

HUMAN RESOURCES

How to Attract and Retain Top Talent

The U.S. healthcare field is facing a serious gap between the supply of qualified caregivers and the anticipated demand for care. With millions of baby boomers reaching retirement age, there are increasing demands on our healthcare system, yet fewer clinicians available to provide care. There also is increased competition from retail-care clinics, which are expected to double in number over the next five years.

How can a healthcare organization hope to retain its top talent and hire new staff with so much competition on the horizon?



First, keep the talent you have. Second, develop your existing employees so you can better staff difficult-to-fill positions. Finally, attract and hire candidates more effectively than your competitors do.

Retain Top Talent

- Enable employees to easily apply for internal positions and move freely inside the organization.
- Set transparent, cascading goals to work toward, and provide staff with frequent feedback of their progress in a performance management system.
- Recognize high performers to reinforce positive behaviors, and encourage peers to emulate those positive actions.
- As appropriate, invest in employee wellness and professional development.

Performance management practices can help to reinforce your culture by recognizing strong performers and encouraging positive turnover of low performers.

Grow Your Own

- Upon hire, immediately begin developing employees for long-term talent needs, particularly for difficult-to-fill roles.
- Create an individual career path for each employee that combines his or her long-term goals with the needs of the organization.
- Link these career paths to development plans and specific learning activities so the plans are visible to and actionable for the employee on an ongoing basis.
- Through goal planning and appraisal technologies, check in on each employee consistently for performance and alignment to career aspirations and goals.

*“Start where you are. Use what you have.
Do what you can.”*

—Arthur Ashe

This grow-your-own strategy does most of the work in terms of employee retention, but consider rolling out organizationwide initiatives to ensure employees are happy and feel taken care of.

Attract and Hire

- Use recruitment marketing technologies and processes to more effectively attract high-quality candidates.
- Invest in sourcing-specific talent acquisition to identify passive candidates.
- Invest in highly engaging mobile application technology and search-engine-optimized career webpages.
- Invest in assessment technology to behaviorally screen candidates against behavior markers that are specific to healthcare roles.
- Integrate all of the above with strong applicant tracking and workflow technology to manage the hiring and onboarding processes.

The real shift is in viewing all of these pieces as interconnected and self-reinforcing. The big difference between successful and unsuccessful organizations isn't a particular approach or technology within a given talent management pillar; it's the ability to see beyond pillars and consider how the whole is interconnected.

Source: Adapted from an article by Dave Wilkins, chief marketing officer, HealthcareSource. Visit www.healthcaresource.com.

MENTORSHIP

Your Role as Mentee

Whether you enter into either a formal mentoring program or an informal mentor/mentee relationship, what you gain from a mentoring situation has much to do with how open you are to learning; how willing you are to invest in developing a relationship of trust that requires time and energy; and how willing and open



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you are to being challenged, receiving candid feedback and being reflective.

The most important asset you bring to the mentoring relationship is your willingness to learn and grow personally and professionally. The mentee is usually the initiator of the mentor/mentee relationship, unless it is a structured, organization-based mentoring program. In either case, the relationship exists mainly for your growth and development; thus, you need to take the lead. You should be proactive not only in seeking out a mentor but also in approaching the overall mentoring relationship with an agenda and coming to each mentoring conversation prepared with topics for discussion.

It is up to you to communicate to your mentor how best you learn, how you communicate, what your objectives are and what your vision/dreams are for the future. The more insights about your style and vision you share, the better your mentor can assist you in your growth and development.

How to be the best mentee. If you want a successful mentoring experience, you need to come to the relationship motivated and empowered to plan and direct your own professional life. It is you, the mentee, who will need to own the responsibility for your development, learning and professional growth. First, you must be willing to put in the time to develop an open and trusting relationship. This relationship-building phase takes months and requires your full effort. Without this foundation of trust, a meaningful learning/growth relationship cannot take hold. Trust has a lot to do with being open and honest with your mentor and following through on your commitments, so be sure to do what you say you will do between meetings.

Your mentor expects you to have a clear understanding of why you want to be mentored. She expects you to understand that the mentoring relationship is confidential so she

will feel free to share her personal experiences with you. You should be able to clearly articulate your expectations of your mentor so there can be a conversation about and agreement on those expectations early in the relationship. See the section in the *ACHE Mentee Guide* at ache.org/MenteeGuide about the role of a mentor.

Be prepared for each mentoring session; have an agenda, yet remain flexible if the conversation takes you in a slightly different direction. Create goals and milestones, and remain focused on achieving what has been agreed on in the mentoring sessions. You also need to be a good listener, setting aside time for self-reflection. You should be able to talk with your mentor about your preferred learning style. You must be able to accept constructive criticism and have the courage to provide feedback, both positive and constructive, to your mentor to maintain a healthy, productive mentoring relationship.

Focus on the relationship, rather than the outcomes. Your mentor's job is not to get you your next job. It is important to be realistic in your expectations. If you build a strong, trusting relationship with your mentor, he will help you in more ways than you can imagine. Being the best mentee is much like managing up, a common corporate term describing the process by which a subordinate takes ownership of the relationship, letting the boss, or in this case the mentor, know what is needed. In this situation, the mentee might plan meeting agendas, ask questions, listen, pay attention, maintain a positive attitude no matter what arises, keep the mentor informed, work to understand the mentor's style and lean into that style to promote better communication, be sensitive to the mentor's needs, complete agreed-on tasks, and request and give honest feedback in a caring manner.

Source: Adapted from the *ACHE Mentee Guide*. Visit ache.org/MenteeGuide.

Submit a Pointer to "Professional Pointers"

Have you implemented workplace strategies that could help your colleagues succeed as well? *Healthcare Executive* invites you to share workplace knowledge that has played a role in your career success.

To submit a topic for consideration, please contact the editor-in-chief at he-editor@ache.org.