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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Welcome, listeners. I'm Ken Segel, I'm the Chief Relationship Officer of Value Capture, and the host of Habitual Excellence, and I am really, excited and energized by today's guest.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** She is Donis Macheno, and Donise is the Vice President of Periop Services for Lancaster General Hospital, a jewel in the crown of the Penn Medicine Health System, one of our very greatest.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** And, a location that is not only extremely large, but, has a great history of community service and impact and medicine leadership, medical leadership, nursing leadership on its own.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Denise, thanks for being with us.

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, thanks for the opportunity.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** That's great. Denise, can you introduce yourself and , for our listenership of other leaders, , just share, , 30 seconds about your path in healthcare and how you came to your current role?

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, sure. I'm a nurse by background. I started out in the emergency department as a clinician, and then went through several operational leadership areas, med-surg nursing, step-down, ICU. Also had a concurrent pathway of accreditation and

regulatory compliance, patient safety, quality improvement, and performance improvement.

**Donise Musheno:** And so currently, as you indicated, in a new functional area for me, a vice president of perioperative services over a couple different locations, and sterile processing and endoscopy units as well.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Right, so a broader portfolio... a pretty broad portfolio under that title, and a growing one, so it's great.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Well, we're excited to have you, and... and, like a lot of, your peers across American healthcare right now, when you were appointed to your current role, you had quite a set of complex challenges you are facing.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Could you describe some of those challenges and then talk about some of the results you've been able to achieve as a team? You always underline as a team and as an organization. And then we'll talk about the path and some of your learnings.

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, so the biggest challenge that we had was really around our sterile processing and instrumentation defects, that really made a significant impact on all the other operations within perioperative services. So, when I had joined, and when we started this work, we were facing a 30% defect rate on instruments brought to the operating room.

**Donise Musheno:** So, really, a third of the time, there was something wrong. Now, that could be a filter issue, a hold, all kinds of different defects that came out, but ultimately, Donise Musheno: ended up impacting our cases. So we had about a 9% case delay at that time, which is really significant when you're focused on making sure that your patients get the right care at the right time, and also created a lot of stress on the team who wanted to do a good job and wanted to make sure they could take care of their patients in a timely manner, and then ultimately impacted the overall efficiency and the financial performance as well.

**Donise Musheno:** So we had to really focus significantly on first fixing those instrumentation defects, and using those improvements to drive all the other efficiencies. So then it snowballed into helping us from a first case on time start, room turnover, and certainly staff well-being really was a major impact of the work.

**Donise Musheno:** So, I indicated we started with around a 30% defect rate. We've been able to get that down to about Donise Musheno: about a 4% defect rate. And running on our case delays were about 9% case delays when we started, and we're now running around 0.2, 0.1% case delays, so significant movement.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Yes, I'll say, and

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** you've also been able to sustain it, because you created systems around it, and I think we're gonna...

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** chat a little bit about that, but knowing how many of your peers are facing similar challenges, I think it's really exciting to hear about those

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** results, and I was reviewing them yesterday, and just the way they intersect together, , once you start making it possible for people to be more successful in their work, everything gets better, right?

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** So, great to hear. Okay, so I've learned a lot from you as we've chatted about these issues, about what you as a leader learned. Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his): how you did things and what you've learned from it. So one of the things I was struck by

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Was you said there were things you had... when you came in, there were things that... your mind was more on...

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** some background stuff in the culture than it was on getting right to the improvement itself.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Can you... can you talk a little bit about that?

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, so one of the, , my previous roles in the organization, I was familiar with the teams and some of the challenges that had brought to the high defect rates and the efficiency issues, and Donise Musheno: At the end of the day, it really came down, there was a lot of churn in leadership, and that makes it hard, both to move improvements, sustain improvements, but really erodes at the culture and the trust of the team.

**Donise Musheno:** And so, when I thought about the coming into the space and what was most important, I was intentional about wanting to spend time with the teams to connect and make relationships first. Donise Musheno: And to help focus on that culture to build trust.

**Donise Musheno:** I knew there was a lot of work that was going to need to be done, and we had to start with relationships to get trust so that the teams could do the hard work that I knew lied ahead of us.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** And so, how'd you do that?

