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Acknowledgments

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About the Authors

Michael Holik, EdD, is an Associate Professor at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. He holds a doctorate in education instructional leadership from Lindenwood University, a master's degree in technology education from the University of Central Missouri, a bachelor's degree in hospitality restaurant administration from Missouri State University, and an associate's degree in hospitality restaurant management from Ozarks Technical Community College. Dr Holik has worked in higher education since 2005, first as a culinary and hospitality management instructor until 2017 and subsequently as faculty in the nutrition and dietetics department. He has 21 years of experience in the foodservice and hospitality industry, having worked in upper, middle, and front-line management and leadership, auditing, and training. To date, Dr Holik has published seven articles on teaching and learning pedagogy. He is currently working on a research agenda that includes virtual reality teaching and learning pedagogy for dietetics foodservice management courses as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)-related aspects of health science programs. Dr Holik has presented his research locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. During his 19 years in higher education, Dr Holik has earned an instructor of the year award, a Governor's Excellence in Teaching Award, mentoring and advising awards, and recognition for his engagement efforts with off-campus commuting students.

Dr Holik is an active member of Nutrition and Dietetic Educators and Preceptors (NDEP) and has served as the NDEP DEI Committee Chairperson since 2023. He is also an active member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics where he serves as a member of the Academy's IDEA Committee.

When Dr Holik is not working or volunteering his time to serve on committees, he enjoys teaching group fitness classes as both a certified Versaclimber instructor and certified Lagree instructor, traveling, fostering a pug rescue, cooking, baking, home improvement projects, and spending time with his amazing husband, pug fur kids, and friends.

Danielle Platt, MS, RD, LDN, received her bachelor's degree in clinical dietetics and nutrition from the University of Pittsburgh and her graduate degree in health education with a concentration in nutrition marketing from Saint Joseph's University. She has been a registered dietitian since 2000 and a licensed dietitian nutritionist since 2003.

Platt has worked for Main Line Health since 2001. In 2008 she was promoted to Assistant Director of Patient Services/Clinical Nutrition Manager at Paoli Hospital, where she spearheaded the nutritional host program and implemented a room service model for patient services that now receives nationally acknowledged scores of over 90% in patient satisfaction. In 2018, Platt became Director of Clinical Nutrition for Main Line Health, working to ensure practice systemization and optimization. In 2021, she was named Senior Director of Quality and Standards, with oversight of all clinical nutrition practice, registered dietitians, foodservice programs, patient experience as it pertains to food and nutrition, environmental services, and patient transport.

Platt was recognized on a national level as preceptor of the month for the Aramark dietetic internship in 2018 and was also awarded preceptor of the year in 2018. When Platt is not working, she enjoys gardening, raising chickens, traveling, and spending time with her family and friends.

Introduction and How to Use This Book

The Story Behind the Story

When I began teaching foodservice management to dietetics students, I consistently received the same questions each semester: “Why do I need to learn about foodservice management when I have every intention of being a clinical dietitian who works in a hospital?” or “I want to be an entrepreneur and start a private practice. What does foodservice management have to do with establishing a business?” or “I plan to work alongside the community in health and wellness. How would learning about foodservice management help me?”

I began proactively addressing these questions by stating (and restating) the connections between the course content and the roles of a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) during lectures. I also began adding sections titled “Food for Thought” into my learning management system that explained the connections in written form. To address the need for applied learning, as well as mimic the scenario format that can be found in the Commission on Dietetics Registration (CDR) examination, I began writing case studies to use in my foodservice management courses. The case study format was an instant hit, not only because students could visualize these real-life scenarios in which RDNs were the case subjects but also because they required more engagement and critical thinking to complete the assignments.

The concepts of foodservice management are woven throughout everything an RDN does, regardless of specialty. The RDN is the connection between medically based nutrition recommendations and real food. Having a solid knowledge base with regard to how food is prepared and served to patients will help an RDN who works in any setting. For example, for a clinical RDN to

be successful in an acute care hospital, they must have strong clinical practice skills as well as a thorough understanding of how the foodservice department operates. This knowledge of foodservice can answer many questions, such as: How are patients fed? Are patients offered room service or the traditional tray line with a menu? How does the kitchen accommodate food allergies, intolerances, and medically necessary diet protocols? Are mealtimes flexible enough to accommodate medications or test timing?

