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Staff Matters: More Tips for Hiring and Developing a Great Staff

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More Tips for Hiring and Developing a Great Staff



By Jodi Schafer, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

Question: We are having such a hard time hiring staff for our practice. Not only are we struggling to find employees who are the right “fit” for our culture, but we are really struggling to find an office/practice manager. It seems like we’ve tried everything as far as recruiting goes. Do you have any other ideas to help us?

AnsWER: You are not alone in this struggle. Employers everywhere are having a hard time finding employees to fill positions, at all levels. Since the pandemic began, many people have retired or left the workforce for a variety of reasons. And, the challenge of having enough employees to fill positions is not going away any time soon. So, practices must be more creative in recruitment, including developing partnerships with high schools, community colleges, and training programs. They also need to pay attention to their work culture to ensure that they don’t lose the people they have. Opportunities for continuous learning are key for retaining employees, so let’s take a deeper look at how you can create those opportunities within your practice.

Think about the key skills you need each role to have to be successful in your practice. Ideally, you have these key skills included in the job descriptions for each position. Things like communication, organization, conflict resolution, and working on teams are all skill areas that practices need. You may have others. What do these look like when they are happening effectively? What resources do you have in place to help build and enhance these skills? If you don’t have clear expectations of employees, this would be a great place to start.

Likewise, what are your processes for communication, organizing the work, and conflict resolution? Do you have policies and procedures in your employee handbook and/or additional training protocols for each position? Who is responsible for administering this training, and how is comprehension and proficiency measured?

Creating an internal training process for these critical areas of interpersonal and teambuilding skills goes a long way toward building shared awareness and understanding for what is expected. Without these structures, employees guess at what they should do, actions are inconsistent, and sometimes their habits do not fit well with your team and practice, creating conflict.

In addition to clarifying your internal systems, policies, and procedures, you should also begin building your training and professional development offerings. Now more than ever, practices need to look within to see if there are employees who can “grow into” new positions, as well as potentially be promoted into leadership roles. You may have someone in the practice who has some natural leadership abilities but needs additional support to take on an office or practice manager role. There are many trainings out there on supervision, communication, conflict resolution, etc. HRM is launching our own online training platform at www.HR hazmat.com to support our clients with these needs. We also provide on-site training, tailored to the needs of each client.

This is just one of many external resources/vendors available to assist you with leadership development. Regardless of the training you use, make sure that the learning objectives align with your goals and that it is delivered in a way that is engaging for your staff.

Training is one step in building new skills, but it is not sufficient by itself. Training plus ongoing coaching and mentoring at the practice level is what creates real change; helping employees refine their skills as they build new habits. This requires synchronization and ongoing effort on your part to ensure that your investments in training and development bear fruit. Whether you’re focused on growing leaders or building a talent pipeline, you’ll need to be heavily involved in the process.

This is going to be the way of the future when it comes to talent acquisition. While we may long for the days of “post and pick,” the truth is that this new path forward — while more time- and cost-intensive — is also more flexible, more predictable, and more likely pay off in the long run. ●