



Our Pursuit of Excellence: Q&A with Rich Whitney

Radiology Partners (RP) held its 2020 Practice Leadership Summit (PLS) January 23-25 in Las Vegas, Nevada, and the entire event was themed around RP's practice value of excellence. Before RP physicians and teammates convened at PLS, we sat down with RP CEO Rich Whitney to hear his perspective on excellence and why the pursuit matters.

Excellence is difficult to define. What does excellence mean to you?

Excellence means a passionate striving for results that go far beyond the standard; results that are, in fact, extraordinary. It is also a recognition that excellence itself is not a static measure. It actually requires a constant reimagining of what is possible by overcoming obstacles or by challenging our current frame of reference.

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Why is the pursuit of excellence important at RP?

Our mission, to transform radiology, is an extremely ambitious and important quest. There is much at stake for tens of millions of patients and, I would argue, for our healthcare system overall. Average will not get us there. Good will not get us there. Even excellent by today's standards will not do the job. To achieve our goals, we need to strive for excellence in everything we do and continually force a redefining of the standard of excellence. That is why excellence is one of our core values.

Is excellence achievable?

Excellence is a desire, an intent, a commitment to extraordinary outcomes, and is not necessarily a statically defined destination. You achieve excellence when the achievement of outstanding results drives you to continually break down barriers to even greater achievement, to continually reimagine what is possible and in turn to continually redefine the standard for the field.

How do you differentiate between excellence and engagement?

Engagement is an ingredient of excellence. An individual, a team, a practice cannot achieve excellence without engagement. But, engagement alone is not excellence.

When you think about RP five years ago versus today, how has our pursuit of excellence evolved?

Five years ago excellence in our field was not well defined. Much of radiology was stuck in a status quo. In fact, if you said you were excellent and people believed you, well then you were excellent! Today, RP is leading the way in defining and demonstrating what excellence is in radiology. In part, it is doing the hard work of defining key quality metrics, measuring performance and driving continuous improvement. In part, it is challenging the status quo and imagining new possibilities for the role we can play in improving our healthcare system in America. But, admittedly, we are just getting started and have a very long way to go.

Aristotle said, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit." How do we make excellence a habit?

Engage, attract and recognize. We need to engage our many talented and passionate physicians and support team members and foster their enthusiasm for our mission. We need to attract more and more people who share our desire for excellence in all that we do. And we need to recognize those who are extraordinary examples of excellence for the rest of us.

The pursuit of excellence is not unique—especially in healthcare. Many healthcare organizations tout excellence as a value. What makes RP's pursuit unique?

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Certainly we are not the only organization pursuing excellence, but I would say that excellence doesn't happen by accident or just because you say you want to be excellent. On the other hand, most people and organizations are capable of excellence, but it takes a sustained commitment from both physician and support team leaders to foster the engagement and passion required to achieve the extraordinary. We hope to lead the way in our field in this regard and to serve as an example to others in the healthcare system overall.

Rich Whitney is CEO and Chairman of [Radiology Partners](#), a leading physician-led and physician-owned radiology practice in the U.S. Follow him on Twitter at [@RichWhitneyRP](#). For the latest news from RP, follow along on our [blog](#) and on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

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