Many of the topics discussed in foodservice management courses will be relevant throughout your career. Indeed, at some point you may be interested in taking on more management responsibilities, leading projects, or serving in a supervisory role. RDNs, for example, may find themselves calculating full-time equivalents and staffing ratios for the clinical team at the hospital. Toward these ends, this book was written to align with the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) KRDNs and CRDNs to help further establish relevancy and prepare you for taking the registration examination after completing a dietetic internship.

The concepts covered in this book are also valuable to students studying to become nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered (NDTRs) or certified dietary managers (CDMs). These nutrition practitioners will be able to achieve success in their careers in part because of a solid knowledge base about foodservice management. Managing successful foodservice operations generates almost immediate results and drives patient satisfaction and experience, which is always a priority. Contributing to quality medical care, assuming the role of expert regarding clinical nutrition and foodservice management, and observing the successful implementation of

recommended changes for improvement come to fruition are thrilling parts of the job.

Understanding the importance of leadership will prove valuable throughout your career. An RDN may find themselves on the health and wellness committee at their facility, where they could be asked to host a presentation on healthy eating tips and a sampling of menu ideas. They may need to adjust recipes for diet compliance and present this information to the foodservice staff. They may need to modify or create policies or procedures that will affect patients and staff members. To align these foodservice duties with preparation for the registration examination, this textbook has been formatted to follow other nutrition foodservice management textbooks and the CDR study outline provided by ACEND.

Finally, I wanted to teach from a textbook that employed inclusive pronouns and names that represented a variety of cultures. This book thoughtfully and purposefully includes both.

How to Use This Book

Lessons in Foodservice Management: Case Studies for Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners was written to help you further connect the concepts of foodservice management as they relate to the various roles of RDNs, NDTRs, and CDMs. This book is designed to supplement and complement traditional foodservice management textbooks:

- Each chapter starts with a short theory section to guide you through the terminology and conceptual framework of foodservice management.
- Each chapter incorporates the idea of emotional intelligence, a solid understanding of which is vital to success in foodservice management.
- Throughout each chapter, the perspective of an RDN working in the field is woven in to demonstrate how theoretical concepts manifest in real-world scenarios, establishing the importance and value of foodservice management concepts to RDNs.
- Each chapter ends with a detailed case study that blends the principles introduced in the

theory section into a rich narrative to further aid understanding of the concepts.

- Each case study includes discussion questions or instructions for a project or assignment related to the topic.

The Dietitian's Perspective

One of the best educational experiences a student can have is to learn from a textbook that is both based on real experiences and filled with practical applications for the field. *Lessons in Foodservice Management: Case Studies for Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners* includes the Dietitian's Perspective in every chapter. By including a perspective from an RDN currently working in the clinical field and who has a thorough understanding of foodservice management, you will be able to learn how the concepts from each chapter apply in day-to-day interactions on the job.

The Dietitian's Perspective is intended to depict the application of theoretical components of foodservice management in everyday life. In addition, this section will help you learn more about the leadership roles that RDNs can hold, such as the clinical nutrition manager (CNM), who conducts quality improvement projects that impact patient care and oversees the clinical aspects of RDNs and NDTRs, health and safety policies, and foodservice employees that have patient interactions. An RDN or NDTR may also serve as a patient services manager (PSM), whose primary responsibilities include oversight of patient dining services including the diet office, tray line, and nutritional hosts. To make the most of this textbook, be sure to read through each Dietitian's Perspective. Most perspectives should also help you understand how emotional intelligence connects to your role.

Emotional Intelligence

The role that emotional intelligence (EI) or emotional quotient (EQ) plays in foodservice management is on display in every chapter of *Lessons in Foodservice Management: Case Studies for Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners*. Emotional intelligence encompasses a) an understanding of your own emotions and those of

others and b) the ability to balance, control, and utilize them effectively. Just because an individual knows what emotional intelligence *is* does not mean that they *are* emotionally intelligent. Managers can use emotional intelligence to understand and empathize with employees while maintaining the ability to keep their own emotions in check.

