

# Guiding the European Magnet® Journey: Insights for Project Coordination

## **Introduction:**

*This guide is based on the **collective experience of European hospitals participating in Magnet4Europe**. The information and recommendations in this document are derived from individual interviews, focus groups, and exchanges during network meetings. It is important to understand that **the approaches and methods presented here reflect subjective experiences** and should not be considered as universally applicable or proven facts. They are intended to serve as a guidance and a source of inspiration for hospitals considering similar changes and should be adapted to the specific conditions and cultures.*

*In the participating Magnet4Europe hospitals, designated “**Magnet® Coordinators**” have been appointed to oversee the implementation. Therefore, throughout this document, reference is made to the role and activities of the Magnet® Coordinator.*

**Scope:** Consider allocating 0.5-1.0 FTE for Magnet® coordination. This role can be shared among multiple individuals to ensure smooth information flow.

## **Good Knowledge about the Hospital and the Magnet® concept:**

- The Magnet® concept should be thoroughly understood.
- An in-depth understanding of the hospital’s organizational culture, structures, and processes is required to effectively initiate and steer the Magnet® process.
- Comparison of the current status of the organization with the Magnet® requirements (gap analysis) to identify areas for potential improvement.
  - Determine the starting point, whether hospital-wide or in specific departments.
  - Create an action plan tailored to the organization's specific issues.
  - Start with "low-hanging fruits", i.e., easily implementable topics that are visible to the staff.
  - Address the "high-hanging fruits", i.e., topics that involve a cultural shift in the hospital and require more time.
- List and review all projects already being carried out in the organization and check which ones already align with the Magnet® components as Magnet® can serve as a framework to organize already existing initiatives and continuous projects.

## **Participation and Inclusion of all Professional groups:**

- Form purely nursing-related working groups to create an environment where the valuable work of nurses is recognized and appreciated to boost their motivation and engagement.
- Introduce shared governance structures to ensure that employees actively participate in the design and implementation of the Magnet® project.
- Promote active involvement of employees at all levels by including them in decision-making processes and encouraging them to contribute their own ideas, suggestions, and perspectives.
- Strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration and involve all professional groups in the Magnet® project, e.g., by forming an interprofessional steering group and interprofessional project teams. The focus is on an open dialogue that values feedback, the diversity of experiences, and the expertise of all professional groups without making the decision-making autonomy of nursing professionals dependent on the approval of other professional groups.
- Involve trainees/students into the Magnet® project and integrate Magnet® in training.

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### Communication and Transparency:

- Transparent communication about the Magnet® project through regular dissemination of information to all professional groups and the use of feedback mechanisms.
- Regular reporting on progress, goals, challenges, and successes of the project to maintain employee engagement and motivation.
- Highlight noticeable, positive changes to make the Magnet® concept "tangible" for employees.
- Visibility of the project teams through actions.
- Media and communication channels for information dissemination and reporting can include:
  - Internal Newsletters
  - One-Minute Wonder posters
  - Employee portal or intranet
  - Websites
  - Emails
  - Social Media (Twitter/X, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.)
  - Information events (in-person and virtual)
  - Podcast by the project group for employees
  - Updates in team or department meetings
  - Virtual office hours (e.g. via Zoom, MS-Teams or other meeting tools)
  - Multipliers on each ward as a mouthpiece into clinical practice
- Regularity: Depending on the need, target group, or project phase, information can be given weekly, monthly, or quarterly.

### Project Structure:

- Establish an interprofessional steering group<sup>1</sup> that meets regularly to make decisions, identify obstacles, and monitor the progress of the project.
- Implement improvement projects with the help of project teams<sup>2</sup> through several small projects or subprojects led by employees from various areas. Integrate the subprojects under the overarching roof of the "Magnet" project to ensure consistent alignment with the same goals and standards.
- Form multiplier groups<sup>3</sup> to carry information into practice while simultaneously gathering ideas, concerns, and feedback from practice and incorporating them into the implementation processes.
- Create incentives for employees to actively participate in subprojects, e.g., by recognizing their contributions.
- Flexibility in project design to adapt to changing conditions and ensure the long-term effectiveness and relevance of the measures.

### Training, Coaching, Support:

- Providing support:
  - For the project team to ensure all members understand the Magnet® concept and goals for an effective implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> The **steering group** serves as the central body for strategic direction and coordination of the Magnet® initiative and works closely with the project team. It is organizationally superior to the project team and has budget responsibility. The steering group includes decision maker of the hospital (e.g. the CNO, Magnet® Coordinator, the Medical Director, and the Executive Management).

<sup>2</sup> The **project team** focuses on the operational implementation of specific projects required for the implementation of the Magnet® components. At least one project manager takes the lead of this group. Further subdivision into sub-project teams with sub-project managers is possible.

