

## MY SUCCESS IN HIRING AND RETAINING STAFF

by James Savas

Hiring and retaining the best staff is tantamount to the expansion and smooth flow of an organization. Having worked for many years with small to large outpatient medical facilities, I have learned a great deal about what works and what doesn't.

For starters, there are a couple of basic rules or 'stable ideas' that clinics should apply to ensure that they get who they need and want. One is to put someone in charge of the human resource functions (here recruitment, hiring and onboarding), and the other is to keep up a constant stream of promotion to certain key recruitment "pools".

Putting someone in charge of the HR functions of the office might seem simple and obvious, but I know plenty of executives and owners out there who "don't have time" to do this job themselves and "can't afford to hire someone" to do it. To both of those viewpoints I say, "change your mind, or you're in for a very tough ride."

The functions of a true HR department are so vital that not having them accounted for in your practice may lead to too few staff, unqualified staff, loss of income, instability, and worse. The 'technology' of putting these functions in a practice and keeping them "in" is as vital and specific as how to treat a patient for a particular disorder or ailment. An executive who doesn't hire someone to do the functions of this division will wind up heavily-burdened with noise, fires and more headaches than he/she can easily deal with.

Whether you hire someone for the job and get them trained, or put a current, reliable staff member on board with these functions on a part-time schedule, just get the functions *IN*.

By "constant stream of promotion," I'm not referring to placing several large, expensive ads in the 'same old' magazine or website; though if this has proven successful, do it too; I'm referring to word-of-mouth promotion as well as hard and soft-copy promotion - getting your hiring needs constantly known and promoted on *every avenue possible*. We've all heard the idea that "good staff are hard to find."

To this, I ask the question, "Were you?" Were you hard to find for an employer who happened upon your fabulous resume? In many cases I've found that whether it was a friend or family member telling you about the office, or a drive past the office, or you happened upon it while flipping through local websites or magazines - something grabbed your attention. I can tell you that more than 85 percent of the staff I've hired recently (and I mean good staff that stayed) were looking for a job in an upbeat environment, with growth potential, where they may have to work hard, but ultimately knew there was something to be gained aside from the money offered - *a higher purpose*.

When I took the time to look at how I was getting these highly-motivated and well-qualified staff in the door, I found that the majority had come from my current staff referring their friends, old school mates, and the like. Upon discovering this, I immediately boosted the internal referral efforts and had as many as 20 interviews in a single day this way.

Some specific examples of my promotional tactics included creating a referral bonus game for current staff, keeping in good communication with ex-staff who had left under positive circumstances, thumbing through old resumes and application forms, handing promotion to the support-services men and woman, speaking to the clinic's referring doctors, and even competitors. Doing this I've managed to maintain an 82% retention rate based on hiring staff with these points in mind, and recommend you start doing the same. It may seem a little un-real or "over doing it", but I've never seen it fail.

The above points have been key for me in my hiring and retaining success. The money you might be concerned about losing on implementing some of this will be of little concern when you see the quality of your staff improve along with productivity and income.

Happy hiring and let me know how it goes!