Emotional intelligence is important in many aspects of both professional and personal interactions. Managers often need to have a higher level of emotional intelligence when working with employees, clients, and customers. In addition, emotional intelligence plays a vital role in the soft or essential skills used by RDNs when working with patients who often have strong opinions about what they can and cannot eat or what they consider “healthy” or “unhealthy.”

Consider the following example: an RDN is counseling a patient who begins sharing information about their troubling relationship with food. The patient begins to cry. In this moment, it is crucial for the RDN to separate their own emotions internally (to be able to continue to actively listen to and then best respond to the patient) and externally (so as not to influence the patient’s narrative with what may be perceived as upsetting facial expressions or body language). The role of the RDN in this moment is to be a support person, not someone to cry alongside the patient. This is not to say that the RDN should not show empathy and kindness, but rather that they should be shown in a reserved manner.

Emotional intelligence is also important when interacting with employees. Imagine a CDM who witnesses a foodservice worker sneaking food off of patient trays while working the tray line. The CDM might be able to tell by the employee’s attempts to be discreet that the employee knows their actions are wrong. In this situation the CDM could react in two ways. Without utilizing emotional intelligence, the CDM could jump to the conclusion that the employee is careless, has no respect for policies, and is knowingly violating them. On the other hand, the CDM could tap into their emotional intelligence and take a moment to consider whether perhaps the employee is struggling financially and is unable to afford enough food, leading them to seek out food while working. The CDM can take the employee aside and ask about the employee’s actions in private.

A manager with a high level of emotional intelligence will consider a people-first mentality in these scenarios.

Another important aspect of emotional intelligence is self-awareness. Even if the RDN does not serve in a formal managerial role, they can still exert influence when working with patients, clients, customers, or other employees. Individuals who are self-aware understand that their words and actions can have a positive or negative impact on those around them. For example, if an RDN is sharing a story about themselves in an attempt to be relatable to a patient, they should employ self-awareness to ensure that their story does not cause unnecessary harm. The RDN may feel that they are innocently discussing the frequency with which they exercise and may not realize that this information could be triggering to someone experiencing body image issues.

The following is a personal anecdote about self-awareness and emotional intelligence. There was a time during my foodservice management career when one of the hourly supervisors approached me for help with an employee who was experiencing mental distress because the supervisor believed that I would be better equipped to handle the situation. We sat with the employee, who was considerably upset, and in an effort to calm them down and better understand the situation, began to ask questions. As the employee responded, I recalled a time when I had been in a similar situation. I took a deep breath and told myself to remain calm as the employee continued to relay a story that hit so close to home that I felt a sympathetic wave of emotions welling inside. When I thought that I might begin to cry in empathy with the employee, I had a split second to use self-awareness and emotional intelligence to remind myself that this was about the employee and not about me. While taking deep breaths, I continued to be present and listen actively and was able to help the employee.

Remember that self-awareness is part of emotional intelligence and emotional intelligence is embedded in many day-to-day situations. Nutrition practitioners who work in management or leadership roles must find the right balance between being emotional and being emotionally intelligent to best support their patients, clients, or customers.

Michael Holik, EdD

Emotional Intelligence Resources

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SECTION

1

Human Resource Management

Staff Recruitment and Retention

TERMS TO KNOW

attrition	a natural or voluntary reduction in employees, often due to retirement, resignation, or other career opportunities
emotional intelligence	the ability to understand one's personal emotions as well as the emotions of others
job description	summation of duties, responsibilities, qualifications, and required skills for a job
job posting	an advertisement for an open position
key performance indicator (KPI)	measurable indicator of progress toward specific goals
organizational chart	outline of the personnel structure within an organization that allows employers and employees to see which positions are managerial, as well as the positions that report to each managerial position
retention	the ability to retain employees and prevent turnover or attrition
turnover	the overall percentage of employees who leave an organization, regardless of reason (voluntary or involuntary)

Introduction

This chapter will begin to introduce central concepts that will be used throughout the book, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and emotional intelligence. This chapter will also review organizational structure, job postings, retention, turnover, and attrition. These ideas

will be discussed as they relate to the process of recruiting qualified applicants, and the retention of candidates once employed. The role that emotional intelligence plays in the areas of recruitment and retention is also addressed. Before any recruitment can take place, hiring personnel must first understand the organization's structure and budget to assess staffing needs.

