Recruitment and Retention Communication Strategies for Nurse Managers

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Which is harder to accomplish?

- Recruitment?

- Retention?

Learner Objectives

- Improve Recruitment Processes

- Expand Retention Practices

- Interviewing Processes

- Deploy Improved Communication Strategies

- Address "toxic" behaviors effectively

We'd Like to Share Our Work Experience With YOU

- Hazel Findlay remained 5-star staffing for years during the entire duration of the pandemic **without** the use of agency staff. The longevity of the staff in the facility is incredible with average tenure at 5 years. Two CNAs have been with our company for 40 years. The CNAs attribute their success to applying their mission to both their residents and staff. ***Our mission is to help people live to their highest potential as individuals who seek independence, good health and personal fulfillment.***

- Total nursing staff turnover = 38%; National = 52.6%; Michigan = 50.8% In the last year the highest was 7%

- Our annual DON turnover is 0; national/state average estimate= 1 turnover every 18 months

- Our annual LNHA turnover is 0; national = .09 annually; Michigan = .08 annually

The COST of Turnover -

- WHAT is the ACTUAL cost of turnover?

- MORE than the hours of training

- SLOWS the FLOW for everyone

- Disrupts morale

- COSTS TIME AND MONEY for EACH fail

- SET THE GOAL – At least ONE YEAR for Certified Nursing Assistant AND TWO YEARS for NURSES
  - We calculated where we lose staff
  - Implemented mentors
  - Expanded training time
  - Created career ladder positions for Nursing Assistants

LABOR STRATEGY and LONG-TERM VISION DRIVES YOUR HIRING PRACTICE

Begin	Begin with a labor and wage study if you haven't completed one recently
Conduct	Conduct a job analysis to understand WHAT the position requires
Identify	Identify your company's labor strategy
Think about	Think about "FIT" – will you need people who FIT the culture* of your company or is the position(s) about the tasks and duties and culture isn't important
Comment	*As a side comment – "culture" isn't the cringe worthy, we're going to join hands and all get along in our community ideology. Culture refers to the texture and tone of your company and workflow. Is the culture high energy, fun, competitive or scarcity oriented or chaotic?

Improve Recruitment Processes

What's "IN IT FOR ME" (WIIFM) or how to make meaningful outreach

Recruitment Strategies - Current practice

- Revamping recruitment strategies and identify areas needing improvement.

- Look at your current process
  - What is working?
  - What isn't working?

Recruitment Strategies

- Set attainable goals using a multi-faceted approach
- WORD OF MOUTH MATTERS!!!
  - **Retention can lead to Recruitment**
- Testimonials, celebrations
- Embrace social media
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - YouTube
  - Snapchat
  - Twitter

- **FIND YOUR TARGET –** *verify with HR/Legal to avoid discriminatory practices*

- WHO FITS? Who's your TARGET?
  Is it the FIT? OR the FUNCTION?
  Parents looking for flexible hours?
  Part-time workers?
  Second career?

LABOR STRATEGY and Long-term VISION

BARGAIN LABORER – you just want the cheapest body to fill the position. You're not concerned with turnover, education/training, or the "FIT".

LOYAL SOLDIER – you're looking for a low maintenance, high retention employee. This employee understands the company and their role. They like being part of a team and are good at tasks and duties. They like training to remain in step with the workflow. They want steady, reliable work and a work environment with established benefits (monetary, flex time, "other").

COMMITTED EXPERT – you want someone who's specialized in an area. You'll rely on this person(s) and will require routine training to remain a committed expert. This person requires autonomy, stability, and being valued for the specialized skills brought to the table.

FREE AGENT – you'll hire a short term or contract employee (s) to help with a project or fill a position temporarily while recruiting or onboarding.

CASE STUDY – RECRUITMENT & Retention at THE NEST

- The Nest, as 3-star rated skilled nursing center in the Midwest, had a problem. They'd move from a 5-star center with a lively staff and good tenure 3 years ago to a downtrodden, not so friendly team. The new Regional Director of Operations visited the team and made several observations.
  - No one greeted her as she made rounds.
  - Staff looked messy, with unkempt uniforms and messy hair.
  - The residents were messy looking, food on faces and clothing.
  - Staff members were punching in then immediately going out to smoke without being "on break" and without replacing the team on the units.
  - Staff members were taking unsanctioned breaks to "go smoke a quick one" (saying, "This doesn't count as a break – it's only 5 minutes.")

