



mhca's e-Newsletter

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Are You Passionately Curious?

I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious. – Albert Einstein



Innovative leaders understand - you'll never know what you don't know unless you stop to look around. The trouble is we tend to look only in our own backyards. This can lead to what The Future Hunters, who presented during our Spring Conference in Savannah, dubbed "educated incapacity" - where we know so much about our own industry that we are the last to recognize what, in hindsight, might be viewed as somewhat obvious paths to a better, albeit very different, future.

A sure cure for educated incapacity is analogous learning - learning from industries and people that, although different from us, share some similar core elements. Bringing individuals from vastly different industries together to engage in deep conversations about common goals, from resource alignment and performance management to customer engagement and community partnership, can be invigorating and lead to surprising breakthroughs.

People in analogous fields draw on different pools of knowledge, and because they aren't immersed in each other's fields, they're unfamiliar with time-honored, tried-and-true approaches and are therefore more likely to see others' challenges with fresh eyes and come up with radically innovative solutions.

Research has shown there are many benefits to cross-industry investigations, from transfer of knowledge with low risk of competition, to cost savings in reduced time to market, but probably the most significant benefit is how it teaches leaders to **ask better questions**, like what is the essence of the problem, and **make more connections**, like how building a car is like butchering an animal.

We just returned from our Summer Conference in Detroit, where some members enjoyed a tour of the historic Ford Piquette Avenue Plant. Henry Ford had all the classic traits of an innovative entrepreneur – he was passionately curious and comfortable with learning by doing, despite the inherent risks and his early failures. He was also great at articulating his vision, which helped him attract outstanding talent from a variety of industries.

Ford Motor Company routinely borrowed ideas from other industries – watchmakers, sewing machine makers, gun makers...but, as is often the case, their most radically innovative idea came from an industry far removed from their own. The idea for Ford's assembly line came from an employee who visited the Chicago meat packers. He observed how they used an overhead trolley in dressing beef, with each butcher removing specific cuts as the carcasses passed by, until nothing was left. Figuring efficiently assembling something, like a car, wasn't all that different from efficiently disassembling something, like a cow, he suggested Ford simply reverse the process he observed to streamline auto assembly. After some initial resistance (after all, cars are not cows), they tried it with the assembly of a single component. It worked so well, the assembly process was soon expanded to the production of the entire automobile.

What great ideas are you missing out on because they're in industries that seem too far afield?

Steve Jobs said that creativity comes down to “exposing yourself to the best things that humans have done and then try to bring those things in to what you’re doing.” During our Summer Conference, we heard some great new ideas from speakers like Rich Sheridan, CEO of Melo Innovations in Detroit; and, while behavioral healthcare is very different from software development, just as cars are very different from cows, there is always, always, always, something to learn from others.

To enhance our ability to see analogies, the best thing we can do is to expose ourselves to more things. We must challenge ourselves to read more books and articles from outside our industry, engage in more conversations with people who are vastly different from ourselves, and ask better questions. If we do these things, we will begin to see our challenges with fresh eyes and come up with our own radically innovative ideas.

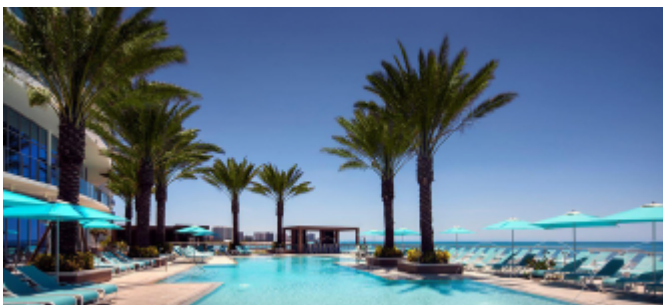
Looking Ahead



Fall Conference

Curious about current trends in behavioral health or how to build a better culture in your organization? Explore these topics and more at our Fall Conference in Austin, Texas, Oct. 30 - Nov.1. Our hotel block is nearly full, so if you don't yet have a room reservation, contact Gena at gmatthews@mhca.com for help.

[Register Now!](#)



Winter Conference

If you're planning to join us in Clearwater Beach for the 2019 Winter Conference and Annual Meeting, please book your room now. Our room block at the Opal Sands is filling up, so if you can't get the nights you need, please contact Gena at gmatthews@mhca.com for help.

[Hotel Information](#)

Call for Presentations



Got a bright idea? Our quarterly conferences cater to the professional development needs of C-suite executives in the behavioral healthcare industry. We're currently interested in offering sessions on the impact of technology on behavioral health services and/or organizational sustainability, integrated care and care coordination, financial management, financing and access to capital, building innovation and entrepreneurship as organizational competency, leadership skill development and succession planning/workforce development. If you'd like to present on any of these topics, or on another topic or project that would be of interest to **mhca** members, we invite you to submit a proposal.

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