



**5 STAR**  
BRAGGING

# Congratulations

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Lee".

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CEO & FOUNDER,  
CUSTOM LEARNING SYSTEMS

**You did it! You've achieved what only 8% of hospitals in the U.S. can claim – a 5 Star designation!**

This incredible accomplishment benefits your patients, their families, and your community. Now it's time to share the news and ensure your organization reaps the rewards of increased market growth and an enhanced community reputation.

***“It ain't bragging if you've done it.”***

– James A. Owen

This Communication Toolkit is packed with ideas, tips, and best practices to help spread the word.

## **WHAT TO DO NEXT**

### **Step 1:** Form a 5 Star

Communication Task Force.  
Give them a 3-month timeline to put this toolkit into action.

### **Step 2:** Just do it. Act upon the ideas you like and make them your own.

If you need help, we're here for you. Reach out to:

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Let us know how we can support your efforts. Let's get started and show the world!



# Our 5 Star Bragging Communication Toolkit Recommendations

Explore ideas, tips, and best practices to help your team spread the word and celebrate your organization's achievement.

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# 5 Star Communication Task Force Charter

## RECOMMENDATION

Charter a 5 Star Communication Task Force to oversee all communication strategies and tactics internally and community wide.

## OWNER

Executive Leadership

## DUE DATE

## Task Force Authority

The 5 Star Communication Team is established under the direct authorization of the C-Suite. The team operates with full executive support and has the authority to:

- Develop, approve, and execute communication strategies and initiatives related to the 5 Star rating achievement
- Coordinate with all hospital departments, including marketing, HR, patient services, and operations, to ensure alignment
- Allocate necessary resources, including budget and personnel, to support its initiatives. *(Subject to consultation with the assigned C-Suite Executive Sponsor)*
- Represent the hospital in communications with external stakeholders, including media, community groups, and industry organizations
- Access internal data and insights to guide messaging and measure the effectiveness of campaigns
- Report directly to the C-Suite on progress, challenges, and outcomes, with the ability to recommend adjustments to strategy



## Task Force Responsibilities

- **Strategic Communication Planning**  
Design and implement a comprehensive plan for internal and external communications regarding the 5 Star rating.
- **Messaging Consistency**  
Ensure all communication materials and announcements reflect a unified message aligned with the hospital's mission and values.
- **Stakeholder Engagement**  
Identify and tailor communications to key audiences, including employees, patients, community members, media, and industry organizations.
- **Measurement and Reporting**  
Track the success of communication initiatives using key performance indicators (KPIs) and present findings to leadership.
- **Continuous Improvement**  
Collect feedback from stakeholders to refine messaging and maintain excellence in communication.



## Task Force Goals

- Develop and launch a high-impact announcement campaign within 14 days of receiving the 5 Star rating confirmation
- Achieve 100% awareness of the 5 Star rating among all hospital employees within 5 working days of the launch of the campaign
- Ensure a minimum 75% of local community members are aware of the 5 Star rating through outreach and media coverage within 45 days
- Secure free media coverage in all local outlets and relevant regional and state-wide publications
- Increase social media engagement (likes, shares, comments) during the campaign period
- Distribute and or deliver at least one case study or success story to relevant industry associations and conferences
- Create a toolkit of communication assets (logos, banners, templates, email signatures) for all departments to use ASAP
- Conduct at least three community events to celebrate the achievement within 60 days
- Incorporate recognition into all hospital branding materials, including the website, ASAP and at the latest by the end of the first quarter
- Build a long-term strategy to sustain awareness and capitalize on the 5 Star recognition for future branding and marketing efforts

# Priority Projects

What to do what to do? With 52+ ways to communicate your success included in this workbook, we thought we would

provide guidance as to the top 10 (20) ways to get going. When in doubt just take a straw poll with your colleagues to decide.

## 1 Immediate Tasks

- Utilize Logos
- Install an Onsite Billboard

## 2 Internal Communication

- Host a 5 Star Caregiver Celebration
- Create and Distribute a Special 5 Star Gift for All Employees

## 3 Patient & Visitor Engagement

- Install Lobby Banners and/or Digital Displays
- Educate Frontline Caregivers and Leaders

## 4 Media Outreach

- Send a News Release
- Schedule Interviews for Hospital Leadership

## 5 Social Media Campaign

- Announce the Achievement on All Social Media Platforms
- Provide Branded Giveaways

## 6 Community Outreach

- Appoint a Service Excellence Ambassador Team to Serve as Community Speakers Bureau
- Coordinate with Local Mayors and County Commissioners

## 7 Payer & Partner Communication

- Include the Recognition in Correspondence
- Share the News with Referral Partners

## 8 Industry & Professional Association Engagement

- Submit the Achievement as a Case Study
- Notify State and National Hospital Associations

## 9 Digital & Website Updates

- Create a Prominent Website Banner
- Incorporate the 5 Star Logo(s) on Everything

## 10 Board & Leadership Involvement

- Present the Recognition at a Board Meeting
- Incorporate the Recognition Into Executive Speeches or Presentations

# 1 Immediate Tasks

Utilize the appropriate logos on all print and digital forms of communication.



Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Logo



National Rural Rating System Logo



Custom Learning Systems Certified 5 Star Logo



Custom Learning Systems Logo



## RECOMMENDATION

Install a double-sided billboard or weather resistant banner onsite (example 4' h x 48' w) that can be seen by every vehicle that drives by

## OWNER

Executive Leadership

## DUE DATE

30 days

## 2 Internal Communication

	RECOMMENDATION	OWNER	DUE DATE
1	<b>Develop a custom email signature for staff</b> that highlights the 5 Star rating	IT/Marketing	Immediate
2	<b>Create and distribute a special 5 Star gift for all employees</b> examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Star name badge or pin</li> <li>• 5 Star polo shirt</li> <li>• 5 Star baseball cap</li> </ul>	HR/Marketing	ASAP
3	<b>Send a personalized letter from the CEO</b> thanking each individual for their contributions	CEO/Executive Assistant	7 days
4	<b>Include a feature story in the hospital's internal newsletter</b> about how the achievement was earned, centred around the leadership of the Service Excellence Council	Business Development/Marketing	2 weeks
5	<b>Host a 5 Star Caregiver Celebration</b> for employees with the objective of enabling as many contributors as possible to tell share their story and be recognized	HR/Employee Engagement/SEC	15 days
6	<b>Display banners and posters in staff lounges</b> and break rooms, along with congratulatory thank-you messages received	Facilities/Marketing	2-4 weeks
7	<b>The SEC to encourage departmental meetings</b> to share the recognition and highlight specific team contributions	Department Heads	Within 4 weeks
8	<b>Create an internal video featuring staff and patient and family testimonials</b> about the service excellence campaign and human impact of the 5 Star achievement <i>(Please ensure everyone being recorded gives consent for use of their name and/or image, as the video(s) may be shared externally)</i>	Marketing/Media	4 weeks
9	<b>Conduct a 5 Star Town Hall</b> for employees to celebrate and brainstorm next steps to sustain momentum	HR/Executive Leadership	6 weeks

### 3 Patient & Visitor Engagement

RECOMMENDATION	OWNER	DUE DATE
1 Add a message to hospital Wi-Fi login screens highlighting the rating	IT/Marketing	3 days
2 Install lobby banners and/or digital displays prominently showcasing the 5 Star rating	Facilities/Marketing	10 days
3 Include a mention of the rating in pre-appointment reminders or patient emails	Patient Services/IT	10 days
4 Print recognition on appointment cards or discharge papers	Patient Services/ Printing Vendor	10 days
5 Educate frontline caregivers and leaders to mention the achievement to their patients	SEC	14 days
6 Place brochures or flyers in waiting rooms explaining the significance of the achievement	Marketing	3 weeks
7 Provide branded giveaways, like pens or reusable bags, featuring the 5 Star logo	Marketing/Procurement	4 weeks

### 4 Media Outreach

RECOMMENDATION	OWNER	DUE DATE
1 Schedule interviews for hospital leadership with local TV and radio stations	Business Development/ Marketing	ASAP
2 Invite media representatives to a celebratory event and/or tour of the hospital	Business Development/ Marketing	ASAP
3 Send a news release to local, regional, state and healthcare media outlets announcing the recognition	Business Development/ Marketing	3 days
4 Offer to write an op-ed or guest column in local newspapers and magazines about the journey to 5 Star	PR/Executive Leadership	14 days
5 Create a media kit with photos, quotes, and background on the rating process	Business Development/ Marketing	14 days

## 5 Social Media Campaign

RECOMMENDATION	OWNER	DUE DATE
1 <b>Add a message to hospital Wi-Fi login screens</b> highlighting the rating	IT/Marketing	3 days
2 <b>Announce the achievement on all social media platforms</b> with a custom hashtag (example #5StarCare) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook</li> <li>• Google</li> <li>• LinkedIn</li> <li>• X - Twitter</li> <li>• Tik Tok</li> </ul>	Facilities/Marketing	7 days
3 <b>Post staff and patient testimonials</b> about what the rating means to them. Invite patients to record brief videos. <i>(Please ensure everyone being recorded gives consent for use of their name and/or image, as the video(s) may be shared externally)</i>	Business Development/Marketing	14 days
4 <b>Educate frontline caregivers and leaders</b> to mention the achievement to their patients	SEC	14 days
5 <b>Share a behind-the-scenes video</b> on how your Service Excellence Council achieved the 5 Star rating	Business Development/Marketing	4 weeks
6 <b>Provide branded giveaways</b> , like pens or reusable bags, featuring the 5 Star logo	Marketing/Procurement	4 weeks
7 <b>Launch a photo contest</b> for employees to share their pride using the custom hashtag	SEC & Business Development/Marketing	8 weeks

## 6 Community Outreach

RECOMMENDATION	OWNER	DUE DATE
1 <b>Write thank-you notes</b> to members of your Board and Patient & Family Advisory Council	Executive Leadership	14 days
2 <b>Coordinate with Local Mayors and County Commissioners</b> to conduct a 10 minute 5 Star Leadership Briefing for each City/Town/County Council in your market area. Conclude by presenting Council with a special edition 5 Star Plaque expressing gratitude for their ongoing support	PR/Executive Leadership	2-6 weeks