Organizational Structure

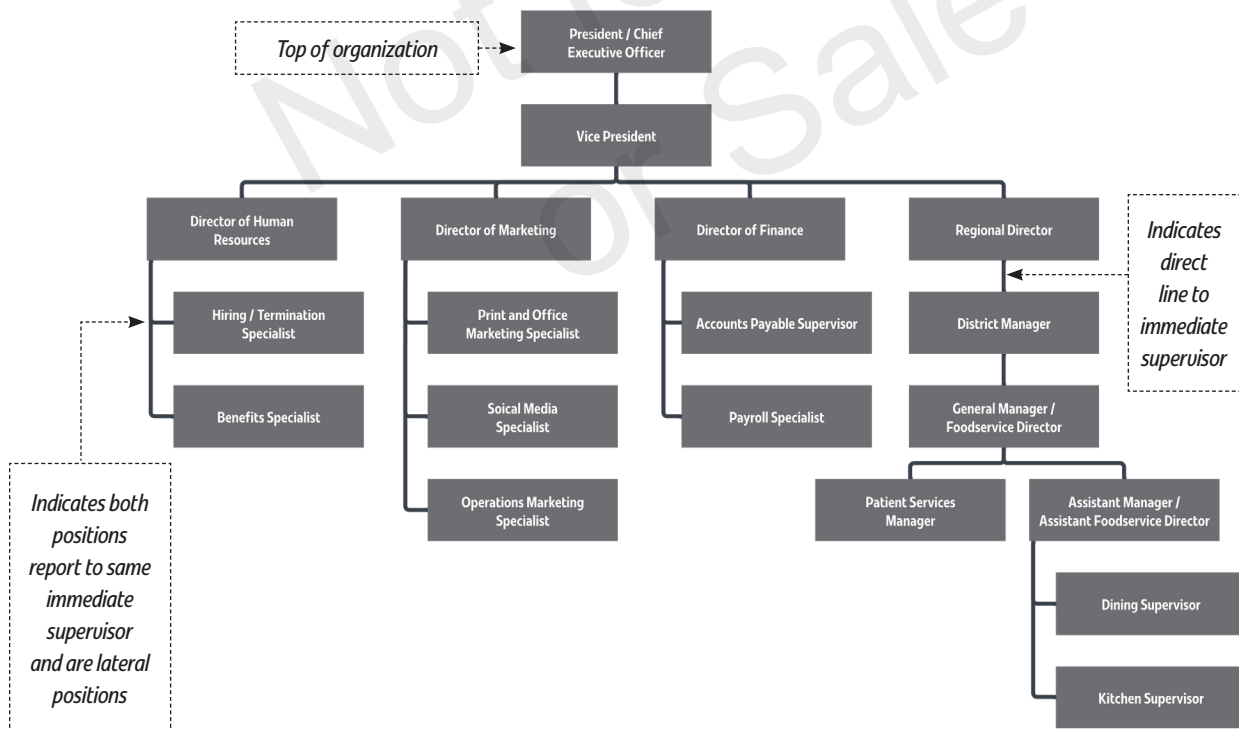
Organizational structure must be established prior to beginning the process of employee recruitment and retention. Organizational structures help businesses understand all positions in the company and establish a hierarchy or chain of command. Organizational structure, often outlined in an *organizational chart* (or org chart), allows employers and employees to see which positions are managerial as well as the positions that report to each managerial position. This structure is depicted with lines that connect employees to direct supervisors. Within the org chart, each company area is delineated by the functions or roles it performs within the organization. A well-written org chart should enable a company to better navigate decision-making by ensuring that it has the positions necessary to achieve the company's business goals. The complexity of an org chart depends on the size of the business: larger companies typically have more positions and smaller companies have fewer. Org charts in foodservice are commonly

designed to have both vertical and functional components. Figure 1.1 depicts an example of such a chart.