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**Donise Musheno:** So, before starting the... before starting the role, I was very fortunate to get support from the executive leadership team in an ask that I had, which was really take the first 3 weeks in the role and not actually do the role. And that's really hard to do, and so I asked for 3 weeks where I would just be with the teams, go with the teams.

**Donise Musheno:** Go to all the different sites, and connect with the staff, learn our process, and really see firsthand, go and see what the issues were that were driving the defects and the efficiency challenges.

**Donise Musheno:** And when you're in almost a crisis-type point, when you have that high of a defect and the stress on the teams related to efficiency, it's hard to ask for, give me 3 weeks to not do my job, essentially, not move actions forward, but really take the time and pause to connect.

**Donise Musheno:** And during those 3 weeks, I leaned on our medical staff leadership to help identify who were our providers that were having the most concerns, what were the case types that were the most challenged.

**Donise Musheno:** And really intentional in going and being in the OR with those physicians, and with those teams. Also going out to practices, going to where those other colleagues were, to really understand what their concerns were directly, and build that relationship so they could understand my perspective, where I'm coming from, and that they felt heard, and that I understood what their specific pain points were.

**Donise Musheno:** It also allowed me to really connect individually with our frontline staff, elbows to elbows during the day, and hear from them what their challenges were, and what their ideas are, how we could fix things in a fast manner.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** It strikes me... , both... it was bold to ask for that, and yet... How powerful it is.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** both to help you understand what the real situation is, and build the relationships that are required to then make change with, right?

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** So, fabulous.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** When you then started to lean in and get started, do you... do you think your teams... believed...

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** the degree of positive momentum that you've achieved would be possible. Were they believers, great, you're here, now we're gonna do great things, or did you... did you have to work on belief a little bit?

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**Donise Musheno:** The answer is no, they did not believe. And I think that's a key role of my position, right, is to set the vision and help the teams believe that they can get there. When you're in crisis mode, it's really hard to accept that things cannot be that challenging all the time.

**Donise Musheno:** And so, after that time with the teams and shadowing, my next step was, I will create a Donise Musheno: bold vision statement, and really the North Star. What is that, high level that we're going to go to, and state it? Donise Musheno: And then start to repeat it over and over again.

**Donise Musheno:** And that really, that vision statement, tied with what are the four behavior expectations that all team members have, for us to get there, and then also what are our two main priority focus areas? So, in the day where there's chaos, there's a lot of competing priorities, there's a lot of things that you have to manage in operations.

**Donise Musheno:** If your team knows what are the two things that I have to focus on, if nothing else, that really helps guide their daily work. And for us, that was. Donise Musheno: It's quality, and it's efficiency. And so setting that, expectation and putting it on a single slide that we still, to this day, every division meeting, every time we have huddles on our huddle boards, that is that one visual that we all commit to.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** I am, I knew I was excited and energized for a reason, but I, , there's so much of what we see about those that are having success really energizing teams and getting great performance. It's this simplification of pulling things together around a very ambitious goal.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** clarity about the key principles we're gonna follow to get there, and then what's most important. And... I, I love it. I love it. And I think it's, no matter how sexy it is, it's the way to succeed, and so anyway, I'm, I'm, I'm excited.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Alright, then, like a lot of leaders, data was an issue, and particularly data that people could believe. So, can you talk about that journey?

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** with that key... , The source of truth problem. Yeah. What did you talk about?

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, there was a lot of concern that the data that we had on defects was severely underreported, so even though I shared that concerning number of 30% defect rate, the teams were saying that that actually is really low, and it's low because we've given up on reporting, and it's this self-fulfilling prophecy.

**Donise Musheno:** Nothing happens, we're not seeing changes, I'm not going to spend the time to report.

**Donise Musheno:** And honestly, when the teams are in the operating room, their focus is, if this instrument has a defect, I need to find another instrument now so that we can take care of our patients.

**Donise Musheno:** And the reporting piece of that is less of a priority when a patient is there, which is totally appropriate. And when I was doing those 3 weeks of shadowing, I validated that, absolutely. That was true. There was a significant underreporting in the cases where I saw Donise Musheno: And that feedback from the teens was accurate.

**Donise Musheno:** So we really had to revamp the way that we collected data, to make it incredibly easy for the frontline staff. But also to have leadership engagement in the collection of the data, and then also validating the data twice a day.

