



Justin Rock, MBA '10

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A HOSPITAL MAY NOT BE THE FIRST PLACE THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF CUSTOMER SERVICE; HOWEVER, DUE TO THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY AND POLICY CHANGES, HOSPITALS ARE QUICKLY CLIMBING TO THE TOP OF THE LIST. AND JUSTIN ROCK IS PART OF THE MOVEMENT TO PROVIDE PATIENTS THE MOST EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE HEALTH CARE POSSIBLE.

After completing his undergraduate degree in Economics in just three years at The University of Texas at Arlington (graduating magna cum laude), Rock entered Baylor's Robbins MBA Healthcare Program.

"The primary reason I chose Baylor was because of its unique health care offerings," he said. "Baylor has an extremely strong reputation in the health care community, both on the medical and business side."

To provide students with in-depth training experience, the Robbins MBA Healthcare Program requires a paid executive residency with a health care organization. Rock traveled south to Valley Baptist Health System in Harlingen, Texas, in June 2009, where his residency project centered on the creation of a Customer Service Department.

"Prior to the residency, Valley Baptist had lost sight of its customer service vision," Rock said. "The executive staff saw this as a major competitive disadvantage and decided to create the Customer Service Department to address our immediate strategic needs. Since then, **CUSTOMER SERVICE HAS BECOME A MAJOR PILLAR OF OUR ORGANIZATION AND IS NOW PART OF OUR DAILY VERNACULAR.**"

Upon completion of his residency and earning an MBA with a specialization in health care administration, Rock was hired as customer service manager at Valley Baptist and began working closely with nursing leadership, operational directors and physicians on how best to address customer service needs.

"My work ranged from generating daily reports on current patient satisfaction statistics to creating far-reaching operational strategies, such as the implementation of nurse hourly rounds," he said. "At least once a month, I would spend a full day on each hospital campus visiting with front-line employees and patients. This allowed me to see the direct

results of our hospital's initiatives and provided me an opportunity to receive immediate feedback from employees on their perception of the organization."

In 2011, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) initiated the Hospital Value-Based Purchasing Program, where acute care hospitals across the nation will be reimbursed based on their performance on certain quality measures, such as patient satisfaction. Rock said health care organizations are still learning exactly how to incorporate customer service into their overall strategies and quickly adapt to these policy changes, which will take effect in 2012.

"It appears customer service is still a fairly new concept to the health care industry, and many hospital administrators are still figuring out how to react to the CMS-required public reporting of patient satisfaction data," he said. "However, recent studies have shown that improvements in customer service, such as increased communication between nurses, physicians and patients, not only lead to increased treatment plan compliance and improved outcomes, but will also have a direct financial impact on the hospital in terms of increased patient loyalty and additional reimbursement through the CMS Value-Based Purchasing guidelines."

Now an operations analyst, Rock continues to advocate efficient health care from an operational standpoint, such as lowering emergency room wait times. As customer service within the health care industry grows increasingly important, Rock's ultimate goal is to ensure quality care.

"During my residency, I was actually a little hesitant to work on customer service," he said. "So much of business school concentrates on background analytics that we sometimes forget the end purpose of our work. To quote our vice president of Pastoral Services, **'PEOPLE DO NOT CARE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE.'**"

 bbr.baylor.edu/rock

Valley Baptist