



Hiring *Right* Requires the Right Approach



Employing an organizational psychologist or paying for expensive employee screening services is simply not in the cards for most urgent care centers. Yet, hiring “right” is perhaps the most important thing we do and the implications on our practices are considerable. Here are just a few of the areas most impacted by our talent acquisition success (or failure):

1. Risk, quality, and liability
2. Patient satisfaction
3. Operations and work flow
4. Culture

Now let’s look a little more deeply at each.

Risk, quality, and liability: Our core covenant is to provide the highest quality of care in a safe and effective manner to ensure the best outcome. This usually involves a credentialing process for providers and support staff. Putting thought into requirements for training, licensure, and experience along with a checklist of skills required for the job helps us protect patients and reduce liability. Make no exceptions!

Patient satisfaction: When hiring for customer service, we need to understand what our patients expect from their caregivers, then hire and train to support it. I have found attentiveness, compassion, and efficiency to be the most desirable traits here. Understanding how a candidate responds to common scenarios that require each will help identify a match.

Operations and work flow: Looking for predictors of reliability, flexibility, teamwork, and efficiency is critical to the success of a 365-day practice with variable and unpredictable volume. A poor fit here is guaranteed to create problems.

Culture: Start with a mission, vision, and values and be sure that candidates understand what they mean to the organization. Values should be clearly defined and communicated. Crafting questions that screen for shared values is essential.

Next, think about how you might query candidates in each of these categories for alignment and fit. Many of the newer recruiting sites have engines that support some screening of the candidate pool, but once you get to the interview stage, you see how imperfect these are. It is the live interview where the rubber meets the road, and being prepared with some open-ended questions that can determine fit is critically impor-

tant. The most effective questions identify common scenarios that create tension in our setting and elucidate how a candidate would respond to these. Here are just a few examples:

- Call-outs: How have you handled circumstances in the past that could cause you to be absent or late to work?
- Workplace confrontation: Give an example of coworker discord you have experienced, and how you handled it.
- Changing gears: Things change quickly in urgent care. How does it make you feel when asked to shift focus and speed? How do you typically respond?
- Frustration: Describe the most frustrating thing about your last job. How did you manage that? Describe a frustrating experience you had with a patient. How did you respond?
- Attentiveness: What do you think is an appropriate wait time to see a provider in urgent care? How would you handle a patient who complains about a wait less than that? How might you prevent dissatisfaction around wait times to begin with?
- Conflicting ideas: Describe how you handled an organizational decision that you disagreed with.
- Staying late and coping with late-arriving patients: What is your philosophy on closing time? How have you handled policies that differ from your philosophy? How do you react when a patient arrives immediately before closing? What if four patients show up just before closing? How does this impact your mood with patients and staff?

Employee turnover is expensive, disruptive, and culture-eroding, and the demands of healthcare (urgent care in particular) amplify this. Applying forethought and discipline to recruiting and interviewing can help an urgent care operator prevent bad marriages and messy divorces, and ensure our patients receive the care and experience we promise them. ■

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