**Donise Musheno:** So, what we had was when the team members identified an instrument defect, instead of having them do anything complex to report it, they just simply called the supervisor for the sterile processing area, and one of the supervisors came up to the room.

**Donise Musheno:** And looked at the defect, and managed the collection of that report.

**Donise Musheno:** The number of defects we validate twice a day during our huddles, so we huddle twice a day from an operational perspective, and that allows the leaders of the different areas to confirm, yes, I had one or two defects, this is what they were.

**Donise Musheno:** And that... that real-time going, to the process when there is a defect also then helps support that real-time problem solving that we implemented throughout that process, too.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Okay, so... it's interesting, data, , that practical approach to get real information that people could believe, and the connecting of the leadership help chain, and then you've said that then that... being there in real time facilitated real-time problem solving, and that's... that's something...

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** we really are thrilled that you've made so much progress with.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** What is real-time problem solving? What was the shift for you toward that? How's it worked for you? , what should other leaders understand about solving the problem now?

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**Donise Musheno:** A couple shifts. The first is getting buy-in from the leadership team that it's important, and that you get a return on investment by going to where the defect is in the moment, so that you can really understand the root cause of the problem.

**Donise Musheno:** That's one key piece of it. the second key piece of it is making sure then that you can implement improvements in a fast manner.

**Donise Musheno:** We had a culture, especially... the division is 700 different team members of very different roles and priorities that have to work together to make safe, high-quality patient care.

**Donise Musheno:** And so, we had a culture of wanting to make sure that everybody was involved in the decisions, we had consensus, and we moved large projects forward. Donise Musheno: But we really started to shift to, how can we do small tests of change? So if you go and you see a defect in the moment, and you understand what the cause of the defect is.

**Donise Musheno:** Let's try an action tomorrow. Let's see if it works. And if it does work, great. Let's keep building on that, rather than spending too much time waiting and preparing for a large initiative. Let's just focus on that more active problem solving and pilot testing, just to see what works and what doesn't.

**Donise Musheno:** A big shift in how we approach the problem so that we can respond faster to them.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** And how, what's that journey been like for you as a leader, and what have you seen in the teams as you got more and more traction with that approach?

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**Donise Musheno:** there's a much more willingness to try that approach in terms of thinking differently. There's a, less of a concern when we say, hey, let's try something different tomorrow, or just a short-term pilot of it, because they also feel a bit more empowered, right?

**Donise Musheno:** When they're involved in seeing where the defect is, coming up with the action steps that we're going to try, there's a lot more engagement around it, too, because rather than reporting a defect, not knowing where the information goes, not seeing change, they see that we do something different the next day, and see if it helps.

**Donise Musheno:** Get feedback on what the response was.

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Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his): That's great. So it's something you then saw that energy building and wanted to reinforce, and yeah. What... what... what did that... shift, and the ones you've described together require of you as a , a senior leader in the organization with a pretty big span of control, what... let us look through your eyes, , at your standard work. Where did... did you have to dig down inside yourself to make sure that that was happening?

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, so it varied depending on where we were and what the group was, and I think that's important. We're shifting the focus depending on what the need is and the different teams.

**Donise Musheno:** A couple different things is, from a communication focus, I think that was critical. And doing communication in different ways for different audiences and what they'll respond to.

**Donise Musheno:** So, we talked a minute about the data, making sure that the teams trusted the data. Certainly, our physician colleagues are really driven by that, and that really resonated with many of them. But certainly, a lot of healthcare teams also resonate with what's the patient impact, so communicating why we're focusing on this from a patient Donise Musheno: perspective, or a patient family perspective.

**Donise Musheno:** But also, making sure that that data and the whys are really shared transparently in different forums. So, specifically, I had to build a communication structure so that everyone knew when to anticipate information from me and what was standard.

**Donise Musheno:** Certainly, our regular standing meetings from Department of Surgery and my team meetings, but going a little bit differently. So we are using a virtual huddle, so every two weeks we record a meeting just like this and share the data, do celebrations, recognitions, and wins, but also go through what are the new things we're trying this week?

**Donise Musheno:** What are the action items that we've done? What's been successful? And everyone knowing that that's coming really helped to build trust, too, because they see the actions that are being taken.

**Donise Musheno:** They feel that they're knowledgeable about the data, that we're not hiding things, and that we're moving things forward.

