

# Small Is Beautiful

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**Small is Beautiful**  
*Lessons for  
Small-Scale Care Providers*

presented by  
Irving L. Stackpole, RRT, MEd

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**Small is Beautiful**

British economist E.F. Schumacher observed that humans are small. He reasoned that, therefore:

**SMALL MUST BE BEAUTIFUL**



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**Small is Powerful**

Business researcher ZJ Achs & economist DB Audretsch found that small organizations are creating more innovation and job growth. They reasoned that, therefore:

**SMALL MUST BE POWERFUL**



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### Today's Presentation

- Perceived Shortcomings of Small-Scale Providers
- Advantages of Being Small (or Why Small is Beautiful)
- Action Challenges Facing Small-Scale Providers
  - Recruitment / Retention
  - Marketing
  - Flexibility
  - Raving Fans

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### Care Providers: What Do We Do?

- "Producing", enabling or ↑ probability of wellness through prevention/intervention
- Wellness produced in one of three ways
  1. With technology & systems
  2. With providers' knowledge and skills
  3. With combinations of both 1 and 2

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## “Technology”

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- Simple stethoscopes to complex machines, physical property and treatment protocols (systems) are examples of technology
- Anything a practitioner uses to aid in “producing wellness” can be “technology”

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## Technology – Untoward Side Effects

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## Production of Wellness Occurs...

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- Always a combination of technological and human inputs
- In reality, wellness is **never** produced solely by technology and / or systems
- Wellness must always include human inputs / components
  - Staff + Motivation + Skills + Experience
  - These are every care provider’s assets

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## Perception: Larger is Better?

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- Traditionally, small scale is (often) thought of as a negative quality
  1. Traditional argument: small providers simply can not afford “modern” technology (i.e., property plant & equipment- PP&E)
  2. Traditional argument: a large population is necessary to justify the capital expenditure required for new PP&E and systems

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## Technology as a Negative

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- Although technology is necessary, there exist some conditions for which it is not useful such as:
  - When proper or effective use is not known or well understood
  - When the amount of technology exceeds a level which allows carers to use their knowledge and skills

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## What is “Caring”?

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- The practice of caring both is, and should be, focused on individual people
- The provision of care is concerned with producing wellness for individuals and treating people, not diseases
- Because of its inherent properties, technology cannot act as a substitute for skilled, caring practitioners

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## Small as an Asset

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- Recruitment & Retention
- Marketing
  - Building Preference for your “Brand”
- Flexibility
  - Speed to Change & Adapt
- Creating “Raving Fans”

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## Small is Beautiful - Recruitment

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- Technology & the physical environment will not prevent carers from using their skills, knowledge and a “human touch”
  - “[YOUR NAME] House – we’ll help you care, not get in the way.”
  - The [YOUR NAME] House – a family of caring families.”
  - “Do what you do best – Care for those who need it most! At [YOUR NAME] together we can...”
  - “You bring the motivation; we’ll provide everything else.”

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 STACKPOLE & Associates, Inc. *We don't treat staff like this!*

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## Small is Beautiful - Marketing

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- Care is not = technology & PP&E!
  - “Each resident is a unique story & history. At [YOUR NAME] House, we know them all by name, not by number.”
  - The [YOUR NAME] House – our family caring for your family.”
  - “An intimate setting for those who need it most!”
  - “[YOUR NAME] House – whatever the care required, personal attention comes as standard.”

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## Small is Beautiful - Flexibility

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- Employees
  - “Bring us the motivation to care, and together, we’ll find a way.”
- Marketing
  - “No cookie cutters here! Unless of course, Mum wants to bake something for the holidays.”

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## Do You Have Raving Fans?

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- Frequency / proportion of re-use & recommendation / advocacy
  - Are your customers / staff loyal?
  - Willing to recommend?
  - Do your customers recommend?
  - Do your employees recommend?

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**Loyalty = Raving Fans: The Real Story**

- Loyalty behavior when experience is good
- Loyalty behavior when experience is bad
- Effective Recovery = ↑↑ Loyalty
- Creating Raving Fans!

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**Create Raving Fans!**

- Listen, Listen, Listen
  - Ask what can / should be done differently and / or better
  - Satisfaction surveys, focus group discussions, individual interviews
- Small scale should make this easier

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**Create Raving Fans!**

- Errors
  - Perceived or actual defects in the service
    - Type 1 – Rude, offensive behavior
    - Type 2 – Lost / missing / damaged items
- When “errors” occur
  - Apologize
  - Explain
    - Not Excuse
  - Act
  - Remind

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## Create Raving Fans!

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- *Effective Error Recovery*
  - *Prompt*
  - *Authoritative*
    - *No Excuses*
  - *Action*
  - *Follow up* *Remind*

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## What About Errors / Mistakes?

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- *Why Don't We All Get this Right?*
  - *Personal Defensiveness*
  - *Professional Pride*
  - *Culture of CYA*
  - *Loss of Wisdom* → *Turnover*

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## Embrace the Challenge

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- *Small scale is inherently and naturally different from large scale*
- *Both large and small practices have their own benefits and challenges*
- *Neither is better than other, although, "small is beautiful"!*

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