<sup>3</sup> The **multiplier groups** are specially formed teams that are distinct from the project teams. Their main task is to facilitate communication and the flow of information between project management and the staff in practice. The group ideally consists of representatives from each ward or department. Ideally, the representative should be a Magnet® enthusiast.

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- For employees to ensure they understand the goals and benefits of the Magnet® program and can participate actively.
- Introducing Magnet® components during the onboarding process (for all professional groups).
- Promoting skills in change-management, project work, leadership, and interprofessional teamwork to ensure successful project implementation.
- Training and coaching in idea-development, workshops, future workshops, and journal clubs to encourage employees to bring their creativity and innovative thinking to the table and think and implement new ways.
- Mentoring by certified Magnet® hospitals.

### **Recognition:**

- **Acknowledge successes and progress in the implementation process:**
  - Set up a system for recognizing and appreciating teams or individuals who have contributed to the successful implementation of Magnet® components.
  - Award honors or certificates for special achievements within the Magnet® project (e.g., Daisy Award, Nursing Star).
  - Public recognition by management or in internal communication channels such as newsletters or employee meetings.
- **Celebrating and acknowledging success:**
  - Organizing events or action days (e.g., International Nurses Day) to honor and celebrate the achievements of nursing staff.
  - Implementing a poster campaign with photos and statements from hospital nurses to make their work and contributions visible.
  - Distributing small gifts (using a "goodie cart" to visit different wards) to show appreciation and honor the commitment of the staff.
  - Organizing special occasions such as food trucks or ice cream stands where employees can get something for free and celebrate each other.
  - Conducting quizzes, raffles, or other fun activities to strengthen the team and celebrate successes.
- **Celebrating both small and large successes:**
  - Celebrating small and large achievement, progress, goals, and milestones to maintain staff engagement and boost their motivation for the project.
  - Involving employees in the festivities and celebrations to foster a sense of community and cohesion.

### **Setting Milestones and Implementation of Measurement and Evaluation:**

- Developing and applying metrics and indicators in close collaboration with, e.g., the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), steering group, quality management, and nursing science, specifically aimed at monitoring and documenting the progress and impact of the Magnet® project.
- Data can assist in making operational decisions, implementing necessary adjustments, and establishing external benchmarks.

### **Networking and Exchange:**

- Seeking external allies, such as hospitals with similar goals, and involving experienced hospitals for support (e.g., contacting hospitals from the Magnet4Europe project).
- Encouraging project team members and other staff to find and use active networks and relevant platforms for exchanging experiences and strengthening mutual support.
- Sharing good practices and experiences with other hospitals for inspiration in implementing Magnet, to learn from the successes of others.

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- Visiting a Magnet® hospital in the USA:
  - With decision-makers and nursing staff (clinical practice).
  - Well-prepared visit with specific goals and questions.
  - Shadowing nursing professionals in clinical practice.
  - Reporting back on the insights gained at the own hospital and evaluating what could be implemented.
- Inviting representatives from a U.S. Magnet® hospital to the own hospital, thus enhancing the visibility of the Magnet® project within the own facility and fostering direct exchange; additionally, provides a critical view of the organization through the "Magnet® lens".

### **Being a Role model and Promoting Cultural change:**

- Active promotion of cultural change in the hospital, based on open communication, willingness to learn, and mutual support.
- Identification of obstacles to cultural change and development of strategies to overcome them, such as reducing barriers to open communication and creating an environment that fosters innovation and continuous improvement.

### **Knowing potential Challenges and Solutions:**

- **Promotion of perseverance:** Magnet® requires patience and endurance, as changes take time to develop, and employees must be brought along in the change process. Setbacks should not be discouraging but seen as opportunities for reflection and learning.
- **Handling and overcoming resistance and disinterest:** Some employees might show resistance to change or have no interest in the Magnet® project. It is crucial to clearly communicate the benefits of the Magnet® model, highlight the advantages for employees and patients, and offer opportunities for active participation. However, it is important not to be intrusive. Instead, the focus should be on supporting and motivating interested employees, and further motivating them, while simultaneously respecting the decisions of those who do not wish to participate.
- **Overcoming language barriers:** Employees might struggle with understanding materials or training in English. To ensure that all employees can participate in the process, terminologies should be adapted, translations, interpreting services, or special training in the local language provided.
- **Optimization of time and financial resources:** Limited resources, such as personnel and time, could pose a challenge to the implementation of the Magnet® project. It is important to find creative solutions to ensure that employees can still participate despite their daily commitments. This can be achieved by prioritizing resources for the most important activities and creating windows of time for employees to attend meetings, workshops, and other relevant events. Focus times or periods for creative work can also be facilitated, during which employees can brainstorm, research, or develop ideas. Many of the improvements initiated by Magnet® would be necessary for continuous quality improvement anyway. Therefore, the time investment should not be seen as an additional burden, but as a valuable contribution to promoting excellence throughout the hospital.