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Has your leadership style ever made a detour into the Trump Zone?

InveniasPartners, a Chicago-based executive search, assessment and talent management firm, supports hospitals, health systems, payers and medical groups in their quest to find top c-suite and board talent.



Healthcare leaders are respected for their inspiration, equanimity, knowledge and commitment to health system transformation. But leadership--or lack thereof--sometimes surfaces in the shadows within small groups of colleagues and confidants. It's easy to assume that no one will share your gaff or inappropriate remark. Unfortunately, no healthcare C-Suite or board executive is immune from the impact of open microphones, recording devices or eavesdropping staff members. Make sure your quips and comments never extend into the linguistic wasteland charted by presidential aspirant Donald Trump. Before you speak, pose the following four self-assessment questions:

One: Do you ever make veiled, inappropriate comments about gender, religion, ethnic group, or population?

Trump on Megan Kelly: "Blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever...."

Suggestion: Check your conversation for crass remarks or archaic stereotypes about women, minorities, seniors or the poor. If you need to comment on gender, religion, ethnicity, or socioeconomic cluster, back up your statements with credible evidence--statistics, examples, and real-world illustrations. Keep rude or lewd comments to yourself and out of the office and boardroom.

Two: Do you change positions on issues and ideas without warning or sufficient evidence?

Trump on abortion: "I've evolved like Ronald Reagan."

Trump on being a Democrat: "I came from a blue area."

Suggestion: Yes, politicians and healthcare executives can change their positions on issues. But

if you continually shift your stance with the winds of public opinion, colleagues, employees and community leaders, all will question if you're grounded in mission, vision and values. If you must change your position, back up the decision with evidence and reasoning.

Three: Do you project an attitude of arrogance and expediency? Does your behavior demonstrate a willingness to cut corners and play games?

Trump on buying politicians: "I will tell you that our system is broken. I gave to many people, before this, before two months ago, I was a businessman. I give to everybody. When they call, I give. And do you know what? When I need something from them two years later, three years later, I call them, they are there for me."

Trump on bankruptcy: "On four occasions I've taken advantage of the laws of this country, like other people."

Suggestion: Healthcare organizations need C-Suite and board leaders who live the values of integrity, respect, equality and honesty. They want "straight arrows"--disciplined, principled C-Suite and board executives who reject the rush of short-term financial gain in favor of long-term credibility and lasting innovation. The preferred mantra: "We're in this for the long haul."

Four: Do you sometimes refuse to take a stand on issues important to colleagues, stakeholders, employees and clinicians?

Trump on running as an independent: "If I'm the nominee, I will pledge I will not run as an independent. But - and I am discussing it with everybody, but I'm, you know, talking about a lot of leverage."

Suggestion: If you refuse to take positions on vital issues, stakeholders might assume that you lack the commitment and team orientation needed for healthcare transformation. Showcase your speed, flexibility and agility, but also reveal your willingness to join forces with employees, clinicians, community leaders and competitors to improve quality, safety, efficiency and outcomes and control avoidable costs.

If you ever feel tempted to enter the Trump Zone, consider this advice:

- Back up your assertions with timely, trusted evidence.
- Present yourself as an executive and person of integrity.
- Show your willingness to collaborate through interprofessional teams.
- Anchor strategic and personal decisions in mission, vision and values.

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Definition of Invenias

In*ven*i*as verb \in -`ven - ē - əs\

1. To Find
2. Discover
3. To come upon by searching or effort