

Six Unmistakable Steps to Finding New Staff

These tips will help you select the best employees.

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Good employees are hard to find. Even harder if you don't really know what you are looking for. Maybe it's time you set some particulars. And yes, you can and SHOULD be choosy. Don't settle or let the current hiring climate tell you otherwise.

Are you seeking someone who has experience in the medical field? In podiatry, specifically? Any special

qualifications? Is it a part time or full-time position? Do you require

or applicants who describe themselves as hard working "multi-task-

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certain personality characteristics? Are you drawn to impressive resumes with scholarly backgrounds,

ers" or someone seeking minimal wages?

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There is so much to consider when hiring new staff, which is precisely why it should NOT be taken lightly. Develop certain steps that outline your preferences. Skip the shortcuts!

Step One: Create an Attractive, Effective Ad—Be precise and save wasted time by initially weeding out candidates that do not meet your needs. Focus on personality qualities. If you require special skills (medical background, EMR, phone skills, management), say so. Include a starting salary and potential benefits with options to financially grow based on progress. An example with options:

Looking for a pleasurable work environment?

(Name of Practice) is seeking a full/part time highly motivated, caring person to (provide patient assistance/work as a receptionist) in a busy, multi-staffed office in (city). Must have strong listening skills and the ability to work well with people. Experience in a healthcare office (or

reer Days, local (medical-assistant) school bulletin boards, patients, and WORD OF MOUTH. (There is something to be said for the latter). Consider all available options for recruiting—weighing costs against benefits. Sometimes, the best employees are where one might least expect to find them.

Step Three: Don't Rely on the Written Resume—It may be

pressive list of “friends” to sing their praises?

Do a background check, especially if the job opening involves money handling.

Take applicants who claim to be “skilled” at multi-tasking with a grain of salt, since it often results in less attention to detail and spontaneous errors. Concentrate instead on their having more of the “soft” skills necessary: a friendly personality,

If they are likely candidates, set up a second (or third) interview where they also meet your current team.

somewhat exaggerated. Highlight any potential red flags and acquire more details about them in the interview that follows. For example:

- WHY have they worked in seven different offices or WHY have their jobs never lasted more than 6-12 months? Do they move often? Are they difficult to satisfy? Are they unable to easily adapt? Are they difficult to get along with? Were they seeking new work because of recent dismissal?

positive attitude, genuine smile, the ability to problem solve, a self-directed/self-motivated mentality, and the ability to successfully communicate with your patients. Much can be revealed during the interview process.

Step Four: Interview—Regardless of whether the doctor or office manager conducts the interview, it is critical that they TAKE THE NECESSARY TIME with this step. It's no secret that applicants seeking employment will put on their best faces and come prepared with all the right things to say, backed up by an impressive résumé. It's up to the interviewer to dig deeper.

A face-to face encounter offers the interview process so much more than an email, résumé, or a phone call ever can. It allows you to see your applicant ‘up close and personal’ and observe them from a behavioral standpoint. You can observe facial expressions, body language, and gestures that often speak louder than words. There is nothing more endearing than to see an applicant whose smile genuinely lightens up their face. You can't get that in a résumé.

Offer salary and benefits for the position as well as required work hours. It is best to inquire about their wishes and intentions with the objective of coming to a reasonable agreement that satisfies both employer and employee.

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EMR knowledge) a plus, but not a necessity. Will train the right person. Approximately (?) hrs/week. Salary commensurate with experience (or... competitive salary and benefits). Fax (Email) resume to _____.

Step Two: Recruitment—There is no ONE magical kingdom where you can find star employees, so the more places you can be visible and get the word out, the better. Look to place ads in local papers, online job posting sites (some of the more familiar ones are Indeed, LinkedIn, Facebook, Google for Jobs, Craigslist), community Ca-

- Why the “gap” in their work history timeline?

- Look for spelling and grammatical mistakes—with computer programs that do these simple spell/grammar checks for you, there is no room for error. This may show a lack of attention to detail.

- Does their educational background match the job requirements—is that relevant? In other words, does the job you are looking to fill really require their degree in graphic arts?

- Review their references. Is their former manager listed? If not, why? Did they just provide an im-

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Again, the main concern during the face-to-face should be personality. After you've "red-flagged" the résumé, set it aside and engage them in describing their background as part of the interview conversation. Does what they say match their resume? Prepare a job description and openly discuss the duties associated with the new position. Make sure they can tolerate the sight of blood if the open position requires chairside assistance.

Use a prepared interview guideline for each applicant for note-taking and for questioning consistency so that you can compare apples to apples in the final selection. Ask questions and more importantly LISTEN to their responses. Don't be afraid to go off topic (i.e., *"Oh, its' funny you should mention running marathons. My daughter just expressed an interest in that and she's only 13 years old. How did you get involved?"*) This may invite them to volunteer response and offer personal info you are not allowed to ask... i.e., age, marital status, children, etc.

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Utilize critical role-playing exercises (common patient scenarios) as many of their personality attributes, flaws, and people skills come to life here.

If they are likely candidates, set up a second (or third) interview where they also meet your current team. Take them to lunch to observe behavior with restaurant staff and others that may not be evident during formal interviews. Their true self may emerge if they no longer feel they are under the looking glass. Keep in mind, this person will be an ambassador between you and your patients. Choose wisely.

Step Five: Follow Up—Call former employers. While they are limited in what information they

are required to release to you, there may be important details that come to light in a conversation with them that otherwise would not.

Step Six: Training—Once you've invested time, money, and energy into finding your perfect candidate, do the next best thing and prepare them to succeed not merely from the perspective of a new "job" but a new career.

Provide necessary one-on-

one training, including a hands-on "in-service", basic knowledge of podiatric medicine, necessary resource materials (manuals, OSHA and HIPAA info), peer mentorship opportunities, and performance reviews—not meant to criticize, rather to share concerns, enhance skills, and help develop them into an overall more productive employee.

Regardless of their hired position, before "putting them to work", give them ample time initially to observe staff (in all departments) and doctor(s) so they can become familiar with day-to-day operations, patient flow, supplies, processes, and procedures. Make them feel welcome. You'd be surprised what this can do long-term.

Bonus: Heads Up—Keep in mind that interviews are not necessarily one-sided. Applicants are also careful to choose a place to work where they can feel comfortable. Ask if they have any questions or concerns and be sure to answer them honestly. For example, "Why should I work here?" Your response might make the difference for them.

Final Thoughts

Admittedly, finding new staff, especially in this post-pandemic "Great Resignation" is no easy task. Job seekers are not so quick to take just any offer. They often are looking for better salary and benefits, while re-examining their work-life balance.

Most certainly, the pandemic took a toll on the hiring process. It's also true, though, that there has never been a time when doctors, and especially podiatrists, didn't complain

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that applicant "pickins" were slim.

Now, they may even be a little slimmer; however, there are still many individuals who need and *want* to work. They may not be banging on your door, but with a little, more conscious effort, a sensible action plan, and lots of determination—maybe even a little thinking outside the box—they can be found.

Here's the takeaway advice. Do not rush the process. The phrase, "quality takes time" applies here. The *"I need someone right away"* mentality usually results in hiring the wrong person, who doesn't stay, then morphs into that familiar "revolving door of staff". Clearly, this is a very disruptive and costly hiring technique.

Instead, take this process seriously and look for new employees as if your goal is to keep them with you until the day you retire. It can happen! **PM**



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