CASE STUDY – RECRUITMENT & Retention at THE NEST

- The new Regional Director of Operations met with the LNHA and Director of Nursing Services to talk about what they saw as opportunities and where they'd like support. BOTH talked about staffing AND morale. They wanted "more staff" and "better staff". When discussing the hiring process, these opportunities for improvement were identified:
  - Applications could only be obtained online, meaning a person without stable electronic access or with a disability couldn't walk in and complete an application.
  - Applicant advertisements and outreach was required to go through the "corporate office", which was located in an urban area while The Nest was in a semi-rural and impoverished area.
  - Orientation was held once a month at the corporate office for the first 2 days and at the facility for the rest of the orientation cycle (usually 5 days).

CASE STUDY – RECRUITMENT & Retention at THE NEST

- WHAT could go wrong?
  - ADA violations – ADA begins with the application process
  - Not reaching the target segment due to the difference in urban to rural access to electronic networking and outreach
  - Once a month orientation in a corporate office (that's 60 miles from the facility!)

- WHAT are the opportunities?
  - How can you problem solve this IF you have this or a similar situation?

CASE STUDY – RECRUITMENT & Retention at THE NEST

- Additionally – the onsite "hiring manager" (not a Certified Human Resource Specialist and without specialized external training in labor practices) was messy and unkempt.

- The hiring manager smoked a lot, would "go out to burn one real quick" several times a day AND take the housekeeping supervisor and a couple of nursing assistants, too. (Can you say preferential treatment?)

- The hiring manager wasn't friendly and said things like, "When I was a nurse aide, we were grateful to have a job!"

- WHO DO YOU THINK IS ATTRACTED TO THIS HIRING MANAGER?

- HOW can a potential employee navigate this toxic environment?

- WHAT actions can the LNHA and DNS take to begin improving the process?

Are "HIRING FAIRS" Effective ON SITE?

PROS

- Staff meet the applicants

- You have the applicants' sole attention

- YOU can set the hours

- YOU can conduct interviews and set up orientation immediately

- YOU can give tours

CONS

- There are often few applicants

- There are often few applicants

- The hours don't matter if no one shows up

- The ROI (return on investment) may be miniscule

USING CAREER, JOB, and HIRING FAIRS EFFECTIVELY

- What are the positions you need to fill?

- Do you have the WHO visualized? WHO are you looking for?

- Do you have the job descriptions with you?

Recruitment Strategies – Referrals

- Employee Referral Program
  - Nurses and CNAs know other nurses and CNAs
  - Incentives for referrals
  - WHAT INSPIRES THE PERSON? Money? Status? Time off?

  - We are lucky to have a NATP to start applicants on a "career journey"

Recruitment Strategies - WIIFM

- What are potential employees looking for?
  - Tuition reimbursement
  - Insurance packages
  - Retirement
  - **Flexible schedules**-Full-time status at 64, 72 and 80 hours, 12, 16, 8 and 4 hour shifts
  - Room for growth and advancement, education options
  - Positive work environment

Begin At The Beginning…THE INTERVIEW-How Do You Know WHAT Kind of Employee A Prospect Is?

The ONLY evidence-based hiring practice…

- BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING
- Using questions and asking about problem-solving and challenges the interviewee has overcome

LOOK at WHO interviews-Shouldn't fall on just one person

HOW is it conducted

PERFECT THIS PROCESS

Sample Interview Questions-HOW They Might Respond in Different Situations

Question	Score	NOTES
What interests you in this position(s)?		
What are your skills and best strengths?		
What is your major weakness?		
What would you do if you were behind schedule working and the day was going badly?		
Who do you want to be professionally? How do you want people to think of you as a coworker?		
If you could choose, would you work alone or with a team? Why?		
What's most important to you at work? What are you looking for when you are looking for a position?		
What would you do if someone was abusing or stealing from a resident?		
A mechanical lift requires 2 assist. What would you do if a seasoned employee asked you to do one by yourself?		
What would you like THIS company to value most?		
Do you have questions for me?		
TOTAL SCORE		

Score These Individually to Compare Results

Score:

1 – Good, clear answer

2 – Better – more descriptive or comprehensive

3 – Best – articulate, positive, demonstrates problem solving

NOTES:

And Of Course…What NOT to ask…

Are you pregnant?

