Dynamic Chiropractic

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Finding the Right CA, Pt. 1: Three Often-Overlooked Keys

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To maximize both your capacity and collections, doctors should only do that which only a doctor can do. The value of the right CA with the right training is immeasurable. They:

- Ask for referrals on a daily basis
- Build relationships with new patients to help foster long-term ones
- Keep every patient on their recommended care schedule
- Collect pre-payments for care
- Educate patients about the critical role of chiropractic care in health and healing
- Create a positive experience for each patient and maintain a positive environment
- Maximize third-party collections
- And so much more

What Many Doctors Overlook

So, the first often-overlooked key to finding the right CA is to value the role CAs play in your office and recognize how many more interactions with patients they have versus you, the doctor. They really can be your practice's greatest asset.

The second key most doctors skip is to get clear on your vision of an ideal team member. Determine what that looks like. Create a list of team traits that are important to the success of your practice. (We've identified more than 40 in our practice). The clearer your vision, the easier it is to attract what you want.

The third missed key is utilizing expectation management, which is critical in any successful relationship. It's simply letting someone know up front what to expect, and then delivering. It's akin to using a turn signal to let other drivers know you're going to be changing lanes.

Expectation management leads to job satisfaction for team members. The best results are cultivated from under-promising and over-delivering.

Define Job Duties Clearly

Start with a detailed job description. If you hire a CA and tell that person that they're going being paid to do duties A, B and C, but then add to their job description duties D, E and F (without changing their pay), it causes a tremendous problem. This one issue is often the foundation for resentment, poor attitude or performance, or even rationalizing theft to attempt to compensate for the unfairness.

Get clear on the position duties ahead of time. Give prospective employees a full description of duties to avoid the perception that you're adding on jobs later. Having checklists for daily, weekly, monthly and annual duties makes communicating position expectations incredibly easy.

Establish Your Policies

Formulate personnel policies so team members understand what is expected of them before they're hired. Include both the positive and negative consequences for their actions. Unfortunately, the most frequent calls I get relate to a problem a doctor or team leader has with a CA. Most of the problems could be prevented from having clear personnel policies and adhering to them.

It's always shocking to me when I hear, "This is the 12th time my CA has been late." I always think, *12? How in the world did you get to 12?* The personnel policy needs to list behaviors that are unacceptable along with the consequences. For example, in our practice, violations result in: first a verbal warning, then a written warning; three written warnings are grounds for dismissal. Our policy also lists those behaviors that are cause for immediate dismissal.

Also make sure to include a computer and communications policy to outline email use, computer use, social media, etc. When you give an employee a key, have a specific office key policy signed. Of course, you will need to have HIPAA and fraud, waste and abuse compliance policies as well.

Editor's Note: Part 2 of this article discusses the hiring process, including tips for creating the most effective ad and how to evaluate candidates.

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