A Little Creativity Goes A Long Way

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You've probably heard about it already this October – Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It's the Pink Glove Dance video that was posted on YouTube last year by Medline Industries and Providence St. Vincent Medical Center in Portland, OR. The video showed 200+ hospital staff members from Providence St. Vincent donning Medline's pink gloves, to promote breast cancer awareness, and dancing to Jay Sean's "Down."

The video was a huge success, generating millions of clicks world-wide, and inspiring other hospital facilities to create their own versions to promote other causes with health care.

Now, a sequel to the Pink Glove Dance has been created. The sequel shows thousands of breast cancer survivors and healthcare workers from around the country donning the pink gloves and dancing to "You Won't Dance Alone" by the band Best Day Ever.

As a woman, breast cancer is a topic that is probably more frequently on my mind than other illnesses or diseases, and I am always happy to see different individuals and organizations donning the color pink to support the fight against breast cancer. In fact, I am pretty sure my interest in NFL football has increased this month now that I can see players on the field wearing pink shoes, using pink hand towels, etc.

Still, it's something about this video that strikes a deep chord in me. I've seen it before, but it still gets me every time and inspires me to do something – even if it's just to wear pink. As I watched its sequel, which is equally as inspiring, I am reminded of the power of a little creativity in promoting a cause –whether it's breast cancer awareness or a different concern – and that sometimes, that's all it takes to motivate us.

In a presentation I attended a few weeks back by Rickson Sun, Chief Technologist for IDEO, a design and innovation company that is responsible for designing the first mouse for Apple and the first laptop computers, he discussed the idea of design that starts with looking at people and their unmet needs, then coming up with a creative way to reach them in order to promote change. In the case he was discussing that day, the people were health care workers and the unmet need was a solution to get all health care workers to practice better hand hygiene.

After identifying reasons whysome health care professionals fail to adequately wash their hands, Sun engaged a discussion within the room full of infection prevention

professionals, nurses, OR directors, etc. about how a facility could address those reasons in order to get staff members to practice better hygiene. He urged the audience to get creative – how can we really *reach* these people?

One of the first solutions brought up by a member in the group – videos. Specifically, the Pink Glove Dance was brought up, which then launched a larger discussion about other videos similar to the Pink Glove Dance that inspire hospital staffers to change their practices for the better by watching their peers be creative. 'Why is this effective?' audience members discussed. Because a little creativity can go a long way in promoting a cause or best practice in a health care facility.

Take for example, the 3M Innovation Award Contest [1], in which hospitals were given the opportunity to show "original ways of improving patient care and helping to reduce the risk for healthcare-associated infections through video or written submissions," the release issued from 3M says. Fourteen finalists were chosen and then the public voted to determine winners.

The winner [2], from St. John's Mercy Medical Center of St. Louis, MO, was a video depicting an infection prevention "biathlon." The video received more than 10,100 votes. More than 36,000 votes were cast throughout the two week voting period, the 3M release says.

The fact that so many health care professionals logged onto the 3M site to view contestants for the infection-prevention contest demonstrates the impact something creative like a video or written presentation by health care workers themselves generates.

An effort like a video made by colleagues and peers is fun and memorable. And, as seen in the Pink Glove Dance, its sequel and the videos in the 3M contest, it can bring an entire facility together – everyone from surgeons to nurses to housekeeping – to work toward an end goal that could ultimately improve patient care.

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