Recruitment

The recruitment process starts with an assessment of the needs of the organization and the identification of roles that are needed to run the business efficiently and effectively. This process requires an understanding of the concept of full-time equivalents, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. After defining the organizational structure, reviewing the budget, calculating full-time equivalents, and writing *job descriptions*, hiring managers can begin the process of recruiting potential employees. One of the initial steps hiring managers must take is to create the official *job posting*. (A well-written job description can simplify the work of creating a job posting. Job descriptions are further discussed in Chapter 2.) A job posting is essentially an advertisement for the position to be filled. Some job postings may be promoted only inside of an organization (internally), while others may

Figure 1.1 Example of an organizational chart



be publicized both internally and externally. In some situations, a company may give their existing employees priority application time before extending the job posting to external applicants. Each company decides on the most appropriate places to share their job postings, but common locations include general employment and career websites such as LinkedIn, Indeed, and CareerBuilder. In addition to general employment sites, many organizations have accounts on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, or X (formerly known as Twitter) that may be used to advertise open positions.

A well-written job posting should contain the following components:

- a clear and well-written position title
- date of position opening and closing, as applicable (These may depend on the company, type of position, or urgency with which the position needs to be filled. Many organizations use the verbiage “open until filled.”)
- a company description
- a job description including responsibilities and duties
- provisions of the position including benefits, salary range, developmental programs, and opportunities for growth
- minimum and preferred qualifications
- a diversity statement
- a list of documents that the applicant is required to submit
- special notes as applicable (These may include mention of required background checks upon job offer extension or description of working conditions, such as if a job requires standing for long periods or lifting heavy loads.)

In addition to sharing job postings on the internet and social media, organizations may find value in recruiting applicants by attending local, regional, or national career fairs. Many academic institutions hold annual or semiannual career or job fairs for their students; such events can also be effective ways to recruit applicants for internships. Some companies may opt to use professional recruiting services, through which internal or external recruiters can search for diverse,

qualified applicants. See the Dietitian's Perspective on recruitment on page 6.

The next step after recruitment is the hiring process, which is further discussed in Chapter 2. It is important to note that even the best recruitment practices can result in low *retention* rates; therefore, it is crucial to put effort into retaining employees.

Retention

Retention can be defined as the ability to retain employees and prevent turnover or attrition. Though related, turnover and attrition are not interchangeable. *Turnover* denotes the overall percentage of employees who leave an organization regardless of reason (voluntary or involuntary). *Attrition* is the natural or voluntary reduction in employees, often due to retirement, resignation, or other career opportunities. This chapter focuses on employee retention as it relates to turnover. Turnover has the potential to be one of the largest expenses for an organization because of the financial cost of recruiting and training new employees.

Employee retention is largely related to the level of satisfaction experienced on the job. Employees leave organizations for a wide variety of reasons; common reasons may include job dissatisfaction or dissatisfaction with an employer, limited career growth opportunities, inequitable compensation and benefits, poor management and leadership, unresolved conflicts with co-workers or supervisors, work-life balance disparities, lack of diversity and inclusion, and poor alignment of company and personal values.

Discrepancies or inconsistencies in employee expectations that emerge between recruitment/onboarding and the start of a job are also among the common reasons that employees may leave an organization. Consider this scenario: during the recruitment process, an applicant for a restaurant general manager position was promised a fast track to becoming a corporate trainer. While no timeline accompanied this promise, after working as the general manager for 2 years, meeting and exceeding all key performance indicators (KPIs), having positive monthly coaching sessions as well as quarterly and annual evaluations, and providing evidence of exceptional training to the local market's employees, the

One of the most important responsibilities of being a clinical nutrition manager (CNM) or patient services manager (PSM) involves identifying the needs of the operation as they relate to the patient population, customer demographics, and lines of business, as well as hiring the most appropriate applicants with the goal of driving positive outcomes. When considering recruits, it is important that the person hiring examine not only an individual's qualifications for a particular position, but how they would fit into the culture of the department and organization. Conversely, it is also important to ensure that the culture of the organization fits the potential employee and that their vision and values align.