## 6 Community Outreach CONT'D

RECOMMENDATION	OWNER	DUE DATE
3 <b>Partner with local schools or community groups</b> to co-promote the achievement. Conduct classroom "Show & Tells"	Community Outreach/ PR	8-12 weeks
4 <b>Send letters to local community organization leaders</b> thanking them for their support	Business Development/ Marketing	8-12 weeks
5 <b>Collaborate with local businesses to display window decals or signs</b> celebrating the hospital's success. "Home of a 5 Star Hospital"	Community Outreach/ Marketing	8-12 weeks
6 <b>Host a community open house or health fair</b> celebrating the recognition	Business Development/ Marketing	12 weeks
7 <b>Appoint a Service Excellence Ambassador team to serve as a Community Speakers Bureau</b> , with a goal to deliver twenty 5 Star briefings over 6 months	SEC SEA-Ambassador Super Coach & Business Development	6 months

## 7 Payer & Partner Communication

RECOMMENDATION	OWNER	DUE DATE
1 <b>Share the news with referral partners</b> through letters or personal outreach	Referral Coordinator	14 days
2 <b>Include the recognition in correspondence</b> with insurance companies and payers	Community Outreach/ PR	8-12 weeks
3 <b>Reference the 5 Star rating in discussions</b> with managed care organizations or networks	Payer Relations	8-12 weeks
4 <b>Highlight the recognition in your Annual Report</b> or presentations to health plan partners and ACO	Payer Relations/ Marketing/Finance	8-12 weeks
5 <b>Add the achievement to hospital profile pages</b> on payer or partner directories	Marketing/IT	Opportunity basis

## 8 Industry & Professional Association Engagement

RECOMMENDATION	OWNER	DUE DATE
1 <b>Notify state and national hospital associations</b> about the recognition for their newsletters	Business Development/ Marketing	First Opportunity
2 <b>Submit the achievement as a case study</b> or presentation proposal for state and/or national healthcare conferences that you are active with. Invite Custom Learning to jointly co-present along with you	PR/Executive Leadership	Opportunity Basis
3 <b>Promote the rating on the hospital's profile</b> in professional directories or association websites	Business Development/ Marketing	Ongoing

## 9 Digital & Website Updates

RECOMMENDATION	OWNER	DUE DATE
1 <b>Create a prominent website banner</b> announcing the 5 Star rating	Marketing/IT	10 days
2 <b>Update the hospital's website "About Us" or "Awards" page</b> with details of the achievement	Marketing/IT	10 days
3 <b>Develop a blog post or web article</b> outlining how the hospital achieved this milestone	Marketing/Content Team	4 weeks
4 <b>Incorporate the 5 Star logo(s) on all:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Printed and digital materials</li> <li>Online patient portals or appointment scheduling systems</li> </ul>	IT/Patient Services	4 weeks



# 10 Board & Leadership Involvement

	RECOMMENDATION	OWNER	DUE DATE
1	<b>Present the recognition at a Board meeting</b> with a focus on impact and future goals	Executive Leadership	ASAP
2	<b>Incorporate the recognition into executive speeches or presentations</b> at community or industry events	Executive Leadership	First Opportunity
3	<b>Send a congratulatory message from the board</b> to all employees and stakeholders	Executive Leadership/ HR	4 weeks
4	<b>Include the rating during strategic planning meetings</b> to align future goals with continued excellence	Executive Leadership	TBA

## Keep the Momentum Going!

Look at all you've accomplished — and this is just the beginning! By implementing this toolkit, you're not only celebrating your 5 Star achievement — you're also enhancing your hospital's reputation, motivating your team, and fostering trust within your community. Every step you take amplifies your success, attracts new patients, and reinforces the exceptional care you provide.

Don't stop now — keep the momentum going! Use this milestone as a launch pad for continued growth and engagement. Your team's dedication got you here, and with this toolkit, you have everything you need to make an even greater impact. Let's show the world what 5 Star excellence looks like!



# CLS 5 Star Hospitals 2024/2025



*Congratulations*

**5 Star Recognized by CMS**



**Memorial Hospital**  
CARTHAGE, IL



**Rio Grande Hospital**  
DEL NORTE, CO



**Van Diest Medical Center**  
WEBSTER CITY, IA



**Powell Valley Healthcare**  
POWELL, WY



# 5 Star Recognized by NRRS

**Ely-Bloomsenson  
Community Hospital**  
ELY, MN



**Franklin General  
Hospital**  
HAMPTON, IA



**Osceola Regional  
Health Center**  
SIBLEY, IA



**Providence Medical  
Center**  
WAYNE, NB



**Moore County  
Hospital District**  
DUMAS, TX



**Ortonville Area  
Health Services**  
ORTONVILLE, MN



**Union General**  
FARMERVILLE, LA



**Pinckneyville  
Community Hospital**  
PINCKNEYVILLE, IL



