

PERSON-CENTERED STAFFING
TRICKS TO HIRING STAFF THAT STAYS

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- UNDERSTANDING THE BOND
- PASSING THE PRE-EMPLOYMENT TEST
- MAKING FACE-TIME WITH LEGIT INTERACTION
- KNOWING WHEN TO CUT TIES



UNDERSTANDING "THE BOND"

Think about the nurse, CNA, dietary manager, maintenance person, social worker, whoever in your company who has been there FOR-E-VER.

- Sit down for a few minutes over coffee and ask them why they've stayed.
- Their answers may vary but it will give you a real flavor and feel of your company's atmosphere.
- Don't be surprised if you hear stories about "the way things used to be" - there might be some great information in there. After all, they've seen it all!
- Ask them how they've dealt with changes in administrators, department heads, schedules, routines, lack of bonuses, etc.
- The key is learning from past mistakes AND successes. It might be that the tools are already in place - you just need to resurrect them.



THE BOND

The most common responses when I ask nursing staff of all levels why they stay:

- "These are my peeps!"...Nurse (5 years)
- "I can't imagine being anywhere else!"...Social worker (3 years)
- "They [the company] have been pretty good to me."...Maintenance (16 years)
- "This is my second family!"...CNA (8 years)

The point is that there is a bond. That bond is what person-centered staffing is all about. This is a hard job and only the really good ones will bond; whether it's creamed chicken surprise or another round of C.diff.

So how do you create that bond straight from the beginning?

Interviewing Tip: Creating the Bond

Think back to your first date. Were you excited? Nervous? Scared? Confident? Intimidated? Totally freaked?

It's not much different going into an interview. The key, from the employer side, is offering up a friendly, open environment that gives the best opportunity for communication as possible in order for both parties to see if they can "hit it off."

1. Watch their body language by opening yours. Are you comfortable or aloof? Are you distracted or are you visibly present? People can tell. If you're faking that smile and not thorough in your handshake, they'll know. That immediately starts the interview off wrong.
2. Do they meet your eyes when they're talking to you? Fidgeting or stuttering just might be just nerves but at some point they need to see you and visa versa.
3. How are they dressed? Did they make an effort?

*All part of that first impression - just like that first few seconds of that first date - your gut will tell you if you're wasting your time or if you're ready to go to second base ©



AN "HR" THING

- When someone comes looking for a job, there's always the paperwork. One way to save yourselves some steps is by starting with the application and the drug test. Before they EVER get to an interview process, have them fill out an application and send them for a drug test. If they don't pass or their application seems sketchy, you haven't wasted your time.
- Work out with HR if they want to do a brief, preliminary interview about previous employment, etc. There are several types of questions employers are not allowed to ask in reference checks so this might be a good time to ask about previous employment and skill opportunities.

Time Spent = 30 minutes (excluding the drug test)

- Tell the potential employee they can expect to hear from you within a set # of days and make sure to follow-through. **This is the FIRST link in the bond. If you (or actually your HR) person doesn't call within the stated time span with either an invitation for a second interview or a declination, you've already essentially led the potential employee to believe that a) they aren't high on your agenda and therefore, not important to you, and b) that you can't be trusted in the future to follow-through on your word. Not the impression you want to give.**

THE CALL-BACK: THE 2ND INTERVIEW

So everything looks good and HR has given them a call back. What happens from here? Here is your opportunity to really start **Person-Centered Staffing** with your potential employee.