**Donise Musheno:** We also really focus from a communication and a team-building perspective of getting the group together. And I know that sounds really simple, but we have such a large division with different roles, and we had not been face-to-face as a large team in years.

**Donise Musheno:** And so just getting the group together across all the different departments and teams and was really powerful. To help, break silos and build relationships across team members as well. So it was really everyone's working on these common goals that we have, versus more finger-pointing across different divisions and roles.

**Donise Musheno:** So that was pretty intentional.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Yeah, it sounds that way, and again, I'm sure that our audience is putting the, putting the, pieces together between a cyclically designed system to fulfill, , create expectations and then fulfill them, building on this frontline, real-time focus, going and seeing real-time problem solving, data that's credible, experiments, . not worrying about, , 700 people in line before you do anything, but the experimental review and all of that. So, excited, excited to hear all that.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** And I'm sure the audience is getting it, so that's great.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Denise, , like, all leaders... Who get things done in a way that can be sustained. I know you had your eye on You Matter A Lot from your seat, but the local leaders underneath you, the managers. understanding the why, buying in, making the flip, , in terms of their own habits as leaders, which is so hard to do for all of us. That was in your brain, and you've talked about how critical it was to see the change.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** And again, not being critical of anyone before, but just, , that part of the path.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Can you, , through your words, can you describe that strategy from you and some of the things you saw and did?

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, so a couple different things, and going back to the previous question. Some of it is I emulated the behavior I wanted to see in them. So, when we were in a much more challenging perspective, I went with the teams and got my hands dirty and did the work side-by-side with the staff.

**Donise Musheno:** Now, that's not the usual role of the vice president, but in this Donise Musheno: In this circumstance, it's what was needed, so that the frontline teams knew that I cared enough to work with them in that moment. And that's also something that I do ask the managers to do, too, when you're in those moments, certainly not taking all your time away from the strategy and the other functions that you have to do as a leader, but there are absolutely times where you have to lean in elbows to elbows with the team from a culture and just an operations perspective.

**Donise Musheno:** But outside of that, we spend time in our leadership team meetings teaching some of these thoughts around Donise Musheno: How do we do actual real-time problem solving? And teaching simple concepts like the five whys, and understanding why it really is important to take the time in the moment.

**Donise Musheno:** Because what you think is the root cause, if you're only asking it once or twice, you probably haven't dived deep enough. So just some of those, skill sets, from a leadership perspective. We also pulled it into the existing huddle structure to make it more robust.

**Donise Musheno:** So, we had a good huddle structure around, , what were the operational needs for the day, but then we incorporated into that process. Our key metrics around efficiencies and safety. So, we talk about those efficiencies at our huddles every day now, and the leadership team knows that I'll ask what worked well, what didn't work, what were the barriers, what was the root cause of yesterday's delays, what are we going to do differently today?

**Donise Musheno:** And so... and if I focus on it, they know that they are focusing on it as well.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Right.

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, and so, that's also part of the structure that we built to help, support. We also... the huddles used to always be run by the person in my position, and so we've taught the managers

**Donise Musheno:** How to have that accountability, and that also is a growth opportunity for them, leading the local huddles with their peers, but also on the larger organization level, and knowing when to bubble up issues, and when we need escalation support, and teaching them from that perspective, too.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** you... you've set them up for success by running a system that allows them to be successful, and where there are clear expectations, and clear support, is what it sounds like to me. Can you share maybe an anecdote or two of... When you knew... they were... Their energy was growing because of the new approach, , for this way.

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, there's a couple times during some of these huddles where there's a very friendly competition banter.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Amongst the leaders?

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, and I... so that was , like, owning the process, owning, here, yep, I know yesterday was bad, here's why, here's what we're doing differently, and just going back and forth.

**Donise Musheno:** I think that was a shift, yeah.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Yeah, that's great. And... and I'm sure our audience can relate , when things are tough and performance is not where you want, the, , that can have a really chilling effect, right?

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**Donise Musheno:** on safety.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** That thing, so that's a... that's a sign of quite a change, right? Yeah. So... and a tribute to all of you.

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, that to me was the really exciting shift. So, once we were able to really make significant improvements on the instrumentation defects.

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**Donise Musheno:** And really, honestly, culture and well-being-wise, decreased a lot of the stress that that had caused on the team.

