

Attracting and Retaining Talent in Today's Marketplace

By Catherine Baumgardner and Carolyn Merriman

One of the most pressing issues for today's healthcare organization is finding talent in today's marketplace. It's not that talent isn't there...it's just that talent is in great demand and the supply is tighter. Even more pressing is keeping talent once it is found...and removing your organization from the constant bidding war for that talent.

As we support clients with recruitment, we learned that there are some key things that an organization can do to attract the talent to its doors, and what will help that employee to convert to a loyal supporter for the organization.

Five tips for attracting people to your organization:

1. *Be Clear About the Job*—All too often, organizations go into a search without doing their homework on what the job really entails and what they really need from a candidate. Be clear about the role, its responsibilities, who it reports to, compensation and skills desired. While basic questions, nothing turns a potential candidate off faster than interviewing and observing a lack of clarity from the screeners and/or potential employer.
2. *Be Open Minded*—You never know when a person coming from a different background might be exactly what your organization needs. Many healthcare organizations are purposefully seeking outside industry staff members who can challenge the organization with “out of box” thinking. A different perspective infuses freshness into the role that could add great benefit to organizational results.
3. *Be Responsive*—In today's market, it's so important to communicate regularly and quickly with candidates in whom you have interest. Talented candidates have many options. They aren't waiting for you to make a decision.
4. *Be Flexible*—Candidates today probably demand more flexibility than any other generation. You may need to look beyond the traditional way of staffing in order to attract the best candidates.
5. *Let Them Know You Care*—When it comes right down to it, the most talented people end up selecting a job where they feel valued and where they can best utilize their talents. Be sure to take the time to understand their motivations and what they hope to gain from a position with you...and then make the connection for them.

Once the person is on board, the next challenge becomes how to integrate them into your environment so that they don't leave when the facility across town announces a new signing bonus. Interestingly, some of the same tips from recruiting apply to retention.

Five tips for keeping people loyal and in your organization:

1. *Orient to Your Culture*—One of the best ways to connect a new recruit to your organization is to immediately orient them to your culture. In top organizations, every new employee's first day of work is orientation to the company culture and the role that they play in making that culture real to those they serve. If possible, expose them to leadership and let them see, touch and feel that everyone is "walking the talk" at your organization.
2. *Follow-up*—The most critical time for a new employee is the first six months. Therefore, it is key to check in with them at set intervals throughout that period to see how they're doing. What's working well? What's not working well? Are they pleased with their decision to work with you? What could you do to enhance the experience? Too often, new employees join the ranks and are forgotten. When they feel forgotten is when they decide to leave, and top talent is usually the first to go.
3. *Recognize and Meet Their Needs*—All of us today are juggling multiple priorities, and your employees are no different. Identify what can be done to make their lives easier so that you have talented employees who can fully focus on the work at hand.
4. *Train Management*—When employees leave, they do not leave organizations, they leave management...and talent is the first to leave a bad manager. It's important that the environment that is described in orientation matches the environment that they will find when they join their areas of work. If there is a disconnect, that person is as good as gone. It's up to you to have managers who buy in to the overall organizational philosophy, see retention as their job, and work to keep the best of the best.
5. *Let Them Know You Care*—You can't say thank you enough. Find the way that each employee likes to hear it best, and meet that need. When it comes right down to it, if you create an environment where people feel that what they are doing matters, that they are making a difference and that you value what they are doing, you create loyalty.

In today's busy and lean organizations, adding these steps may seem near to impossible, but the cost of recruitment and retention is costly to the bottom line and to your organization's long-term success. So whether you are seeking one candidate or many, review the tips and see if there are a few that can be applied and measured. Your candidates will respond to an improved and committed recruitment culture and your employees will respond by increasing their personal work satisfaction and loyalty.

While these tips are simple and often articulated, it's always a good idea to revisit them, refocus your current efforts on recruitment and retention and if possible, work with your team so they understand their role in the effort.



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