Remember, the definition of person-centered care is: focus on the resident as having control over their daily lives and supporting the resident in making those choices. **This isn't any different for your staff...trusting them to do their jobs (thereby giving them the confidence and control to do their jobs without micromanagement) and supporting them as they learn and grow in their professionalism, both with dignity and mutual respect.**

Plan of Action

1. Set up an interview in a comfortable, conversational area (probably NOT the DON's office) with the DON and, if applicable, the person who will be the applicant's immediate supervisor; Remember, this is a team effort. If they don't hit it off with their immediate supervisor, that will not be a good match from day 1.
2. Keep the conversation light at first and offer them something to drink and have something yourself. This is an opportunity for you both to get to know each other. The environment will set the tone so it's better to sit across from one another at a table, or in a circle, rather than at a desk in a dominant-submissive type role.
3. Ask them why they picked your company, what specifically interests them about working with your residents. Be sure to check with HR for a legal list of questions you are/are not allowed to ask in an interview.
4. Stay away from scenario questions like: If this a resident did this, how would you respond. These are formula questions. Instead ask questions like:
 - * Tell me about a time when you had to handle a resident who was very agitated.
 - * Have you ever encountered a situation with a family member that required customer-service skills? Can you tell me how you approached them and how it was resolved?
 - * Can you tell me some of the most important tools for you to help you be happy and do your job well?
 - * What are some things that frustrate you in this line of work and how do you deal with those issues?

You want to create an atmosphere of empowerment. These types of questions are not cookie-cutter and gives them an opportunity to highlight to you their true experiences, their confidence, and how they handle challenging situations. This also lets them know right off the bat that in your company, you trust them to handle issues and if you can't, at least come to the next level with potential solutions, not whining.

Time Spent = 20-30 minutes

LAST CALL: THE 3RD INTERVIEW

3rd time is the charm! They've made it past HR and the DON and charge nurse. Now it's time to have them talk to who really counts... the resident, family, and their peers. This might include another CNA or nurse, a resident, and a family member.

- Again, gather an informal group. Advise them of the questions they are/are not allowed to ask.
- Introduce the applicant in a friendly, open manner and ask the applicant to tell the group a little about themselves.
- Prep the group ahead of time in order to keep out any awkward silences.
- After the interview, thank the applicant for coming and again let them know a time-frame in which they should hear from you and follow-through.
- Immediately discuss the interview and get the general consensus. They will see different things than you do and that's good! In small communities, staff might even know the applicant. Encourage everyone to be vocal but don't dismiss your own thoughts.
- Thank everyone for coming. Write up a few notes and percolate on the idea before calling HR.

Time Spent = 20 minutes.... so all total you and your team have spent around 60 minutes and in that time you've gotten a pretty good feel if that person is a good fit. If they are, you've bonded and set the right tone, and bonus! You know they've passed the drug test.

HIRED! Now what?

DAY 1

Plan of Action

- Give out an orientation schedule. We all like to know what's going on, especially when we're in a new place with a different routine than we're used to.
- Take them on a tour of your home and introduce them to ancillary people as they are available. Watch them for smiles. Encourage smiles by smiling and welcoming others on your own. (If they don't smile, even when you or someone else is, be aware they might not feel as comfortable as they spoke in the interview and might require more effort on your part than you originally realized. Or, that they aren't necessarily comfortable in a leadership role where they have to speak out.) It may seem silly but smiling matters. If they aren't putting out the effort on Day 1, be wary.
- Deal with the HR stuff - time clocks, TB tests, lunch breaks, paperwork. Go through emergency procedures and physically show them where equipment is located. *You should ask yourself: what would someone need to know if there was a flood, tornado, or zombie apocalypse RIGHT NOW? This is a very understated, under-trained area of long-term care. We assume that someone else will handle it.... sorry, folks but that's no longer the world we live in!*

Days 2-14

Plan of Action

1. Set them up with a mentor in each area they might be working. For example, "Days 2-4, you'll be with Kelly on C wing." Rotate them around, starting with the mentor that will be the strongest support system for them. Spend the bulk of their time where they will be working so they can get a real feel for the routine, the processes, their peers, and most of all, their residents.
2. Teach them how to handle the charting and other paperwork that's necessary for their job. Make sure you put them with someone who is confident and charts correctly. **KEY mistake I see with new employees regarding ADL charting - the person who taught them, although they may have been there for years, taught them wrong! DONs/Charge nurses - follow up on them, discreetly checking behind that they are correctly processing orders, documenting, and assessing. **This is the time to gently correct any bad habits.**
3. Get through any necessary computer training.
4. Explain and demonstrate your phone etiquette - one of the most overlooked but overly *important* parts of our job is customer service and it often starts with the phone.
5. Have the new employee sit in on a care plan meeting or two so they understand how everyone works as a team for the benefit of the resident.