What is your religious affiliation?

What is your political affiliation?

What is your race, color or ethnicity?

What is your gender?

What is your sexual orientation?

Where are you from? Are you a citizen?

How old are you?

Are you disabled?

Are you married?

Do you have children or plan to?

Are you in debt?

Do you drink or smoke?

What do you think about unions in the work place?

Resources

Just Cause | Human Resources (ucdavis.edu)

Expand Retention Practices

Here's where the HARD WORK comes in!

Retention – The HARD WORK

Balance between keeping older and younger staff happy

"Work Family"-Will that work for you?

Emphasize the mission and vision of the facility

Foster a learning environment

Balancing older AND younger employees (newer and more seasoned employees)

- Age bias IS a form of implicit bias
  - Works in BOTH directions
  - Age bias tends to work against mature AND young people

- Find the COMMON GROUND – what does EVERYONE WANT to be successful?

- "We agree on 90% of things, we just need to hammer out the last 10%"

- Give your team the tools to pull together toward the shared mission, vision, and values

- BEFORE YOU SAY SOMETHING YOU MAY REGRET, STOP, THINK, and REFRAIN

- EVERY generation has said silly things about the generations BEFORE and AFTER their generation

Retention at Hazel Findlay

- Survey of staff that has returned to the facility after leaving. At least 26 employees have left and returned. Some multiple times.

- These are some of the things they said:
  - Why they left? Higher pay, family reasons, COVID restrictions, try a different setting, better benefits
  - Why they return and why they stay! **#1 Flexible scheduling**—followed by work family, teamwork, free meals, massages, leadership that cares, caring environment, great staffing levels, cleanliness of the facility, and a manageable workload

WORK FAMILY? Team? Tribe? Group?

LANGUAGE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

How does the company mission, vision, values tie into WHAT you call the WORK FAMILY? TEAM? TRIBE? GROUP?

"Staff" sounds transactional-Not everyone agrees

Relational/relationships keep people happy and invested

The "Work Family"

Create a caring, inquisitive and nurturing culture valuing CURIOUSITY

Leadership should learn and care about employees

Model the desired behavior - staff will follow suit

Find out what matters, what their struggles are and employ strategies to incorporate those subjects

- Celebration slips
- Open-door policy
- Communication book

ASK the Work Family

- WHAT do they want?

- WHAT are their ideas?

- RESPOND TO THEIR IDEAS.

- IF the feedback is NEGATIVE, accept it graciously – we must not be "mad" when we ASK for feedback and hear unpleasant information
  - Demonstrate grace under pressure
  - See the "case study"

- HOW can the SERVANT LEADERS support the Work Family?

EMPHASIZE the MISSION

- Isn't a MISSION just a bunch of words someone made up?

- MAYBE or MAYBE NOT

- Our company lives "*Our mission is to help people live to their highest potential as individuals who seek independence, good health, and personal fulfillment."*
  - We used to have the word OLDER and one of the Work Family asked if the mission statement applied to ALL the people involved in our company....YES. She suggested we remove the work "older" and we did.

Drive Your Mission

People want to
belong to a cause

Make a difference

Apply the mission to
residents AND staff

Foster a Learning Environment

- Foster a learning environment
  - Career Ladder Positions
    - CNA Leadership positions
    - Social Services Nurse's Aide
  - Promote within-boost morale and get people excited
  - Provide education opportunities
    - Classes
    - "Discover Days"
    - Dementia Training
    - Black Belt Training
    - How to give tours, interview, investigations
    - MORE!

