

## *The Patient Experience Post*

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## **The 3 Essentials of Re-Recruiting Your Top Performers: How to Show Your Best Employees the Love They Deserve**

*by Kristin Baird, RN, BSN, MHA*

How long does that heady rush that you feel when you land a top candidate last? A few months? A year? More?

How about that sinking feeling you get when you realize that one of your top performers is heading for a new opportunity elsewhere? — an opportunity that provides them with the encouragement, engagement and ongoing challenges that are lacking under your management. And why are they lacking under your leadership? —because you're frankly too busy dealing with the poor performers.

That sinking feeling is often followed by a multitude of questions. What could I have done to prevent this? Why didn't they come to me if they needed new challenges? How will I ever replace him/her? While these are important questions to ask yourself, they are somewhat futile at the point of the resignation.

The secret to retaining the brightest and the best is through re-recruiting. Just as you spend time and energy trying to find the best fit for your team, once onboard, make sure you make every effort to retain them.

The problem is, many leaders are so time-strapped that their highest performers get the least amount of time. After all, top performers usually function independently, have a high level of engagement, are skilled at their jobs and typically don't demand your time. Their competence creates the perfect opportunity to ignore them while you put out fires with your low performers.

It's a mistake that far too many managers make, until it's too late. Instead, you should be actively taking steps to *re-recruit* your best performers, ensuring that they're getting the positive support, feedback and challenges they need to remain engaged.

As we coach and work on leadership development, so many of the leaders we work with tell us that their best and brightest are the last ones to get their time and attention because they're spending that time

and attention on the disengaged and somewhat engaged. These are the people who seem to need constant monitoring, leaving very little time or emotional reserves for those who are doing the best for the organization.

The reality is, though, that even your most self-directed and motivated staff members need motivation, appreciation and new challenges. If you're not giving it to them, after a while they'll seek those things elsewhere.

What should you be doing to minimize the chances that your top performers will jump ship? Here are the 3 essentials of re-recruiting:

### **1) Make the Time**

Despite the reality that you must spend quality coaching time to move your disengaged folks up or out, and somewhat employees up, you still need to spend quality time with your already engaged employees—their tenure depends upon it. And don't save it for an annual review. Give them the gift of your time and attention outside the annual HR required review.

### **2) Show the Love**

Don't assume that your best employees know they're doing a good job and don't need your validation—they do! They need support and encouragement too, but not generic statements of "good job," or "thanks." Be specific. What is it that they're doing that makes them valuable to you, the department and the organization? Increase the odds that their commitment and loyalty will continue by being appreciative and acknowledging the value they provide.

### **3) Offer New Challenges**

Your best employees can lose their passion for their work if they aren't continually exposed to new challenges and opportunities. Be proactive in looking for those new challenges. Have conversations with your exceptional employees to discover what their next challenge might be—what motivates them? What personal and professional goals do they have that you could help them achieve?

No, you can't ignore your disengaged and somewhat engaged employees. They need coaching for improved performance. But you also need to ensure that you're making time, and taking the time, to focus



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Nurse, author, and consultant Kristin Baird, "Healthcare's Customer Service Guru," is the author of *Raising the Bar on Service Excellence: The Health Care Leader's Guide to Putting Passion into Practice* (Golden Lamp Press, 2008), *Reclaiming the Passion: Stories that Celebrate the Essence of Nursing* (Golden Lamp Press, 2004), and *Customer Service In Healthcare: A Grassroots Approach to Creating a Culture of Service Excellence* (Jossey Bass, 2000). The Baird Group provides consulting, mystery shopping, and training services for improving the patient experience. To learn more, please visit <http://baird-group.com> or call 920-563-4684.