Healthcare facilities vary by specialty and patient needs, with plans of care ranging from low risk to critical and traumatic. The CNM holds leadership responsibilities for all clinical nutrition-related productivity. Therefore, understanding the process of predicting and identifying patient needs and executing plans of care is crucial, and the CNM must have the appropriate employees to assist with this. For a healthcare facility that specializes in trauma or burn care, the CNM would seek and recruit dietitians with a certification in nutrition support or those who have experience working in burn units or on wound

care teams. The clinical needs in subacute or long-term care facilities differ substantially from those in acute care; accordingly, a CNM would seek a board certified specialist in gerontological nutrition or someone with previous long-term care experience for this role. In a dialysis center, the CNM would aim to recruit a board certified specialist in renal nutrition or someone interested in completing this specialty training.

Dietitians who function as PSMs, whether in an acute care hospital, physical medicine and rehabilitation center, skilled nursing facility, assisted living facility, or behavioral health facility, must first gain a full understanding of the operation and identify the needs of the department as they relate to the organization. They can ask questions like what types of individuals will make this operation a success. The ability to manage multiple deliverables simultaneously, be a team player, take initiative, and pay close attention to detail are among the skills that come to mind.

To aid in recruiting, hospitals or healthcare facilities often form relationships with local universities and colleges, especially those with programs focusing on healthcare. Recruiting the right candidates is essential for the success of the business.

general manager still was not promoted to the corporate trainer role. Feeling that they were misled during the recruitment process, the general manager grew frustrated and quit.

Retention issues such as this can be avoided by ensuring that hiring personnel do not make inappropriate promises to candidates. In addition, nonmetric performance variables such as expectations for behaviors, attitudes, and professionalism can be outlined up front, in addition to established metrics such as KPIs (measurable indicators of progress toward specific goals). Establishing these performance variables can help hold both the employee and employer accountable for on-the-job-performance.

Loss of employees because of job dissatisfaction may stem from poor management and leadership in an organization, conflicts with colleagues, a workplace culture that is not a good fit, or lack of support on the job. For example, a foodservice employee may be unable to execute assigned tasks because management has failed to provide the basic tools required to properly execute the tasks. Good employees who strive for excellence in their performance typically complete assigned duties prior to a deadline, connect with supervisors to have appropriate career development conversations, and take initiative in proactive roles within their departments. However, without the support of managers or leaders, employees

cannot fulfill their responsibilities, grow frustrated, and ultimately may quit.

Unresolved conflicts with coworkers or managers also may affect retention. If conflict arises between employees and they are unable to resolve the conflict themselves, employees should inform management and request mediation to help them work toward a resolution. If a conflict arises between an employee and their supervisor and the employee has provided sufficient opportunities for the supervisor to address the issue without resolution, it may become necessary for the employee to escalate the matter. Accordingly, the employee may consult the organizational chart to identify an appropriate person within the chain of command to consult

with the goal of seeking resolution. In a larger organization with a designated human resources department, the employee typically should involve a human resource professional. In these situations, it is advantageous for all parties to collaborate and communicate openly to resolve conflicts. See the Dietitian's Perspective on staff retention below.

Emotional Intelligence

An effective manager possesses many skills beyond the technical ability to efficiently run a department. These human or interpersonal management skills include

DIETITIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

The Nutrition Manager and Staff Retention

Registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) who function in leadership roles (eg, foodservice director, lead dietitian, clinical nutrition manager, patient services manager) have a considerable impact on retention and turnover rates. If a department experiences an increase in turnover, it may be because the manager failed to retain talent by providing limited opportunities for growth, not addressing compensation concerns, or ignoring conflicts. The manager may lack the emotional intelligence or self-awareness necessary to realize that they need to improve their management practices. On the other hand, managers can excel by recognizing talent and understanding the strategies needed to help employees grow, develop, and succeed within the organization.

In clinical nutrition, inadequate staff retention poses not only a financial burden but also a performance and productivity issue for the remaining team members who bear the brunt of an increased workload. Insufficient clinical staffing means that the remaining employees must increase their daily patient load, sometimes by as many as 10 patients per day. If such a situation is ongoing, it may lead to increased staff frustration, burnout, and further loss of employees.

