

NURSE MANAGER

Boot Camp E-zine

Spring 2008

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How to Build Staff and Cut Costs

All healthcare organizations today are juggling the complex mix of cutting operational costs while providing excellent service to stay competitive. This is no small matter when patients' safety and lives depend upon the quality of service provided.

One way to approach the *cost vs. service* dilemma is to cut staff and require remaining staff to produce more with what they have. This method of "slash and burn" can have deleterious and complex organizational effects if misapplied. It is misapplied if the root of ecological and economic issues is ignored: employees' level of desire to stay with the organization and perform their jobs. Distressing ecological issues will decrease productivity and increase turnover that costs millions of dollars annually.

Two critical questions can provide key insights into reducing turnover:

1. What satisfies your staff in their job?
2. What motivates them to do their job?

Many health care organizations regularly measure staff satisfaction, often at considerable cost. If your organization is one of those, or if you are thinking about implementing such measures, we offer the following suggestions to maximize your return on the human and monetary resources you invest in the measurement process.

1. Measure what matters to your staff.

Unless you are measuring the core of what satisfies and motivates your staff, you are wasting time measuring things that are peripheral to job satisfaction and work motivation.

2. **Use scientifically sound measures.** It is important that the survey tools you use have been tested and shown to be reliable.

3. Provide timely measurement results at the unit/ department level.

Timely survey results are critical. Data must be provided in real time. Data that is provided 6-12 months after measurement is largely irrelevant because the organizational dynamics change so quickly. It is important to get the results of the survey within 2-8 weeks of measurement so discussion of course correction can take place in real time.

4. Develop action plans to address needs revealed through measurement.

Data in the survey reports can provide a wealth of information for unit department managers to address areas of least satisfaction and motivating factors that are absent in the workplace.

5. **Evaluate results to measure your success.** Before you implement the actions in your plan, decide how you will measure the success of the actions taken to address the needs evident in the survey results. Two especially meaningful and useful evaluation methods are:

- Correlate key economic factors in your organization with the results of the satisfaction/motivation survey.

.- Re-measure your organization using the same survey that was used to establish the baseline in your first survey, and compare the results.

When it comes to re-measuring your organization, there are two key factors to consider: a) the same survey must be used from one measurement to another, and b) the time interval between measures should be 6-10 months

What do your staff members find satisfying in the workplace? What motivates them to come to work and do their job? The answers to these questions provide the foundation for building a work environment where your staff feels appreciated, recognized, valuable, empowered and energized to perform their job -a work environment where they want to stay.

Care@Nurse.com:

The Email Model of Nursing

Can clinicians and patients communicate effectively via email? A growing number of advocates of email messaging are convinced of its value in healthcare, and a handful of insurance companies have even begun to reimburse for email consultations, with others looking into its feasibility.

Almost since the invention of the telephone, there has been tele-health (to one degree or another). The on-call or after-hours nurse hotline is already a well-established tradition. Email could improve upon this model of caregiver-patient communication, with considerable time-savings an added benefit.

In an email model, nurses would become an important link in the chain of communications. Not only could consultative nurses answer questions directly, they could also receive messages, print them and route them to the physician, lab tech, or other practice specialist - applying their vast clinical knowledge to streamline and enhance the process. With confidentiality such a pressing issue today, private email systems are not suitable for medical communication. Web-based applications, where messages are encrypted and remain on a secure third-party server before being downloaded, are considered safe. Also, some applications currently available offer the email screen as a form that patients fill out, rather than a blank messaging screen. These forms contain fields that must be filled in before the email can be sent, thereby guarding against frivolous messaging and ensuring that the clinician on the other end receives adequate information to help the patient.

CHAT SCHEDULE (1 hour chats)

April 21, 2008 Adjusting for an Aging Workforce
3:00 - 4:00 PM EDT

May 24, 2008 Valuing Employees
3:00 - 4:00 PM EDT

June 7, 2008 The Leadership Spirit
3:00 - 4:00 PM EDT

Go to <http://www.curtincalls.com/chat> and follow

Managing Yourself Under Pressure

Before you can lead others; you have to lead your own life. John Roger and Peter McWilliams in Life 101 suggest the following guidelines:

1. Don't hurt yourself and don't hurt others. This begins at the physical level: don't hit people, don't put things in your body that you know aren't good for you. It continues to the psychological: don't shout at others, and keep a reign on the way you talk to yourself (most peoples' self-talk is surprisingly negative, e.g., "Boy, am I stupid. How dumb can I get. ..etc"). And the emotional level: don't blame others, and refuse to succumb to guilt and resentment.
2. Take care of yourself so you may help take care of others. Get enough rest. Praise yourself for a job well done. Allow yourself to feel satisfaction. Treat yourself to something intellectually stimulating. Consciously make an effort to enjoy the NOW of life.
3. Use everything for your learning and growth. Absolutely Everything. No matter how painful or glorious or embarrassing or funny or silly or even stupid. Easily said, but hard to do.

According to Dr. Jan Fawcett, former Chairman of Psychiatry at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago, you can cope with stress by:

- practicing relaxation and deep breathing on a regular basis
- setting time aside daily just for yourself -even if it's only a few minutes
- taking a lunch break - do not work through lunch - enjoy a relaxing meal, take a walk or exercise
- spending time with family, friends and coworkers
- being realistic about what you can and cannot do.

1. short term subjective states (passing moods):
- 2.

A line from "What the Books Don't Tell You about Leadership"

"Misery doesn't love just any old company, it only loves the company of those 'stewing in the same juice'!!"