Plan of Action

WITHIN THE FIRST 2 WEEKS-1 MONTH

1. Welcome the new employee in a face-to-face informal meeting with the various department heads, including the CEO and administrator. Let them introduce themselves, where their office is, and what hours they generally work. *If they're someone with longevity, it wouldn't hurt for them to say, "Hi, I'm Otto. I've worked here for 18 years in the maintenance department."
2. Complete *Hand-in-Hand* or other required dementia training program.
3. Complete facility person-centered training.
 1. *PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE stay away from videos - there's nothing person-centered about dumping someone in a room and turning on the tube.
4. Pick a day for a peer lunch (on the company). Choose 1-2 peers and invite them all to sit down and talk shop. Sorry, DONs, you're not invited.
5. Set aside some face-to-face time separately with the DON and/or supervising charge nurse to check in and see how it's going.
6. Set up your orientation schedule to include 2 "off" times from what will be their normal schedule and assign them to a mentor. In case they ever have to fill-in for someone, this will give them a chance to work other shifts and see the residents in a different realm *and* it will give them a chance to bond with staff from other shifts. *It's all about keeping the communication open.

AFTER 30 DAYS

- Check in with the employee through another informal meeting.
- Ask how it's going... where are they finding fulfillment? Where are they struggling? What can you do to help?
- Ask about the orientation process and suggestions for improvement. Do they need additional training on the computer or in managing the CNAs?
- Remember, you're still bonding. True sincerity and follow-through will show the employee that you are interested and invested in them, that you value their opinions, and that you look forward to continuing to help each other.



**MAKING
FACE-TIME
WITH
LEGIT
INTERACTION**

KNOW WHO YOU'RE HIRING

[Did you know that the Millennial age group is now the majority of the US workforce? 45%!! That is compared to 21% of Generation X'ers, and 31% Boomers. But hang on! Before you start groaning, think about it this way:](#)

- **Millennials** were born from 1981 until 1996 and in 2015 are 19 to 34 years of age
- **Generation Xers** were born from 1965 until 1980 and in 2015 are 35 to 50 years of age
- **Baby Boomers** were born from 1945 until 1964 and in 2015 are 51 to 70 years of age

So if you don't know how Millennials think by now, you're not really attuned to your own business.

The stigma remains that the majority see Millennials as much more narcissistic and money-driven than GenX employees. But they also see Millennials as more adaptable than Gen X, more open to change, more creative, and more entrepreneurial. People are starting to realize that Millennials can be good workers, contributing creatively even if they aren't inclined to accept all of the organizational routines and expectations without challenge. The things that make them good workers can also create tension.

- Millennials value personal development and work-life balance over money and status. They are ambitious but would rather have no job than stay in a job they hate. And why shouldn't they? We are now a society based on pleasure and self-satisfaction (often instant satisfaction). That's what they've grown up with! They want feedback, a friendly atmosphere. They are smart, adaptable, quick learners.

Source: The Jory Report: [Leading, Learning and Leading Back: A Millennial's View](#) | [Workforce Solutions](#)

LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES HERE PEOPLE!

So it's time to get on board and realize the world's changing and you HAVE to change with it if you want a successful workplace with good staff that legitimately care and give good care.

Millennials like feedback. Feedback = face-time balanced with technology and legit interaction. They value their time so creatively finding ways to get information across without wasting their time (and yours!) is a huge asset.