When vacancies arise in the kitchen, the remaining team members face the option of either taking on additional shifts to cover the opening (potentially incurring overtime pay) or working short staffed with increased workloads for the individuals on each shift. An emotionally intelligent manager recognizes that, during such times, they may need to get their hands dirty and provide frontline support to alleviate some of the burden on their employees. This proactive approach aims to prevent the increase of frustration levels and enhance the retention of remaining staff. Keeping staff engaged and empowered, supporting them, and showing them how much they are valued should prove fruitful and help reduce turnover.

The proper onboarding, training, and education of new staff is vital to retention. Training clinical staff on nutrition protocols and procedures, teaching proper documentation in electronic medical records, supplying the team with the appropriate tools and resources to execute their jobs, and providing opportunities for growth and development should help retain good talent. A well-informed team with leaders who practice open communication and active, hands-on participation will benefit from an increase in staff retention.

emotional intelligence (or emotional quotient). Emotional intelligence can be described as the ability to understand one's personal emotions as well as the emotions of others. Being emotionally intelligent also means being able to remain in control of one's personal emotions regardless of the situation. Emotionally intelligent people often believe in the value of active listening and have a strong desire to self reflect for the purpose of self-improvement.

A strong level of emotional intelligence is important for managers who are engaged in the processes of recruiting and retaining employees. Emotional intelligence plays a part in creating nondiscriminatory and unbiased job descriptions and postings. Individuals in management or leadership roles may frequently encounter challenging situations with employees, colleagues, patients, clients, or customers in which they must remain empathic and in control of their emotional intelligence. When emotions run high, involved parties may become angry, frustrated, scared, or sad, but quick decision-making paired with emotional intelligence can make a situation more manageable. A high degree of emotional intelligence can help defuse a difficult or hostile situation more quickly and expedite a resolution to the issue at hand. Simply stated, employees are more likely to stay

employed when they feel valued, appreciated, safe, and cared for. Having a good understanding of emotional intelligence can have a substantial positive impact on the way employees perceive an organization. If they are satisfied with their direct supervisors, they may be more willing to remain employed with the organization, even if there is some friction in other aspects of their job.

Emotional intelligence also plays a role when an employee is considering the organizational chart. By understanding the chart and adhering to the proper chain of command, employees can utilize their emotional intelligence effectively when communicating with superiors. Before bypassing the chain of command and escalating concerns to the next level of leadership in the hierarchy, for example, employees should take into account the sentiments of the superior with whom they are having issues. In instances of interpersonal issues, experts advise employees to practice professionalism and decency. Direct communication with the offending individual should be prioritized, providing the individual an opportunity to address and rectify their behavior. During a conflict, it is important to consider that the other person may not be aware of how their actions or words are being perceived.

Summary

- By understanding the structure within an organization, hiring personnel can better determine the staffing needs of a company and work to recruit the most qualified candidates.
- However, simply recruiting the most qualified candidates is not enough. Once new hires are onboard, management and leadership should tap into their emotional intelligence as a common practice to improve employee retention.
- Keeping employees satisfied on the job also means ensuring that items discussed during recruitment come to fruition.
- Employee turnover results in one of the highest costs for most companies, both inside and outside of the foodservice industry; therefore, recruiting the most qualified candidates and treating them well is crucial to operational success.

Staff Recruitment and Retention

Francisco is the lead registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) for Meadowbrook Central School District. He is responsible for each school in the large district, including one high school, two middle schools, and several elementary schools. Francisco currently has four RDNs working for him, all of whom have been with the school district for less than 2 years. Francisco has struggled to retain RDNs, although he is not sure why. With recent approval from the school board to add RDNs to the two remaining schools, Francisco and his current team need to recruit staff. In addition to recruiting, Francisco decides it is important to put energy into retention and determine why RDNs are not staying with the school district.

