

CASE STUDY

DELTA COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

How Dohje's Online Gratitude Tool Improved Work Satisfaction at a Rural Community Hospital

THE OPPORTUNITY

When Rhonda Katzdorn was promoted to Human Resources Director at Delta County Memorial Hospital (DCMH), she wanted to find a positive way to connect the organization's various departments.

“We didn’t have a morale problem,” Katzdorn said. “Instead, it was more that the units were siloed, and employees didn’t have a way to reach out to someone in a different department to thank them for their work.”

She saw a clear opportunity to improve interdepartmental recognition as way to improve work satisfaction, teamwork, and patient care.

THE SOLUTION

DCMH launched DohJe at their employee appreciation barbecue in early fall 2015. The DohJe team took high-quality staff portraits and invited every employee to take part, not just nurses and doctors - but assistants, housekeepers, chefs, administrators, maintenance and all.

“There was a real buzz around it,” Katzdorn said

Getting started was simple. DCMH provided the staff list, then DohJe invited each to join in. Their new portraits became their DohJe profile photos, then some were used to create custom flyers. DCMH used the flyers to let patients and family members know that they could directly thank the staff member who helped them using DohJe's online tool. Staff sent DohJes thanking each other for their help, and email notifications were sent directly to each receiver. Some senders marked their notes as “shareable”, creating a well of powerful recognition stories for the public relations team’s use. Additionally, **Katzdorn published select DohJes in the hospital’s staff newsletter, shared the number of notes being sent and received, and recognized the top senders.** In the newsletter and in person, she continually stressed that DohJe was not about competition, but cooperation.



Bianca P., Physician Billing Clerk, and other team members at DCMH

“ Thank you so much for your patience and kindness to my little boy. I don’t usually do things like this, but I was impressed with the way you genuinely seemed to care about not scaring him and making him feel as safe as possible. Thanks again. ” - Chris M, patient

DohJe is consistently used, with staff exchanging on average 21 DohJe notes and replies each week.

THE RESULTS

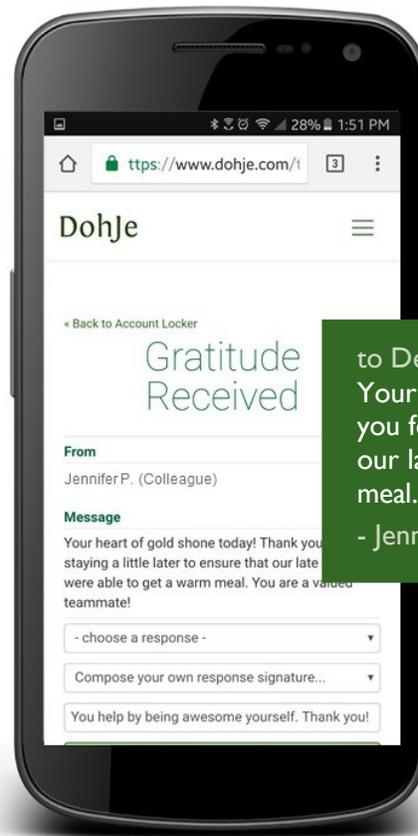
DohJe’s online recognition solution, conscientiously implemented by Katzdorn, **improved the teamwork and cross-department connections at Delta County Memorial Hospital.** The staff sent DohJes to coworkers in other locations, as well as to members of other teams. Housekeeping received notes from Internal Medicine, Dietary Services received notes from OB/GYN, and the Coffee Shop Manager received notes from nearly every department.

In one year, DCMH’s staff of about 600 received 1,700 notes of thanks via DohJe, prompting 800 responses, and increasing their overall shared gratitude a thousand-fold. Employees used **761 fewer hours of sick leave** from the year prior, **saving \$22K,** or .06% of their annual wages of \$34.5M. Sixteen months after launch, staff engagement remains high at 51%.

Researchers from **Harvard Business School** and **University of Michigan** are studying Delta County Memorial Hospital and three other healthcare organizations to better understand the factors that influence employee wellbeing and engagement. After one year of using DohJe, DCMH staff reported :

- strong significant **increase in work satisfaction**
- significant increases in thriving, meaning, perceived social worth, and received gratitude

For Katzdorn, investing in gratitude has reaped immeasurable returns. “It’s given our staff such a boost,” she said. “They really feel like they’re doing a good job because someone took the time to say thank you. Everyone loves to hear thank you.”



to Dea, Food Services Aide
Your heart of gold shone today! Thank you for staying a little later to ensure that our late admits were able to get a warm meal. You are a valued teammate!
- Jennifer, Ward Secretary

DELTA COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

is a non-profit, accredited, county-owned acute care facility located in Delta, CO. In 2016 DCMH was awarded “Top 20 Rural Community Hospital” from National Rural Health Association

and “Top 50 Critical Access Hospitals to Know” from Becker’s Hospital Review.

DOHJE

DohJe offers a digital gratitude tool that provides the best method for patients to directly thank their healthcare heroes and for caregivers to thank each other from any phone, tablet, or computer. Clients include academic medical centers, community hospitals, senior living communities and ambulatory care clinics. Established in 2013, DohJe is based in Bend, OR.

“DohJe has been very positive for our employees and I know they’d be upset if it ever went away.”

- Rhonda Katzdorn, HR Director