From an article in *Forbes*,

- "According to research compiled by Adobe, more than 75% of office workers in the United States [fear our professional relationships may deteriorate](#) if people keep their eyes fixed on computer and smartphone screens instead of on each other once in a while... [Make a point to encourage face-to-face collaboration in the workplace, including off-site gatherings or creative retreats. Even a quick jaunt to a local watering hole for.... [a celebration after a really bad week or a really good survey] can greatly improve morale and collaboration - and also remind your coworkers there's more to interaction than exchanging characters and emojis on a screen.]

Source: Millennials, Here's Why Face Time At Work Is Still Important

TRY REVERSE MENTORING

Reverse mentoring

The idea of tapping into the technical expertise of the Millennial employee and improving the technology knowledge base of the Baby Boomer. This is a way to share knowledge from Boomers to younger employees (so that institutional history and wisdom is not lost when the Boomers retire). This empowers Millennials, builds cross-generational relationships, and drives innovation. Companies with reverse mentoring programs also find it easier to integrate newcomers and help them build networks with others in the company.

This is also a great time to share "war stories." Everyone makes mistakes. Think about that horrible time when you made a med error or an accounting mistake. They happen but by opening up and sharing, you're creating an environment of open communication and not secrets and shame. (And hopefully preventing those same errors from happening again!)

Source: The Jory Experts



A WORD OF CAUTION

"Things" are just that - baseball tickets, candy bars, pizza parties - these are great, but they can't be used as "good employee bribery" in place of legitimate face-to-face interaction.

An employee who is on the fence about leaving won't think about that pizza lunch when they're really mad over the latest call-in but they might recall that time you sat down with them over a Coke in the garden and gave them a chance to vent (NOTE: you are not doing the talking or problem-solving here). It might be the difference between staying and leaving because they feel bonded. Pizza is awesome but it doesn't keep people home.

SOME IDEAS ON RECOGNITION

Lots of ideas out there but this is from a company that looks staffing retention. An article from Forbes summarized the top 5 most successful/meaningful practices for employee recognition.

1. **Recognize people based on specific results and behaviors.** Don't just give someone a reward for being "employee of the month." Give them an award for delivering outstanding customer service when a particular problem occurred. This creates a culture of "doing the right thing."
2. **Implement peer to peer recognition - not top down.** Employees feel much better when they are recognized by their peers. Why is this? Peers know what you're doing on a day to day basis, so when they "thank you" for your efforts the impact is much more meaningful. Top-down recognition is often viewed as political and it rarely reaches the "quiet but critical high-performers" in the company. And it make is public and social.
3. **Share recognition stories.** One of the most powerful practices we identified was "story telling."
4. **Make recognition easy and frequent.** Make it trivially simple for employees to recognize each other. Many of the modern programs we studied give all employees a budget for "points" or "dollars" and they can give them to others online in seconds. **How about a company blog of social media site?** People who do great things are now visible to everyone else!
5. **Tie recognition to your own company values or goals.** When you give someone a "thank you" award, the award is tied to your own company's strategy (customer service, innovation, teamwork, or even a revenue or cost-cutting goal). Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/robbaron/2013/06/13/new-research-unlocks-the-secret-of-employee-recognition/#3a3be827a>

PERSON-CENTERED STAFFING ALSO MEANS COMPASSION

Final thoughts on Face-time and Legit Interactions...

We all have bad days and sometimes the best way to bond and connect is to be a quiet martyr. One home, headed by David Farrell in southern California, created an employee cabinet. The cabinet is stocked with basic things like diapers, toilet paper, shampoo, soap, school supplies, feminine products, even socks. Employees are aware it is there if money is tight and they just need something basic to get by until pay day. There's no special sign on the door and inside are Walmart bags. It's set up on the honor system and funded by the employee activity fund and from donations made by resident's families.

It's the company's way of saying, we appreciate that sometimes life is rough so here's our way of helping you out. Mr. Farrell states he's never had this program be taken advantage of and it's been one of the best ways he feels he can give back and retain good employees.

Sometimes, it's just about **HOPE**.



