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#### ***"It's a Jungle Out There" for healthcare providers.***

Times are tough. The regulations keep piling on and reimbursement rates have been cut. Competition is fierce and costs are rising. Successful healthcare leaders know they must stay ahead of changes in the marketplace and continue to seek out innovative new revenue opportunities. Navigating through the maze is a challenge and leaders often don't have other leadership resources for help in strategizing the direction of their business.

Now, for the first time, Clint Maun is offering consulting and executive coaching for healthcare leadership and management. Imagine being able to confidentially discuss daily challenges, opportunities and receive immediate ideas, information and action recommendations for an affordable monthly fee. Essentially, you'd have a personal consultant and life coach on retainer for much less than his on-site fee, with no expenses.

Clint would be available via live webcam, phone conferences and email to discuss and coach on the

challenges successful healthcare leaders face, such as:

- Reimbursement Issues
- Tough employees
- Strategic opportunities
- Methods to improve teamwork
- Revenue strategies
- Merger and acquisition opportunities
- Partnership with other health care providers

*If you are interested in having Clint on retainer as a personal and professional advisor and coach, please contact Kathy Cain, VP, 800.356.2233.*

### Addressing Employee Absenteeism: 4 Tips to Consider

Are there certain employees who are always out "sick" right before or after a holiday? Or perhaps you have an employee who has a never-ending occurrence of "emergencies" that cause them to miss work. Healthcare managers certainly understand the need for time off, and recognize that sometimes things come up. However, continual unplanned employee absences take a toll on your staff as well as the organization as a whole.

#### Nip It in the Bud

The time to talk about an employee's attendance problem is when you first notice it. As you plan this conversation, here are a few points to keep in mind.

1. *Keep it casual.* Your first discussion about attendance shouldn't be a disciplinary meeting, so be sure to keep the mood one of information-gathering and concern, rather than condemnation or threats.
2. *Focus on the positive.* Every employee is a valuable part of the company. Your focus should be on solving a problem, rather than punishing someone.
3. *Get the facts.* While you should focus on the positive, you also want to be prepared with the hard facts. Prepare for the meeting by gathering all the facts, including dates of absences or tardiness, reasons given for each incident, and any supporting documentation or notes.
4. *Ask questions.* The employee could indeed have legitimate reasons for missing so much work. Encourage your people to talk to you openly and candidly. If there is a genuine issue like transportation, child care, or illness brainstorm on a solution you can offer. A slight adjustment in work hours to match a bus schedule, or a shift in work days to allow family members to share responsibilities might be all it takes to correct the employee's absenteeism issue.

After the meeting, monitor your employee's attendance and address any additional concerns as soon as they arise. If you notice a marked improvement, be sure to let the employee know you appreciate the change. The important thing is to address absenteeism before it becomes a problem. The right conversation with your employee at the right time might be all you need!

*"Action is the foundational key to all success."  
—Pablo Picasso*

### Want to Improve Employee Motivation? Start with Yourself and Your Management Team!

Without a doubt, every healthcare manager should always be asking: What drives my employees? After all, the primary responsibility of all executives and management is to train, motivate, engage, and mentor employees to excel. You, of course, want your employees to excel so that your organization can meet its overall goals and objectives. Your employees, on the other hand, are

usually driven by other factors, which include job satisfaction, recognition, and salary. The trick, therefore, remains in finding a way to motivate employees while also meeting your organization's vision and mission.

It's not exactly a simple task, but it can be done. It's first important to recognize that employees rarely intend to do a poor job or actually want to be unmotivated. Indeed, most employees want to thrive and grow in their current position. If some of your employees aren't performing efficiently and productively, the first and usually most easy place to look is within you and your management team.

Below are some simple ways to keep your employees engaged in their roles:

- **Keep your door (and your ears) open.** If you don't provide a general atmosphere of open discussion, it will be difficult for employees to understand their roles, responsibilities, and goals—all of which affect motivation and productivity. Touch base with your employees often, and make sure they understand what is expected of them. Moreover, give your employees a platform to voice their ideas. Let them know they have an open invitation to talk to you.
- **Communicate the company vision in a way employees can relate to.** Employees must understand and believe in your healthcare organization's vision. If they do, they are much more likely to remain motivated. Just remember that most healthcare employees are willing to commit to a task if they are given a good reason and understand how their role is important and impacts the bottom line. Explain the company's vision in a way that clearly illustrates the role they play in achieving that vision.
- **Ask for input.** Rewards and recognition are perhaps one of the greatest motivators of all. So, ask employees for their opinions on how things could be done more effectively. Then follow up and acknowledge their successes as their suggestions are implemented. Give employees credit!
- **Provide room for learning and growth.** Autonomy and innovation promote employee engagement and enthusiasm. The most successful managers give employees the opportunity to try new ideas and processes without severe repercussions. If employees want to lead a project or implement a new idea, give them the freedom to do so. Be there as a coach and mentor. If they make mistakes, point out where they could improve in the future.

The tips above identify the areas where healthcare organizations can help keep their workforce remain committed and motivated. Remember that your healthcare professionals usually always need the guidance of skilled managers and leaders who seek their ideas, ask for feedback and generate enthusiasm. When leaders provide this, they are more able to generate a sense of purpose and energy among their employees.

*"An employee's motivation is a direct result of the sum of interactions with his or her manager."  
—Bob Nelson*

## Questions about the Future of CLASS Linger

The Obama administration has put a hold on the voluntary long-term care insurance program passed during healthcare reform by cutting its staffing for an undetermined length of time.

The Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act has come under fire since its passage. Critics have long questioned the CLASS program's long-term sustainability, fearing it would eventually run out of money and require government support.

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius previously stated that she would not allow CLASS to be implemented until the administration figured out how to ensure its solvency for the next 75 years. Larry Minnix, president and CEO of LeadingAge, and one of the program's most vocal supporters, commented on the recent news and said, "We look forward to continuing to work with the administration on the implementation of CLASS. Today's pressures on both Medicare and Medicaid make the CLASS Act all the more important to help families and the government reduce the costs of care."

[Learn more about CLASS and its current status.](#)

*"An optimist is a person who starts a new diet on Thanksgiving Day."*  
—Irv Kupcnet

**Want to Liven Up Your Thanksgiving? Try These Tips!**

Want to add a little "spice" to your Thanksgiving meal?! Try any of these humorous tips to liven up your holiday:

- Load your plate up high, then take it to the kitchen, toss it all in the blender, and take your "shake" back to the table. Announce that it's the new Thanksgiving Weight Loss Shake.
- When everyone goes around to say what they are thankful for, say, "I'm thankful I didn't get caught," and refuse to say anything more.
- Bring a date that only talks about the tragic and abusive conditions known to exist at turkey farms.
- During mid-meal turn to the person next to you and say, "See, I told you they wouldn't notice that the turkey was past expiration date. You were worried for nothing."

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