FOSTER THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT – Employees feel more involved when they have up to date, relevant training -

- Which sounds better?
  - We HAVE to have this training (eye rolling involved)
  - We GET to have this training

- It's never perfect and to increase engagement try these approaches:
  - REMEMBER the ADA requires we offer accommodations (reasonable) and offering a "LIVE GROUP" session could be one way to meet this
  - ASK the team for ideas and feedback for HOW they'd like education – group, online-only, hybrid. ASK WHAT they WANT to learn!!!
  - Create training that addresses identified knowledge, process, or practice gaps as identified in team evaluations (and meet the regulatory requirement)

ONBOARD and MENTORS

You never get a second chance to make a FIRST impression!

Assign a mentor – or "work buddy" to befriend new team members

Can be informal or formal

Mentoring & Reverse Mentoring

- EMBRACE the younger or newer worker

- Draw upon the strengths -

- Mentoring is an evidenced based model that:
  - Improves retention
  - Identifies and develops potential new leaders
  - Improved transparency and feedback
  - Strong resident and patient outcomes

Mentor Characteristics

Desire
Successful mentors want to mentor. They take pride in sharing what they know. Improving their teaching skills is important to them.

Responsiveness
Successful mentors need to engage mentees. Their listening and communication skills are key to conveying the right information. Questions can be used to direct the learning process. Successful mentors understand that learning will increase when mentees are comfortable asking questions.

Enthusiasm
Successful mentoring takes energy. Formal mentoring sessions take time to prepare and commitment to conducting them. Mentors who feel good about their jobs will pass on those feelings.

Mentor Characteristics

Humor

Successful mentors have a good sense of humor. Things don't always go according to plan. Everyone has learned something the hard way. Laughing about things that have gone wrong sends the important message that messing up while learning is okay.

Sincerity/Honesty

Successful mentors don't fake it. They truly care about the success of their mentees and deal with them in a straightforward manner. Mentees will respect a mentor who admits not having all of the answers.

Flexibility

Successful mentors are adaptable. They know when to eliminate, adjust, or change what they are teaching to match the capabilities of the trainee or outside constraints.

Mentor Characteristics

Tolerance

Successful mentors are open to the opinions of others. They recognize and accept differences in personalities. They are interested in what others have to say, even when the don't a need and accept negative feedback as a tool for improvement.

Commitment

Successful mentors improve over time. Training, practice, and honest reviews help coaches develop and refine their skills. Successful coaches take their coaching duties seriously.

CNA Career Ladder Positions

- Pipists/Liaisons
  - Investigations
  - Interviews
  - Education
  - Training NEW staff

- Recognize high-potential (HiPo) employees

- Draw upon their strengths

- Morale booster

Other "Extras"

- CPR Training
- Dementia Training
- Therapy Aide Training
- Black Belt Training
- Discover Daze
- Tours, investigations, scheduling, social service aide
- "Dream" of a conference geared towards CNAs

Deploy Improved Communication Strategies for Retention

Driving the RELATIONSHIP and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT to improve communication and ALL systems

Address "toxic" behaviors effectively
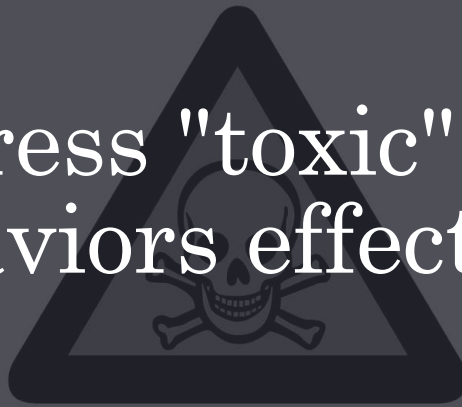
HOW to "see it, say it" and address "poor attitude"

The CASE STUDY – Communication & Toxicity

- Cranky team member; EVERYONE has the LNHA, DON, Facility Assistant numbers, emails, get notes, have a communication book, PCC communication AND MORE…The ONLY person "*unable to reach anyone*" is the Cranky Team Member who calls OFFICE phones leaving messages DESPITE REPEATED reminders to USE THE CELL PHONES for "real time" problem solving.

