

Your 2003 Team-Building Focus: Physician Relations

By Alison McCarthy, MBA

Physician relations reps are key players in promoting your organization's distinguishing clinical and service features. They develop and expand the referral relationship, problem solve and facilitate solutions, and gather valuable information about referral patterns, and practice strengths and weaknesses. But how can you create an environment where everyone is motivated to contribute his or her best? Consider these team-building strategies:

Communicate Like Clockwork.

Communicate goals regularly, outlining what you expect of staff as individuals and as a team. At team meetings, take time to answer questions and listen to experiences so the information you share is heard by all. In that way, everyone learns from one another's experiences.

Vary Assignments.

Assign projects to team members so that each person has to act as both a project leader and a project supporter. As a team leader, each will have to learn how to garner the support of teammates. And as a team player, each will learn how important it is to support one another.

Cultivate Clinical Expertise.

Have each team member research a specific clinical area within the organization and then conduct a presentation to educate the others. This assignment allows each to have an area of clinical expertise that can become a long-term resource for the group.

Meet Socially.

Gather the team together outside of work using retreats and social events. Meeting socially helps to foster a team atmosphere.

Reward Group Performance.

If the organization is able to provide incentive bonuses or rewards, distribute them in terms of individual as well as team performance. Hold staff accountable for results as individuals and team players.

Always make sure team members understand the "big picture" and know exactly where they stand at all times in terms of meeting the organization's strategic objectives. In this way the team and the organization will surely succeed.



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