**Donise Musheno:** We were then able to lean into what are the other roles and responsibilities on overall efficiency. So, one of the areas that we hadn't mentioned in the beginning about the impact of the work that we did is our first case on-time starts were at a historic low, 34%.

**Donise Musheno:** So really, only a third of the cases were starting the day when we expect to start, which is a significant impediment to the rest of the efficiencies, and with that, we were also seeing that the end of the day wasn't predictable, and that was also stressful for the staff.

**Donise Musheno:** They didn't know exactly when they were going to go home, and also we were doing other cases later in the night, which wasn't desirable either. So when we got the sterile processing piece at a much better space, we then pulled together the larger governance structure to help support some of these other initiatives.

**Donise Musheno:** Specifically, our block and scheduling and efficiency committees that really were multidisciplinary teams led by frontline staff and really engaged physicians and staff to work on these problems. Once those teams came together, and the instrumentation was better, we then really could start focusing on what's everybody's responsibility around first case on-time starts.

**Donise Musheno:** And because the culture was starting to shift, and the teams were starting to trust that actions were going to be made, because they saw outcomes on instrumentation, they were more bought into, what do I own in this process, and how can I make improvements, and why is it important for my patients?

**Donise Musheno:** and my teammates. And with that, the team really was empowered to try all kinds of different actions, because again, we weren't focused on a big, huge initiative. It's, let's try something this week and see what it works, or what's your idea around how we could improve this, or do this a little bit differently.

**Donise Musheno:** As a collective team that was talking together was really powerful. Efficiency has gone from the 34% to 75%, the best we've had in the last 14 years.

**Donise Musheno:** Which is fantastic. And with that, we're driving other things. How quickly we're turning over rooms, how well we're ending the day as expected, and also along those lines of the team getting along better, working together, seeing that that vision that was pie in the sky is actually attainable when we all work together.

And it's also helping a lot with turnover. So, we were significantly challenged with staff turnover.

**Donise Musheno:** in that difficult environment, but between, , the different communication, the rounding, the seeing actions, decreasing the stress, we've made significant improvements in turnover as well.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Awesome.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** like.. All leaders... and everybody knows you're the real deal now. So, one of the things you've said to me is, it never ends, right?

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** So, at some level, but you modulate, depending on the needs, etc. So... given that as a truth that everybody innately understands, I think, about leadership and when you're building a new system with different behaviors associated with it.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Where are you looking for the future? Where are you looking to extend the gains and be challenged as a leader and, , take LGH Periop even closer to what's possible?

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**Donise Musheno:** Yeah, so now that we've stabilized things, we really want to get to top decile in a lot of these different areas, and efficiency, for sure.

**Donise Musheno:** For me, personally, from a leadership perspective, I want to continue working with the leadership teams to really build more succession planning, help support my leadership team from a learning and a development, and giving them more opportunities to grow.

**Donise Musheno:** When we were a little bit more challenged, I was managing more of these initiatives, and now I want to start giving them and empowering them the opportunity to learn and certainly support them from that learning, I think that's the next step as well.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** Fantastic. Denise, are there any other learnings, or when you think about your peers across the country at this really exciting, but also quite

challenging time in healthcare, any other learnings from this experience, , that you'd like to share with our guests?

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**Donise Musheno:** I think the other piece that we had talked about is, again, we put a good structure, right? We focused on culture first. Then we looked at the structure, making sure we have teams that locally can support teaching them how to do the real-time problem solving, getting accurate data.

**Donise Musheno:** But really, the sustainability comes to knowing when to lean in. You can't ever let your foot off the gas, but making sure that you don't just set it and let it go, that you have to keep touching base with all the different areas. Trust and verify that things are going the way that you expect.

**Donise Musheno:** And another key piece is still... even though I spent my first 3 weeks shadowing, I still shadow every single week with the teams. I think there's nothing better than going to where the work is happening, hearing from the teams, and seeing what those challenges are, and continuing that culture and connection, and really validating the process and understanding what needs to be fixed next.

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**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** I'm so glad you drew us to that essential truth about a leader's own standard work and the system that you're running. So, terrific.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** So .. Denise, very, very grateful to have had you, very grateful to have had you as a leader leading this work, as I know the people of, eastern Pennsylvania are.

**Ken Segel - Value Capture (he/him/his):** thanks for being a guest on Habitual Excellence.

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**Donise Musheno:** Thank you for the opportunity.