- DON & Facility Assistant present 5 times weekly for EACH shift to see them; the LNHA is in at least ONCE weekly late for midnight shift to check in if needed. The Cranky Team Member left a blasting message in the Communication Book that included:
    - "I don't want to use work time to talk to DON, Facility Assistant or LNHA" (Her reason for not responding during rounds when asked, "Is there anything you need to be successful?")
    - "I can't find your cell numbers" (They are prominently posted in MULTIPLE places.)
    - The communication note-book is "germ-filled" so she won't use it (The communication book is a paper notebook in the service wing, not a "HIGH GERM" area)
    - "I don't have the right email" (She misspells the names)
    - "I was sick" when told the LNHA would come in to see her specifically

The CASE STUDY – WHAT To Do?

- The Cranky Team Member takes messages and delivers them out of context.

- "OTHER Administrators work the floor"

- A "hit and run" artist. No interest in problem solving. Prefers to punch and slug from afar, stir the pot and so forth.

- BEST approach to reduce the "churn" – keep reinforcing THE DOOR IS OPEN, IF THE EMPLOYEE CHOOSES not to enter, we won't be able to problem solve

- "I'm sorry you feel this way"…"I looked at your resume and I know the Administrators at your other jobs, I didn't know they worked the floor. Tell me about that."

- "How can I help you feel better?" "What do you need to be successful?"

- "Do you need reasonable accommodation?"

- This person wanted to STIR the POT. It worked for a little while until people realized EVERYONE else can reach the leaders and routinely DO AND we all work the floor AND are available –

- LESSON: Be KINDLY blunt and squish the churn asap with as much courtesy as can be mustered

Is It Personality Or Stress?

Knowing your staff is key

- Direct line staff are tired
  - Burnout
  - Compassion Fatigue
  - Turnover in the workforce
  - PPE Fatigue
  - Stressors from home
    - Financial
    - Family/Personal Relationships

What Can We Do?

- Opportunities to talk
  - Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
  - Social Services Department
  - Human Resources
  - Mentors

What Can We Do?

- Leadership should be visible and accessible for help
  - Help with solution focus problem solving
  - Give support, refer to EAP
  - Model self-care and encourage
  - REFRAME, REFRAME, REFRAME
  - Understand burn out vs compassion fatigue

- Time-off
  - Encourage "well days"
  - Move away from punitive time off practices
    - YES, some people will take advantage....

What Can We Do?

- Chair Massages

- Celebrate the little things! And the BIG things!
  - Thank you notes
  - Special treats
  - Work anniversaries
  - Birthdays
  - Accomplishments

- Our staff needs recognition for their hard work and the extra stuff they do. This is frequently mentioned in our surveys and interviews for new staff

• What if it's more than stress?

•Toxic Personalities
  •Brings everyone else around them down
  •Affects the residents' mood and behavior
  •Some people are happy to be unhappy
  •Difficult to direct and work cooperatively

"The Grumbler"

- Never satisfied
- Failure to try to understand others, rules, and procedures
- Complain to anyone who listens
  - Co-workers
  - May become a problem if it includes residents and family members

Changing the Grumbling to Delight…

- Listen
  - Be empathetic
  - Be professional
  - Many times, just need to be heard
  - Reframe their mindset to the positives in their jobs

- Deeper Issues
  - Family problems
  - Financial problems
  - Problems with certain co-workers

ANOTHER APPROACH….

- Solution focus
  - What's YOUR solution?
  - If you had a magic wand, what would you do?
  - How can you see this playing out?
  - Keep directing the person to WHAT part he/she plays in the "problem"

"The Excuse Maker"

- "I'm so busy"

- "I have a lot going on"

- "It's not my fault"

- Throws co-workers under the bus
  - Look at someone else! Then you are not looking at me!

Accountability for the Excuse Maker

- Emphasize teamwork
  - Provide motivation

- End results matter
  - Quality of care
  - Involvement and satisfaction of residents

- Seek help instead of excuses
  - Demonstrate the reframe

"The BLAH Betty"

- Never excited

- Disengaged

- Don't care about the quality of their work

- Lack Initiative

Turning Blah Betty Into Peppy Patty...

- Lead by example
  - Get excited about the work YOU do as a leader
  - Excitement is contagious

- Notice what they do enjoy and their strengths

- Help them learn new things

- Fun activities

- Celebrate

"The Smarty Pants"

- The "know-it-alls"

- Long-tenured employees

- May not accept direction

- Argumentative

- Superior
  - Off-putting to new employees

Give the "Smarty Pants" a Toolbelt...

