

Future Shape of the Winner

# Case Study: Wow! Projects. Memorial Hospital and Health System

## The Problem

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Profit margins were eroding at Memorial Hospital and Health System of South Bend, Indiana. Niche competitors were cherry picking profitable services, hindering the hospital's ability to provide ones that are necessary but less lucrative. Other services were becoming commodities, and the organization found itself being squeezed by the government, insurance companies, drug makers, and technology providers.

## The Solution

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The Memorial team studied successful businesses and the work of consultants, including Tom Peters, and identified innovation as the solution to the organization's predicament. They aimed to transform their culture so that every associate could express and implement ideas and unleash his or her creativity. Everyone would need to understand the issues and the imperative for change, and to share a common perspective and language. They all would need to be "sheep-dipped" in the culture of innovation.

The team chose The Tom Peters Company! to use the WOW! Projects methodology to get everyone in the organization immersed in innovation and understanding the challenges, objectives, and goals. Our consultants first ensured that the leadership team understood and supported the initiative. They met with the leaders to further define and map out a strategy using the WOW! methodology. They gave the executives a 'taste of WOW!' so that they would understand the process, holding a pilot WOW! Workshop for the 250 top managers. With guidance from our consultants, Memorial subsequently rolled out WOW! Projects in a big way. One of our consultants trained and certified the employees to lead the WOW! Workshops in which other employees learned to work on WOW! Projects. Members of the leadership team sponsored and supported the resulting projects. In several weeklong concurrent sessions, more than 200 people were initiated into the Wow! way of doing things.



## The Result

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Now more than 700 employees have attended this WOW! Wizard School, and they have taken ownership of more than 150 projects. Management says employees “think differently, move faster, and show more passion”. There are more leaders and more people taking on projects who would not have thought that they could do so.

Memorial also became the first hospital to set up an R&D unit and to implement a board-approved R&D policy. It has improved patient satisfaction scores and reduced employee turnover. It has created strategic alliances with companies like Du Pont, Baxter, Steelcase, and Lands End, which have resulted in donations and exchanges of products and services, access to business skills, and additional revenues. Subsequently Memorial was selected as a test site for an international safety project, and WOW! Projects was the execution framework chosen to get everyone focused on that topic.

