



Chief Executive Officer

A publication of the American College of Healthcare Executives CEO Circle

FALL 2012

Talent Management Grooms From the Inside and Outside

R. Timothy Rice, FACHE, and Joan H. Evans

Competition in healthcare for high-caliber leaders is fierce and will only intensify during the next few years. That is why an effective talent management program, including internal leadership development and internal and external succession planning, can provide organizations the ability to compete for exceptional people and continue to carry out their strategic agenda.

The multifaceted, integrated talent management program established in 2007 at Cone Health has enabled our organization to identify outstanding potential within our ranks and to develop many leaders internally, with an eye to the external market for positions for which we might not have sufficient “bench strength.”

Organizations can lose momentum when significant gaps in leadership positions require others to temporarily step in to fill the void. These gaps can stress organizations, whose people already are working to capacity. Our program employs a proactive and transparent approach to talent management that prevents the kind of talent abysses that can quickly stall forward movement of short- and long-range plans. This preemptive strategy also saves our organization hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in search firm fees.

Initially launched to address a shortage of qualified nursing leaders, the program has since expanded to encompass all disciplines and organizational levels, from front-line management to senior leadership. By the end of 2010, Cone Health was filling 75 percent of leadership positions with internal candidates. In addition, 90 percent of those positions were being filled within 60 days, a sharp improvement from the nine- to 12-month window we faced before the program began.

We integrate leadership development and succession planning into every aspect of our strategic plan, not only for today, but also with consideration for where we want to be three to five years from now.

Internal succession is one of 10 key performance measures used across the organization. When we look at a vacancy, it is through the lens of making

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YOUR CAREER

Onboarding Your Way to Success

Brent A. Marsteller, FACHE, and
Dennis J. Kain, FACHE

Effective leadership in health administration requires the mastery of a host of complex interpersonal skills, including persuasion, negotiation and conflict management. In response to the specific tasks and relationship demands of a given workplace context, much of the necessary skill development takes place on the job.

Transitioning to a new organization is tough. Many American businesses, particularly those in the healthcare field, tragically fail at this effort. We tend to put new executives out on a limb and say “sink or swim.” This not only can damage an executive’s career, but the CEO’s as well, who is ultimately responsible for the success of his or her senior leadership team.

An example of how executives can hurt themselves in the early stages of employment is the story of a CEO of a rural hospital that is part of larger health system. He

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Trend Tracker (continued)

changes in reimbursement and clinical practice, manage costs and coordinate patient care.

www.ey.com.

For workers, “show me the way” can be just as important as “show me the money,” new research from Accountemps suggests. In the survey, 54 percent of workers interviewed said knowing their career path is very important to their overall job satisfaction. Thirty-one percent of respondents feel this feedback is at least somewhat important. The survey is based on telephone interviews with 405 working

adults 18 years of age or older and employed in an office environment. “Employees want to know how to get to that next rung on the career ladder,” said Max Messmer, chairman of Accountemps. “Managers should ensure their staff see their potential to advance.” One career-related question leadership should be prepared to answer from staff is “Who should I be networking with, internally and externally?” Identify the key players inside and outside the organization who can provide career guidance and industry insight.

www.accountemps.com

Onboarding Your Way to Success (continued from page 1)

was attending a civic function with community leaders in attendance, and during the event the CEO’s cellphone rang. He stepped out of the room to take the call. What seemed like an innocent enough occurrence was not. System corporate leaders learned of the incident before the CEO returned to the hospital the same day and were not pleased with his actions. But who would have told him his actions were unprofessional? Was the CEO at fault? He probably should have known better than to answer his phone in such a visible setting.

In his defense, however, he was unaware of the civic organization’s unwritten policy regarding taking calls during meetings. The CEO had only been on the job a short time and had not yet gained the institutional knowledge of how sensitive a subject taking a cellphone call during a meeting was. A mechanism was not in place

at the organization for a formal onboarding process.

A structured onboarding program would have helped this CEO within his first three months on the job develop, for example, formal networks of individuals who would have relayed that information to him ahead of time or provided feedback through a formal assessment.

It may seem like a little thing, but it can mean a lot to one’s career. These can be the critical early course corrections that can happen with such feedback.

An onboarding program can include a 360-degree, multisource assessment describing how a new executive is fitting into an organization. Benefits include the following:

- Enables executives to see how others view their leadership and management effectiveness

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Changing Healthcare BY Design



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- Provides executives with constructive, nonthreatening feedback
- Enhances success through individual, team and organizational behavior changes
- Aligns individual goals with the organization's vision
- Highlights problems that may interfere with day-to-day management and process improvement
- Promotes communication between executives and their teams

Cabell Huntington Hospital

Cabell Huntington (W.Va.) Hospital began its onboarding program six years ago. The organization's goals for the program are to assimilate newly hired leaders into the hospital, introducing them to its managerial philosophies.

Our onboarding process is a major selling point for prospective managerial and leadership staff candidates. We want all employees to succeed, and we put extra emphasis on managers and leaders being successful right from the start. We don't want them to struggle. Top leadership's philosophy is structured around people. They know that as new leaders, not only will they go through new employee orientation but also manager and leadership survival training. It's their road map to success.

The onboarding program has many components to it, and one major facet is ensuring new managers and leaders learn how

to work as a team. One exercise involves assigning them to a real issue the organization is experiencing but has been unable to solve. Onboarding participants work with a sponsor vice president who removes roadblocks they might encounter but does not lead them

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down any particular path to help solve the problem. New managers and leaders then present their plan to the vice president and finally to a wider audience of senior leaders.

Even if their solution doesn't work, the goal is to see if they can get from point A to point B and work effectively in a team environment. Senior management wanted to know how well trainees presented, if they knew and understood the assigned project and followed the project's rules. The program has been successful, as we have built both a stronger mid-level management team and a group of high-potential leaders who are part of a tight-knit group and trust and rely on each other to get the job done. Not only do managers and leaders

learn that working as part of a team is important, they also learn to work and operate outside of their comfort zones. This allows the organization to view how people perform beyond their areas of responsibility, which helps us develop our succession plan.

One exercise we've conducted to strengthen this area was at a recent off-site training session where trainees engaged in conversation with customers at a convenience store. Many participants thought this was an unusual activity, but the end results were powerful as many returned with positive experiences. Most trainees were uncomfortable asking strangers questions, but when they did they learned outcomes could be positive. Now, when faced with difficult and similar situations in the workplace, trainees said they are better prepared to manage these circumstances.

In the end, everything we do is tied to the strategic plan of the organization, and as a result our outcomes have shown sustained improvement. Training and alignment are key components of successful onboarding programs. When management is aligned with the organization's mission, vision and goals, then the hospital succeeds at better providing care, which ultimately benefits patients.

Brent A. Marsteller, FACHE, is president and CEO of Cabell Huntington (W.Va.) Hospital. He can be reached at bmarsteller@chhi.org. Dennis J. Kain, FACHE, is president of Tyler & Company Inc., Chadds Ford, Pa. He can be reached at dkain@tylerandco.com.