White Paper

Reducing Turnover as a Key Outcome of
Clinical Workforce Management Software

Executive Summary

A very real workforce shortage exists within many departments in the healthcare industry. Staff turnover generates high costs across the board, creates inefficiency, and inhibits operational initiatives.

Reducing staff turnover in these highly skilled positions remains crucial to the ongoing success of any operation. Clinical Workforce Management Software offer solutions that improve morale and increase job satisfaction and ultimately help in reducing turnover.

Background

Turnover in staff is always an issue. However, in 2020, healthcare turnover had increased by 5%, making it second only to hospitality.[2]

Although one might assume that the COVID-19 pandemic is a driver here, the trend started well before the pandemic.

Problem Statement

For any hospital, staff retention remains a critical, ongoing objective. Retaining staff not only keeps departments at budgeted levels, but it also maintains staff effectiveness and reduces the expenses of repeatedly training for the same positions.

Ask yourself how many months it takes for a new staff member to become fully trained – three? six? nine? Are your staff rotating floors, benches, or departments? Perhaps twelve months is more realistic? Regardless of your structure, if one highly trained person leaves, you face months of training and relative inefficiency before returning to some sense of "normal".

Management needs to reduce turnover, but how? Increasing pay seems an obvious answer – and it does help for a period of time. Some HR leaders refer to this effect as the "three-month rule" - job satisfaction seems to improve for roughly three months after a pay increase.

Regardless of the timeframe where increased job satisfaction is noted, leaders consistently agree the effect is short-lived.[4,5,21] Quite quickly, the affected employees consider the new rate of pay to be the "new normal", and any underlying problems, issues or stresses will rear their heads once again.

Now, your operation is back where you started – and your costs have increased.

A Culture of Frustration

Reducing turnover will likely come about through honestly addressing problems in the management of each department. Leaders determined to Increase morale and improve job satisfaction will likely experience decreased turnover.

Some of the underlying, more complex problems needing attention could be difficult and uncomfortable to address. Some most likely will involve change and hard conversations. Crucial Conversations[6] is an excellent resource for handling some of the situations that might arise.

Other problems, while seemingly mundane, can play a key role in job satisfaction and ultimately, in retention. These are the irritations that grind away at morale and drag a single department or an entire organization down.

Think culture keywords like *fairness, dignity, transparency, visibility, and accessibility:*

- Shifts that start out unstaffed due to a scheduling oversight – or end up double-staffed
- Leave requests that get lost or are not responded to in a timely fashion
- Leave requests decisions that are not perceived as fair and consistent
- Outreach centers that go unstaffed
- Competency assessments that go uncompleted – or get lost in the paper shuffle and must be repeated
- Citations for deficiencies – again
- Policies and procedures missing critical signatures...and staff that don't complete reading tasks on time
- Manuals that end up locked in the supervisor's office when they are needed the most
- ...and manuals that are missing key pages

Wait – People Don't Quit Jobs; They Quit Bad Bosses, Right?

We've all heard that cliché before. Turns out it's not quite true. People leave jobs for any number of reasons, but they generally are not "pay" and "the boss". [7,8,9,10] Work that is frustrating and work that does not utilize staff potential lead the list. Close behind is organizational culture.

Medical staff enter their professions for specific reasons. They thrive in the healthcare environment, they enjoy the challenge of putting all the pieces together to solve a problem, and they have a desire to be a part of a team helping people. They did not sign up for frustration and mis-management.

Cost of Turnover

The cost to replace one position is estimated to run 20 – 50% the annual cost of the position. [2,11,12] This agrees with the findings of the multiple salary surveys, which shows the time to fill a position averages 3-6 months for a staff position, and 3-12 months for a supervisor or manager. [2,3] Some sources put the number even higher at up to two times annual salary. [2,13,14]

As an example, take a full-time employee with an annual salary of about $68,000 [2,15] and that of a manager at around $86,000 [2,15]. This operation could easily be looking at between $13,600 on the low end and $172,000 on the high side of completely avoidable labor expenses. Consider that these costs are *per vacancy*, then the sums become truly staggering.

(If you're interested in calculating your own cost to refill a position, this short but excellent article by Josh Berlin lays out several items to consider. [14])

Automation has changed the face of your workplace. Why should the work of managing your staff be any different?

Solution

Enter Clinical Workforce Management Software.

Leadership has waited too long for tools to bring control, transparency and automation to the processes around managing staff.

For decades, significant strides have been made in automating laboratory testing and analysis. Filling and managing prescriptions looks little like it did in the past. Imaging has changed by leaps and bounds. Your staff are now used to and expect advanced

technical tools and equipment that make their jobs easier, their work more efficient and improve outcomes.

Until recently, these same advances have not been recognized on the operational side of the business even though regulations and oversight have significantly increased.

Management staff still frequently depends on paper, binders, spreadsheets and shared drives to manage complex operations related to scheduling, competency assessment and document management as well as inspection preparation.

Fortunately today, solutions now exist.

Clinical Workforce Management Software provides both automation for the management side but also aids in promoting an environment of fairness and transparency, addressing critical issues related to retention and turnover:

- Schedules that can be viewed at home or on a mobile device
- Leave requests that are timestamped and have an iron-clad approval and notification process
- Competency assessments that are scheduled in advance and tracked throughout the year
- Competency assessments that allow for scheduling based upon skill and readiness for a specific test system, bench or department
- Required documents that get reviewed, approved and read on time...
- ... and remain available in an on-line library.

Automation changed the face of healthcare. Now, hospitals can automate operational management as well.

Conclusion

Removing workplace frustrations, improving morale, and reducing turnover are bit like one cornerstone rule of backpacking – "Mind your ounces and the pounds take care of themselves."

Successful hospitals of the future – those that address the root issues of high turnover - will focus on top-line issues such as employee satisfaction and morale, staff advancement and training, and organizational culture.

They'll avoid the knee-jerk, quick fix of providing raises that don't solve long-term issues.

Those hospitals will need tools to help them achieve those goals.

Fortunately, Clinical Workforce Management Software exists today to help innovative operations achieve their goals and chart a new course. Turnover doesn't have to be the story in every organization, but those that succeed will be those that adapt and address these challenges with new ideas and the tools to support them.

Adopting Clinical Workforce Management Software can help make turnover more of an exception than a norm.

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About StaffReady Software

StaffReady Software owns, supports and sells the StaffReady platform, an integrated suite of tools that help healthcare organizations effectively manage competency assessments, document control, staff scheduling, and checklist management. Our expertise and long history of developing software solutions allow us to work with any size organization from Global 100 companies to small reference labs and pharmacies. We're proud of our client portfolio representing decades of relationships and an enduring commitment to their success.

Visit us at www.staffready.com

info@staffready.com

What Our Customers Have to Say:

> StaffReady is very easy to manage and has reduced the number of scheduler related emails I receive. Additionally, customer support has been extremely responsive any time I have reached out. I am so happy with this product and highly recommend it to anyone that manages a schedule.

Adrienne Miller, PharmD
Manager, Pharmacy Non-Sterile Operations
and Milk and Formula Room

> The amount of time StaffReady Competency saves us is phenomenal. I don't spend hours of my day figuring out who needs assessments, tracking down supervisors, and rearranging benches. With StaffReady I spend 10 minutes instead of the whole day.

Renata Carson,
Assistant Laboratory Manager,
DynaLIFE DX