



# **Culture Change at McLaren Healthcare**

Challenging the resistance to change

## Challenge

Bart Buxton knew that he needed to make a change. As the new CEO of McLaren Hospital in Pontiac Michigan, he found the doctors and hospital staff were very resistant to change and did not truly work together at solving the many problems they encountered on a daily basis. Bart had experienced lean and continuous improvement methods in the past, he was a believer. But how could he get his staff to become believers? He needed dedication and “buy in’ to stop the daily “firefighting’, make improvement efforts sustainable, and get his team working together.

## Solution

Bart called Dennis Wade at Oakland University in neighboring Rochester, MI asking for help with his dilemma. After a brief conversation, Dennis recommended that Bart call the Lean Learning Center. “The Lean Learning Center has the best program we know of to change a company’s culture and create the buy in you need’.

Shortly afterward, Bart visited the Lean Learning Center and was convinced that this was what the McLaren group needed. He made arrangements for two groups of doctors and health care professionals from McLaren to attend the Lean Experience® at the Lean Learning Center. Bart commented that our doctors and professional providers are very talented, experienced, and focused on quality care. With many years of education and training already, they are also very resistant to change. We needed a methodology and program that would open their minds and make them believers. The Lean Experience® is the unique program we were looking for.

## Results

After the first day of class Bart received a few phone calls from the participants complaining about a “new language’ and strange terms that cannot possibly help them. Midway through the class, the calls strangely stopped (he knew the journey was worth the effort, he hoped they had not given up). Then finally, the last day of class, the calls started back in earnest. Not just a few calls this time, calls from everyone. They were energized, on fire, and ready to tackle the problems together at the hospital.

It was just the “buy in’ that Bart had hoped for. The culture was starting to change. The team was working together, solving problems, and starting to create the type of learning organization that was needed. I am thrilled with the results, we are currently making plans to continue our learning efforts with the Lean Learning Center.

# References

Bart Buxton  
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Dennis Wade  
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Other references for similar culture changes with the Lean Learning Center:

Randy Hines  
Hi-Vol Mfg., Livonia, MI  
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