

Don't be a drive-by training victim

By Monica Wofford

We've all seen it: The one-time campaign, the one-time class, the one-day training event sold as a solution.

It's called drive-by training — and it's not uncommon and it's not effective. Yet it happens in respectable companies daily. It's the one-day event meant to be the be-all and end-all to your employee's problem, yet no one ever asked the employee what he learned at the event or what the real problem was — so he didn't care.

If you expect those you work with to care about training, make it something worth caring about. Make it something they are involved in, not something you force them to attend. Sell them on the idea that this training and follow-up coaching will add tools to their current choices and add skill to their current abilities, and essentially make their lives easier.

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Your goal should be to solve the problem through training, not to pawn off the responsibility to some outside source simply because you do not have the time to worry about it.

LOOK WITHIN

Look closely at the root cause of your employee's behavior or lack of performance. Is she not greeting people when they walk in because she doesn't want to or because no one ever spelled it out for her? You shouldn't have your employee take customer-service training when the real issue is you failing to share your expectations, coaching, or consequences.

If you believe that everyone you work with just knows what you want without you having to share expectations or how you would like for things to work, you might be expecting telepathy skills to work in your office.

The same goes for training. If you expect people to immediately know how to apply the skills from a training session in another city to the goings on in your office, it is not likely to happen unless you go over it with them afterward and pull out the points you find most relevant.

BECOME A VALUABLE RESOURCE

If you're a valuable business resource to those in your office, you can get to the heart of your challenges and conduct meaningful training, instead of a mere exercise.

Those you work with *want* training from you. They want direction and coaching, but if you are always too busy, too tired, or too focused on patients, you send the message that you don't have time for training. So when they do get training from elsewhere, it really isn't that important.

The more you are involved in training or coaching those you work with, the faster you will find solutions. Those who deal with the patients when they walk in every day are often closer to the front-desk problems than you are.

Ask them for suggestions on how to make the process flow more smoothly. Ask those that answer the

phones how to streamline answering questions or how to multitask more effectively. Maybe it is nothing more than a hands-free headset that is needed, instead of a training session on motivation.

However, if it is a motivational problem that stems from lacking rewards, they might tell you that as well. Maybe they don't feel valued. Again, a drive-by training class will not fix this challenge.

Training is the transfer of knowledge and skill needed when there is a skill gap, not when there is a difference of opinion. Have employees truly forgotten how to perform customer service or are they struggling with a culture that only supports "Do as I say, not as I do?" Performance problems rarely stem from a lack of memory.

Different companies and organizations have different cultures, and the more you understand how yours works, the more valuable coaching and training you can

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PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

provide or ask for.

Do your research, ask the questions of those you work with, and learn to respect the process they follow that was either taught to them or created when they were left to their own devices.

It's a process, not a drive-by event. But if you follow the process, you will have some of the best-trained and most-loyal employees on the planet. After all, that is what you are seeking, isn't it? ☞



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Quick Tip

Want more wellness patients?

If you want to attract (and keep) more wellness-minded practice members, do two things: Talk about wellness, and measure wellness.

For most, talking is easy. But to measure wellness, use the Wellness Wheel as part of your initial paperwork to establish a baseline of your patient's overall well-being in seven dimensions (physical, financial, family, social, career, spiritual, and mental).

Have your patient bubble in his or her subjective assessment on a scale of 1 to 10, then complete another at their progress report. Compare. Discuss. Inspire.

— William D. Esteb, Patient Media, www.patientmedia.com