



Secrets of the Best-Run Practices

Here's a message to new employees about managing up.

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You may find that it is a good idea to try managing up if you are an employee who is new to a practice. Hopefully, you have had time before this to get a general introduction to the physicians and staff. Beyond patient care, a priority is getting to know your bosses, being aware of the practice's goals, and learning how to communicate with staff. Spend time with each provider on a casual basis getting to know their demeanor and style as you also learn systems and patient care protocols.

Also spend time with your administrator. Get to know their role, as well as other key employees, as a resource for information and understanding patient flow. Also be sure to introduce yourself to every staff member. All that is needed is eye contact, a smile, an introduction, and a handshake.

Many employees who support physicians are never noticed. Please be aware of every employee who is there to support your caring for pa-

tients, and they will appreciate your remembering them!

And as you spend time with your boss, dig deeper! Find out what exactly they are trying to accomplish, the goals, and how you may contribute to fit into that plan. This shows interest in an intended long-term tenure, demonstrates initiative, and expresses your concern for the future of the practice.

Also note everybody's preferences and styles of communication. Some employees may prefer internal plat-

working with your own specific history and experiences is great relationship management as well as managing up!

Some general things to keep in mind while managing up are:

- Be authentic. Consider your interests and how your honesty and contributions can best help.
- If you make a mistake, admit it. We are all human and this honesty builds trust.
- Treat everyone the same, from the janitor to the CEO to the physi-

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forms, whereas others will like texting, poking your head around the corner, or speaking up at meetings. Use your emotional intelligence to engage in conversations where you may need to take that extra step, anticipating more work, and where you may contribute further.

In getting to know your peers, you sometimes may run across an assignment that you know you could do a better job with. Also bear in mind that the best leaders always surround themselves with the best people. This is a compliment to you and one that you should put into action as you are able to contribute more of your unique talents, approach, and perspectives. You are advancing your career. Sharing and

Showing favoritism or allying with certain coworkers may erect unanticipated barriers.

Every relationship ebbs and flows. And there are individuals who make extra efforts to continue a relationship that once worked well but may now be on the decline. Regardless of the result, make every effort to always be recognized for your true dedication to the relationship and patient care.

Case Study: Restoring a Relationship Between the Physician and Administrator

A consultant was on assignment with an administrator and a physician who had worked together since

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opening the practice six years prior. Unfortunately, the relationship had become less positive. As with many practices, the dynamics had changed over time. The physician had also started to distress the administrator by frequently overriding administrative decisions in front of staff.

Both the physician and the administrator had the same wishes and goals. They wanted to improve communication and feel that “magic,” like when they first started the practice and shared the same mission. Both were excited to begin this awareness journey.

The objectives:

- Improve communication to a productive banter with respect for each other’s role.
- Recalibrate dynamics with a unified and common mission.
- Stop and listen to each other before entering the all-too-common screaming match that solves nothing.
- Relay and convey that unity and understand that the administrator oversees daily operations.
- Have the physician step back

office before people came in or after everyone had left or in a separate location that they felt was a neutral setting to begin a conversation in an impartial environment.

The physician was open to and respectful of the administrator and wanted to change. Unfortunately, the physician’s need to be in

• While truly respecting this administrator, she could not break the need to be in total charge of everything.

• Since then, the administrator has found another position and feels highly valued in her new space.

• There are situations and times we may need to recalibrate

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control would take over, with her usually ending every conversation with, “This is my practice, and you will do what I want.” This did not leave much room for expanding her awareness and success with breaking through communication barriers. In fact, this statement immediately negated any success achieved earlier during that meeting. The administrator continued to make great progress with her personal awareness and relationship management. People were responding more positively toward

long-standing relationships as they ebb and flow.

There are other instances when a physician will welcome an interim office administrator. This situation is unusual, because the need is often urgent, and it usually requires filling big shoes for a short period of time. It is vital to the practice’s workflow and morale. As you search for an interim administrator, keep the following case study in mind.

Case Study: Physician Welcoming a New or Interim Practice Administrator

Serving as an interim administrator is always challenging. Typically, filling this position can be emergent, as the previous administrator may have left suddenly and in a less-than-positive situation. In the circumstance I am presenting, the previous administrator blatantly displayed employee favoritism, especially when dealing with vacation leave and promotions. This partiality created barriers between employees and a toxic competitive culture. The interim administrator was hired immediately at the time of proposal, not even 24 hours after our initial meeting. The charge to the interim was to steady a confused staff, some of whom were very distressed because of the overnight removal of their boss.

The new hire reviewed processes and protocols to ensure her understanding of everybody’s roles, meeting with each staff member to

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and allow the administrator to do his/her job in full.

The consultant met with the administrator, who was receptive to all recommendations, soaking in all the information and utilizing the guidance immediately. They discussed body language, approach, communication with the physician, and their long-standing relationship. The personal awareness and momentum were immense, generating more successful interactions with not only the physician but the entire staff. The consultant also recommended that the physician and administrator have complete privacy while meeting. Meetings could be held either in the

her and approaching her more often, which is always a good sign. Regrettably, that was not so much the case with the physician, who literally refused to listen before accusing and saying she “just wanted it done.”

You can teach emotional intelligence to people. I believe that it is there and, with many, is ignored if not utilized. When choosing, this doctor elected not to listen or respect someone’s opinion after the relationship faded.

The results were:

- Although she really believed she had the best goals in mind, in the end, the physician did not want to change.

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review their specific role and to ensure a balanced workflow. The interim administrator also asked each employee about the best way to serve them in finding the administrator that they needed. It was essential that the staff trust the interim administrator to continue moving forward in a positive culture.

The challenge was multifaceted:

- Continue to deliver seamless care while dealing with an impactful change for the practice.
- Create a balanced culture (where favoritism is not supported).
- Recruit an administrator who would treat every employee with equal respect.
- Identify staff members' true potential to achieve growth for the future for the practice.

Employees offered many suggestions, from how to handle the lunchroom cleaning schedule to individual roles.

It was possible to gain staff members' trust in about 30 seconds! They continually asked for feedback and promoted staff's involvement in changes in their practice. Employees offered many suggestions, from how to handle the lunchroom cleaning schedule to individual roles. The physicians were key in relaying their value and support of the interim administrator's role.

Results included:

- As each employee's role was clarified, the staff tended to reach beyond their normal circles, communicating more with others with whom they might not usually work.
- Employees felt they were treated more fairly.
- The physicians hired a hands-on administrator who would be cognizant of everyone's role.
- A new, more aware relationship was formed between the providers and the new administrator to have all more involved with the daily practice's goings-on.
- The interim administrator actively affirmed her role, meeting with one lead physician weekly and monthly with the group.

What did the staff see? The doctors and the interim administrator conversed in a productive and unified manner that reflected the importance of each employee, which encouraged stellar patient care. PM



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