Francisco decides to start with himself and do some self-awareness training, beginning with self-reflection. After considerable self-reflection, Francisco begins to question whether some or all of the RDN turnover is due to his management and leadership style. Concerned about his ability to lead, Francisco decides the next appropriate step is to meet informally with his current RDNs to ask for their input. Francisco schedules a meeting the following week at a popular local restaurant and arranges to hold the meeting during the afternoon rather than after work.

Francisco initiates the meeting by informing the staff that they are in a secure environment where they can openly and honestly express their perceptions. To Francisco's surprise, the majority of his staff are eager to contribute. However, recognizing the importance of cultural humility, Francisco understands that one of his RDNs might choose not to speak up due to that person's cultural norms. To guarantee that every voice is acknowledged, Francisco informs his team that he has set up an anonymous comment/feedback box away from his office for them to use freely. He also encourages future private conversations, ensuring open communication channels for all.

During the meeting, two consequential issues come to light: disparities between what was promised during the recruitment process and the actual day-to-day responsibilities of the RDNs and feelings of disrespect and inadequate support. Francisco expresses gratitude to his employees for providing feedback and requests more specific examples related to perceptions of disrespect and lack of support.

The RDNs share that the foodservice directors and certified dietary managers (CDMs) at their respective schools consistently apply poor management principles and treat them disrespectfully. The directors and CDMs often question decisions made by the RDNs and perceive them as solely focused on nutrition guidelines without consideration of costs or budget constraints. There are frequent deviations from the menus prescribed by the RDNs, which align with Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. In addition, the directors and CDMs do not allow the RDNs to fulfill their assigned duties regarding allergen cross contamination avoidance training and oversight of the food allergen stations, asserting that addressing allergens is solely the responsibility of the directors and CDMs. The RDNs also express a concern about insufficient support from the school administration for the nutrition counseling program aimed at children and their parents. This lack of backing hinders the effectiveness of the program.

After listening to the concerns raised by the RDNs, Francisco expresses his gratitude and redirects the discussion toward the inconsistencies between recruitment

promises and actual job duties. He asks for specific examples from the RDNs. They point out that during the recruitment phase they were promised fair annual raises. (Despite the common practice in many companies to discourage discussions about pay, such constraints can be considered unfair labor practices under the National Labor Relations Act. Regardless of a company's culture attempting to restrict conversations about compensation, employees often share information about their income.) The RDNs explain that in comparison with their colleagues, they did not receive raises commensurate with their expectations after joining the school district. Moreover, the RDNs express disappointment that despite verbal commitments made during the recruitment process, they were not given the opportunity to conduct monthly nutrition highlights for the students. The RDNs suggest that these issues contribute to the challenges in retaining RDNs within the school district. They assert that the consistent lack of appreciation prompts them to seek new job opportunities.

Recognizing the concerns raised about the foodservice directors and CDMs, Francisco apologizes for their actions and assures the RDNs that he will investigate these matters the next day following a review of the school district's organizational chart. Francisco emphasizes the reinstatement of the open communication policy, encouraging the RDNs to approach him whenever necessary. To facilitate more timely discussions, Francisco proposes the addition of a weekly, informal wrap-up meeting. He expresses gratitude for the valuable feedback received, thanks his employees, and reiterates his openness to addressing any issues promptly. He emphasizes the value he places on their contributions and provides each RDN with positive feedback, reinforcing their importance within the team.

Case Study Critical Thinking Questions

1. Despite Francisco's doubts about his management style, he made decisions throughout the case study that spoke to his ability to be an effective manager. What were those decisions?
2. Why was it effective planning on Francisco's part to schedule the informal chat as a meeting that took place away from school grounds?
3. Why was it necessary to hold the informal meeting the following week, rather than wait until after new RDNs were hired?
4. After the issues with the foodservice directors and CDMs were identified, how might consulting an organizational chart help the situation?
5. Francisco learned that many of the problems that the RDNs had with the foodservice directors and CDMs centered around issues of trust, respect, and control. What could Francisco do to help correct things?
6. What important tool used during recruitment should also be used on the job to serve as a guide for employee duties? How could this tool be related to retention?
7. How can recruitment activities later affect retention, even though recruitment takes place before the start of a job?
8. Why was it relevant to mention how Francisco ended his meeting?

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