- Harness their knowledge and show them how to communicate it more effectively to their co-workers

- Hold them accountable for the success of new staff
  - Involve in onboarding
 - Make them a mentor
  - Involve them in interviewing

"The Gossip"

How do we know it's gossip?

- The conversationalist seems to be taking pleasure from the misfortune of another person
- The conversation is taking on a negative tone
- You would be uncomfortable repeating the information to the person it is about

Talk About Ideas Not Each Other

- Change the subject
- Say something positive
- Address the lead perpetrator "the source"
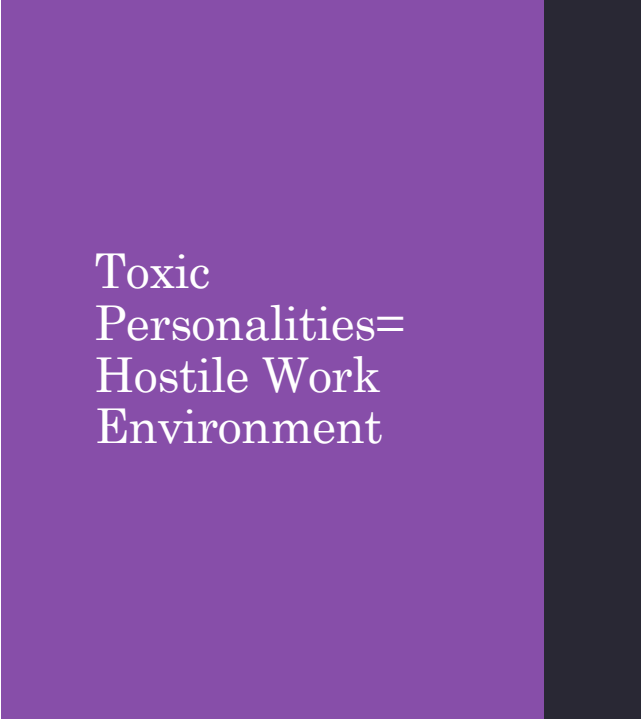- SAY SOMETHING!
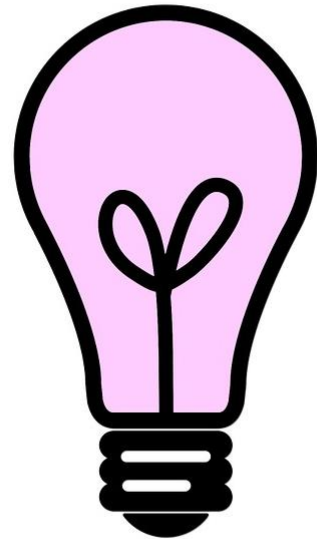
THE GOSSIP – One More Thought

- Gossip can easily become bullying (and probably IS!)

- Can be harassment

Could cause:

- Decreased job satisfaction
- Lower productivity
- Rude behavior IS contagious
- Call-ins, missed shifts-higher turnover rates!
  Sleep disturbances
  Physical and mental health problems

Toxic Personalities= Hostile Work Environment

Disengage the Toxicity

- Use verbal cues
- Short sentences
- Cut off negative conversations
- Reframe what they are saying in a positive way
- Reward the good
- If all else fails: BE BLUNT AND DIRECT

- A "one off" happens

- Toxicity – how to know you're being sucked in?
  - Secrets
  - "I'm telling you, you need to know"
  - "I'm joking!"
  - See it, say it

ADDRESS
TOXICITY
before it GETS
WORSE

Approaching Toxicity

- Create a culture of transparency

- See it, say it

- Support

- "I'm sorry that happened"

- "What can I do to help you"

- Use the performance improvement (write ups) to address chronic toxicity impacting work

- MUST avoid "write up" for attitude – have clear examples

- Get HR help or legal counsel

Thank you for attending!

- Do you have questions or comments?
- Contact us if you want more ideas or information -
- Erica – eholman@hazelifindlay.org
- Kari – k.sodman@hazelifindlay.org

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