

# WEISS



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There are a lot of people running around out there trying to fix healthcare.

Few doubt that things need fixing. But many, from DIYer docs to industry leaders, suffer from being inside an echo chamber.

For example, most healthcare industry leaders know a lot about the way that other healthcare deals, or other ASCs, or other medical groups, and so on, are organized. But what do they know about deals, and ways of doing business, in other spheres?

That's a shame, because there are many valuable lessons from other industries that can be borrowed for great benefit.

That sort of borrowing is one of the things that I've drawn on over a career that started with working in stores, restaurants, and factories, and in being an industrial salesman, doing real estate deals, and so on, plus the probably 100 industries that I've been involved in as a lawyer.

But, even if you haven't done any of that, there are some tools you can use to imagine different ways of structuring and operating your business, whether your business is an anesthesia group, a hospital, or a, well, whatever.

Much of what I'm going to mention is inspired by a book by Mark Fox called *Da Vinci and the 40 Answers*. In the book, Fox interprets concepts developed in the former Soviet Union by Genrich Altshuller. At one point in his career, Altshuller was an employee in the Soviet equivalent of the patent office. He realized over the course of assessing patent applications that ideas could be put into a number of categories. Fox identified 40. I'm not sure if Altshuller identified 40 or 36 or 62; it doesn't make any difference.

Altshuller's thinking is known by its Russian language acronym, TRIZ, for, in English, the "Theory of Inventive Problem Solving". The notion is that there are models or basic formulae to follow to guide your thinking in inventing or in making improvements.

For example, one model is "taking out", pulling an element out from the whole. Someone might see it as selling pizza slices, not whole pizzas. Think about it in the context of healthcare: An ambulatory surgery center is simply the O.R. cut out of a hospital. A free-standing emergency room is a similar example. It's the ER cut out of a hospital and then made into a free-standing entity.

Or, it's something (management services) that's been removed in "slice" fashion from the entire "pie", by a medical group that builds its own management team, and then subsequently expands that team's function by selling its "MSO" services to other customers.

Self-service is another model. At fast food or fast casual restaurants, this is you, the customer as waiter and, sometimes as busser. In fact, at a popular taco place I stopped at over the weekend, a large sign reminds customers that they need to clean up after themselves because "this isn't your mom's house." In healthcare, self-service comes into play in many ways, from at-home DNA testing to direct order clinical laboratory services, just to name two.

Think about how other structures, other concepts can be used as models for your current business or for a new business, whether they come from other industries or from thinking guided by tools such as TRIZ.

What's in a franchise model, but isn't actually franchising, that might be applied to medical groups? What referral structures are used in the travel business that might grow your facility? How can what a charity accomplishes with a zero dollar budget be applied to acquiring a competitor?

Stuck? **Let's talk.**



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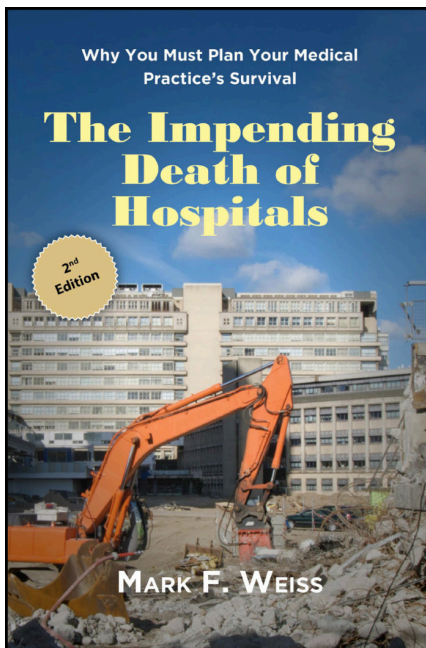


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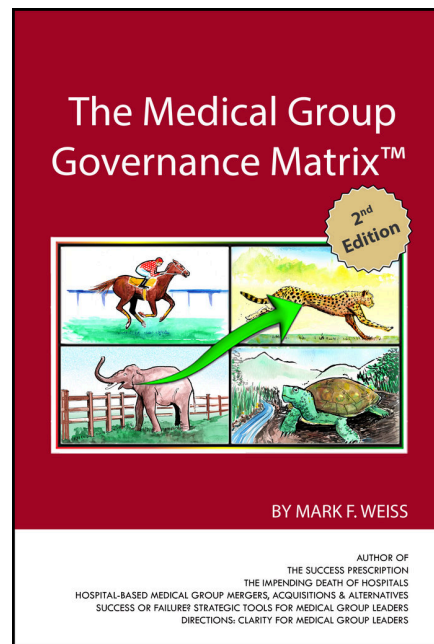
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