KNOWING WHEN TO CUT TIES

SOMETIMES C+++ HAPPENS

We've all been through it. We've gone through all this and there's nothing we can do about it. That stellar perfect-fit employee turns into a bad apple. Maybe they interviewed well but just got ugly when they hit the floor. The 3-step interview process and minimum 2-week orientation (including the off-shifts) usually helps you see this before they've become a full-time rotation in your schedule but not always.

Best thing to do? Throw out the bad apple. Cut the ties. Before their negativity, poor charting, and even poorer attitude rot the whole basket. You've worked too hard to let one person ruin your team, no matter how good their skills are.

Nursing is about 80% customer service anymore and 20% actual skills. They might be brilliant with a Foley but a turn-off to the families. Remember - it's never a one-man show no matter how good they are.

Just don't forget: **EXIT interviews with HR!**

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS YOU CAN/CANNOT ASK

| Subject | Do NOT Ask | You May Ask |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Gender | Are you male or female? What are the names and relationships of the people living with you? | Nothing. |
| Residence | Do you own or rent? | What is the address of your current residence? |
| Race | What is your race, eye color, hair color? | Nothing. |
| Age | What is your date of birth? How old are you? | If hired, can you provide proof that you are at least 18 years of age. |
| National origin | What is your ancestry or national origin? What are the national origins of your parents, spouse? | What languages do you speak or write fluently? *Only ask if relevant to the job. |
| Disabilities | Are you disabled? | Are you capable of performing the essential functions of this position, with or without reasonable accommodation? |

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS YOU CAN/CANNOT ASK

| Subject | Do NOT ask | You May Ask |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Marital or family status | What is your marital status? Do you have children? Are you pregnant? What day care provisions have you made for your children? | None. You can ask ALL applicants if they have any commitments or responsibilities that would prevent you from meeting attendance requirements. |
| Arrests and convictions | Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime? | If application asks being convicted doesn't automatically bar employment. |
| Religion | What is your religious affiliation? What church do you belong to? What religious holidays do you observe? | None. |
| Citizenship | What countries are you a citizen of? Are you or members of your family naturalized citizens? Attach naturalization papers to your application. | Are you a citizen of the United States? If hired, are you able to provide proof your eligibility to work in the United States? |

"You can never make the same mistake twice because the second time you make it, it's not a mistake, it's a choice."

~ Steven Denn

This is what we're doing with our staffing - the same tired practices for hiring, discipline, routine and expecting different outcomes. It's no wonder we're failing and frustrated. It's time to change the game plan.

FINAL THOUGHTS

1. Be visible - you can't connect if they can't see you, multiple times, every day.
2. Be real - like a fake smile, people know when you don't have your head in the game. How can you expect them to?
3. Create opportunities for feedback and follow-through - we expect that of our employees but it's just meaningless words if we don't do it ourselves to them.
4. Try creativity - try (gulp gulp) changing up your recognition system and/or communication system. Create a "text tree," a blog, or a company Facebook page. Be clear about the rules for social media at work but not automatically dismiss it because this is the future, people!! (actually it's the NOW!)
5. Be honest - for the most part, people want to do a good job in this field. It's too hard for too little pay and/or crazy hours. But sometimes they need to step up. There's often way to do this that offer opportunities for growth instead of a pink slip. Maybe they're not the best CNA but they might be a Pinterest guru and always connect with the residents. Maybe activities is a better fit for them and it will boost your activities program at less of a cost than an "activity director."
6. Time to think outside of the box!



RESOURCES

1. New Research Unlocks the Secret of Employee Recognition. *Forbes*. J. Bersin. 6/13/12. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbersin/2012/06/13/new-research-unlocks-the-secret-of-employee-recognition/#7f3e3be65276>
2. Loyalty, Longevity, and Leadership: A Multigenerational Workforce Update. Keene, D. and R. Handrich. 5/31/15. <http://www.thejuryexpert.com/2015/05/loyalty-longevity-and-leadership-a-multigenerational-workforce-update/>
3. Employee Tenure Summary. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/tenure.nr0.htm>
