

Managing for Morale: Effective Management Techniques to Retain Staff

On Friday, June 12th, the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) and the National Forum for Latino Healthcare Executives (NFLHE) hosted, “Managing for Morale: Effective Management Techniques to Retain Staff” at the University of Texas Club. The first presentation included speaker Martha Raymos Duffer, Psy.D, addressing emotional intelligence, communication and leadership for multigenerational and multicultural employees. The topic of emotional intelligence was further explored in a second presentation by Cynthia de Las Fuentes, PhD, who then moderated a panel session with David Shimp, COO, St. David’s Medical Center, Maria Serafine, Consultant, Avanza Healthcare Strategies and Tammy Spohn, VP, Patient Services, Baylor, Scott & White Health.

According to previous leadership theories, we have evolved from the concept that great men and women are born, not bred to the belief that those exhibiting specific traits or actions define great leaders. Fast forward to the industrial age and good leadership becomes actions which incentivize staff for production. Having moved beyond this era, we now find ourselves in a period of transformation, in which leaders must model the “way”, inspire vision, challenge process, enable action and encourage heart. And in order to achieve this, one must be credible, forward-looking, inspirational and display an appreciative inquiry – all being attributes which are buoyed through connection with one’s team and mindfulness without judgment.

In the next ten years, traditionalists and baby boomers will be retiring and leaving the workforce, so now, more than ever, is the time for appropriate succession planning. While traditionalists favor long-term employment and are uncomfortable with change, baby boomers focus on the big picture and live to work, X’ers embrace change and personal growth and generation Y employs collaboration and optimism. Given this range of traits, how do great leaders motivate these diverse groups to form productive cohesive teams? According to Dan Pink’s Drive, X and Y’ers respond to autonomy, mastery, purpose and relatedness.

And, according to Dr. de las Fuentes, the most successful leaders will employ high emotional intelligence to keep multigenerational groups engaged and motivated. Because it is unrealistic to assume that emotions can be checked at the door, one must have the ability to reason about emotions, be attuned to subtle non-verbal cues and succeed in escalating/de-escalating emotions in order to move people to inspiration. Typically, individuals with robust vocabularies, curiosity, ability to brace change, awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses, good judgment of character and commitment to their wellness exude the highest emotional intelligence.

Following these thought provoking presentations, the guest panelists provided lively discussion surrounding the values of having long-term employees, the risks of not investing in staff for long-term employment, staff retention visibility, most challenged areas and best practices for

staff retainment, emotional intelligence in today's leadership style and tips for working with employees resistant to change.

With special appreciation for the event co-sponsors, Austin Absolute Realty and Sodexo, the Central Texas ACHE chapter would also like to thank the presenters for sharing their insights and best practices regarding emotional intelligence. For more information on future events, please visit us at ww.centraltexas.ache.org or send us an email at info@centraltexas.ache.org.