilience and peer support within the leadership team.
- Leaders reporting greater confidence in sustaining performance over time.

OUTCOME HIGHLIGHT: LENGTH OF STAY REDUCTION

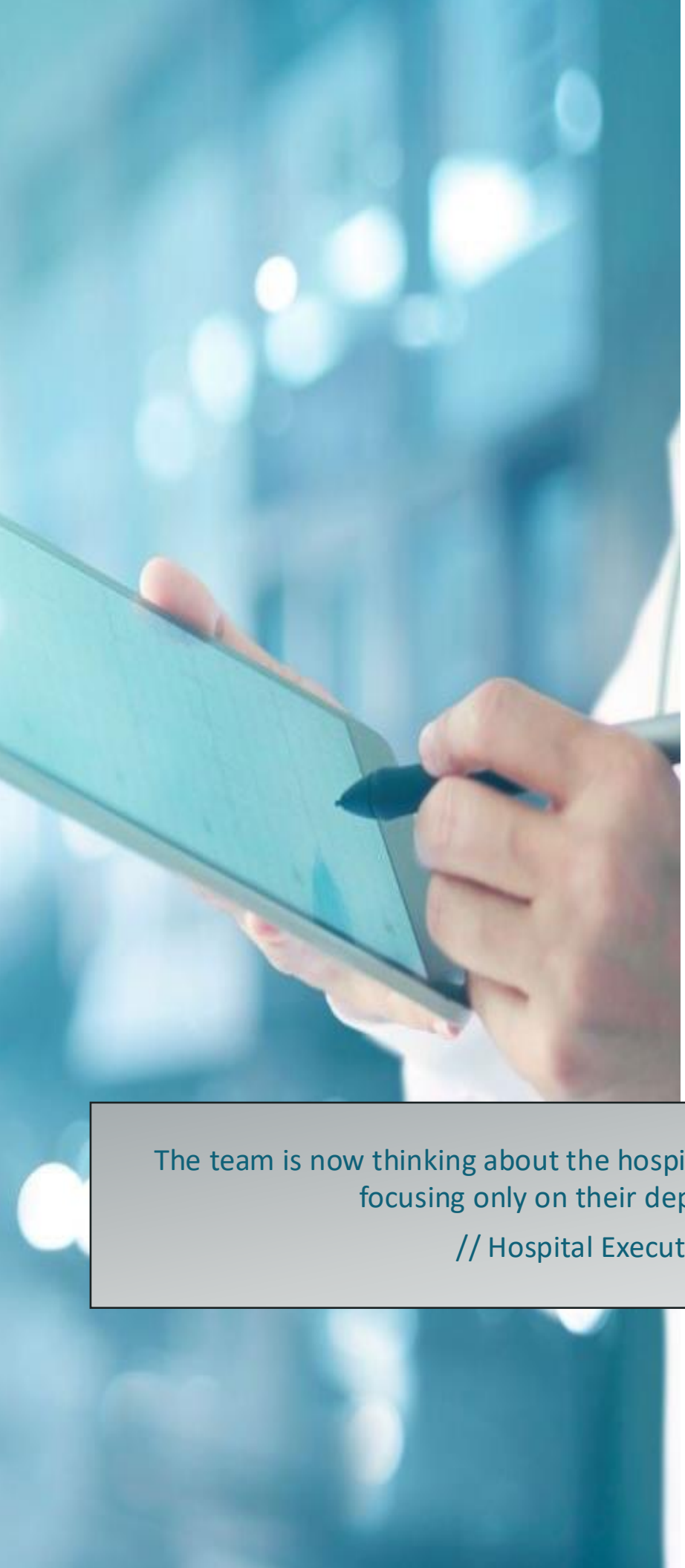
Early in the engagement, the leadership team recognized the need to **clarify the hospital's strategic vision** and **more effectively communicate priorities** across the organization. The CEO led the development of a visual framework to articulate these priorities, which anchored a hospital-wide campaign focused on **Length of Stay reduction**.

The initiative produced significant improvements in **Length of Stay**, and the visual and communication framework developed by the leadership team is now being adopted by other hospitals within the healthcare system.

> ***Leaders now understand the 'why' behind the priorities*** *and are communicating it to their teams.*
>
> **// Senior Leader**

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THE LEARNING

One of the most overlooked drivers of hospital performance isn't strategy, technology, or staffing.

It's the alignment and cohesion within the leadership team itself.

When hospital leadership teams operate as a **cohesive enterprise leadership system**, rather than a collection of functional leaders, they become **powerful multipliers of organizational performance**.

Alignment around shared **priorities**, **disciplined leadership rhythms**, and coordinated **execution** can significantly accelerate improvements in:

- **Leadership Effectiveness**
- **Financial Results**
- **Operational + Clinical Performance**

> The team is now thinking about the hospital as a whole, rather than focusing only on their departments.
>
> // Hospital Executive

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Ready to accelerate your Hospital Leadership Team's impact?

We are ready to help!

TO LEARN MORE

Schedule a discovery call with Devon.

CONNECT WITH US.

Devon Brown, PhD | 303.585.0938 | devon@incitingleaders.com | www.incitingleaders.com

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