Creating a Career Path for a New Technician

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Financial Disclosure

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Loyalty

• We all want it from our employees
• We may be fortunate to have it for a variety of reasons
  1. Only eye practice in town
  2. Employees afraid to change jobs
  3. They hear bad things about the competition
  4. They love what they do and where they work
Do Your Techs Come & Go?

Rvolving Door

Are you always hiring?
Always training?
Why don’t they stay?

Reasons They Leave

• Case in point: One practice had a 73% turnover in one year
  - Techs overworked
  - Pleas for additional help ignored
  - No investment in training
  - No changes to work environment
  - Lack of employee reviews
  - Not appreciated

The Root of the Shortage

• Ophthalmic technician is little known occupation
• Few accredited training programs in US
• Little time for OJT
  - Aging population
  - Increased patient volume
  - Same number of MDs
• Add to that, the stereotypical millennial
Make Them

AN OFFER
THEY CAN'T REFUSE

A CAREER

HIRING
Hiring

• Open recruitment
• Ad should indicate this can lead to a long term career path
• Specific instructions
  - Cover letter
  - Specific subject of email
  - No calls

Hiring

• Interviewing
  - Behavioral technique
  - Same questions
• Return to shadow
  - Interaction with others
    - Multiple opinions
• If trained, do practical
• If certified, contact JCAHPO
  - Jcahpo@jcahpo.org

Hiring

• Set expectations
  - Attendance
  - Travel between offices
  - Appearance
  - Team player
  - Certification
    - First commitment to career path
• Training commitments
  - Practice
  - New hire
TRAINING

Building the Foundation

Start at the beginning

- Observation
- Techs, scribes, doctors
- Charting
- EMR or paper forms
- Approved abbreviations and terminology
- Patient Flow
- Progress slowly
Training Tools

- Three dimensional eye
- Videos, animations
- Dictionary of Eye Terminology
- Patient education materials
- Fundamentals for Ophthalmic Technical Personnel
- RootAtlas
- Teaching Tube or Tiger Lens for slit lamp
- Willing staff

Building blocks

Train simple tasks first

All new hires want to feel they are able to contribute
THE TRAINER & ADULT LEARNER

Training

Transferring knowledge and skill to employees so that they can do their jobs more effectively.

One Trainer

- Key element
- Investment in new staff just as capital equipment
- Consistency
  - Technique, answers, protocol
  - Avoid trickle down
- Your best technician may not be the best trainer
Traits of an Effective Trainer

- Know subject manner
- Learn who audience is
- Nonjudgmental
- Respectful of differences
- Culturally sensitive
- Self-aware
- Participative
- Compassionate
- Enthusiastic
- Read and use body language
- Speak clearly at level most can understand
- Communicative
- Illustrative
- Comfortable managing a group
- Flexible
- Open to new ideas, perspectives
- Receptive to feedback
- Strive for improvement

Key Trainer Behaviors

- Respectful of differences - Must be good working with people of various backgrounds and must tailor behavior to the various needs of the group
- Communicative - Q and A. The trainer should ask questions to stimulate learning and listen to the response before replying
- Nonjudgemental - Be neutral; know when stereotypes are challenged and respond with respect and understanding
- Flexible - Sessions must be adapted to meet the needs of the learners, no matter how well organized it is.
- Participative - Interact with learners using a variety of learning methods to maintain interest and satisfy learning styles
- Feedback - Must be willing to give and take in a constructive manner

Contributing Factors for Adult Learners

- Need to Know
- Foundation
- Self-Concept
- Adult Learning
- Readiness
- Orientation
- Motivation
The Adult Learner

- Self motivated - Need to know. Can learn independently. Resistant to control by others
- Goal oriented - Helps to understand the end product and why
- Relevance - Applies previous knowledge and experience to current learning
- Practical - Wants options, challenges
- Orientation - Task oriented or is goal entered around task
- Respect - Wants to be respected and free to express oneself

TEACHER, COACH AND MENTOR

Teacher

- Has skills or information the trainee lacks
- Primary task is to share information
- Temporary relationship
- Narrow focus
Coach vs. Mentor

**Coach**
Extending traditional training methods to include focus on:
- An individual’s needs and accomplishments
- Close observation
  Responsible for providing:
  - impartial and non-judgmental feedback on performance

**Mentor**
Employee training system under which a senior or more experienced individual is assigned to act as:
- An advisor, counselor or guide to
  - A junior or trainee
  Responsible for providing:
  - Support, feedback to the individual

As Time Passes

Role Changes over Time
A coach...

- Creates an environment where people are motivated to perform
- Sets goals and objectives with team members
- Co-ordinates the activities of teams towards achievement of these goals
- Shows team members how to execute the plan and their jobs
- Helps team members work through and solve problems
- Advises team members about the implementation of plans and projects
- Empowers teams to take ownership of the strategy and its implementation
- Is available for guidance and follow-up action to be taken
- Monitors the quality

The Coaching Process

1. Set performance objectives
2. Provide direction and support
3. Coach individual or team to meet objectives
4. Monitor performance and success for coaching

Mentor

- Conveys wisdom and corporate culture
- Has been down that path
- Provides connections, resources, and advice
LOYALTY

More than anything, loyal employees care about your organization as much as you do.

Building Loyalty

• Hire after interaction with current employees
• Provide appropriate training with realistic expectations
• Open and honest communication
• Make them feel as though they belong
• Empower them to make suggestions
• Encourage career development
Building Loyalty

• Be the boss you would like to have
• Create a culture that reflects the Mission Statement
• Be fair
• Follow company policy
• Set an example
• Know something about each person
• Say thank you.

REVOLVING DOOR IS CLOSED!!!