



Help Wanted?

Four steps to finding and keeping your dream employee

By Sarah J. Boyd

Hiring and retaining good people doesn't always seem easy, but it can be if you follow these four simple steps.

1 Share the responsibility.

Identify three employees who you feel represent your brand well and get them involved. When you need to hire someone new, narrow down the candidate pool through phone interviews or quick in-person interviews, then pass the baton to your team to conduct peer interviews. This team can help you identify the candidate who fits best and will bring new and energizing ideas to your workforce.

2 Roll out the welcome wagon.

Fully 46% of new-hires leave their job within the first year, according to a report published in *The Social Workplace*. This represents a loss of resources and hurts long-term relationships with patients. As the business owner or manager, it is up to you to on-board new employees in a way that sets the stage for a lasting and mutually beneficial relationship. Check in with your new employee in a structured way after the first 30, 60, and 90 days. This time period is crucial. Be open to honest feedback, and make sure you are not just throwing this new employee into the “deep end” with no planned training period.

3 Provide feedback.

Set goals and expectations for both your new employee and your team. Your best employees are those who appreciate challenges and open communication. Provide feedback frequently by having short one-on-one meetings with your employees weekly. If an issue or behavior needs to be addressed, do so in

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a way that is direct, but not aggressive. Let's use the example of an employee coming in late.

A good example of addressing the situation is as follows: “David, can I provide you with some feedback? When you consistently come in late, your co-workers have to pick up extra work to get our day

started on time. I feel that you don't care about our patients who schedule appointments at this time, and you don't show respect for me. How can we change this moving forward?” As for positive feedback, be specific. Cite examples, and encourage more of this type of behavior in the future.

4 Recognize and reward.

When you provide positive feedback, be systematic and consistent in reinforcing the desired performance. Write hand-written thank-you letters to your employees to share kind words. I encourage you to mail these letters to your employee's home address as this often fosters a sense of pride at home and will pay dividends in surprising ways. It is also important to reward employees in meaningful ways.

If you have a busy parking lot or work in a hospital, find a way to carve out an “employee of the month” parking spot that is convenient and desirable. Display the employee's picture and some interesting facts about them in an area that patients and families frequent so this reward will have a snowball effect in terms of relationship-building opportunities.

Follow these four steps, and you and your patients will reap the rewards. ■

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