Managing team change

When someone leaves your team, or a new person starts, it can be an unsettling time if you don’t know how to deal with the change. BDPMA chairman Amelia Bray offers some advice.

Change is never easy for some people

I recall one week in practice, several years ago now when two members of staff both handed in their notice. This may not be a major incident in your business, but it can be a huge upheaval. Looking back though, it was actually the catalyst for a massive review of our entire business ethos and became the start of a much more focused system for recruitment.

The right team

Hiring quality team members is one of the most important and challenging aspects of our business. Having the right people doing the right job is essential but it doesn’t happen on its own. You have to create the right environment for your team.

How new team members actually do their jobs, partly based on the culture you create, tells you a lot about your business. It’s no wonder that learning the complex processes of the computer system can be quite challenging. If someone is struggling, you can’t just rush them or cut corners. However, if the new team member is flexible about the timeframes for learning the new processes, they are more likely to stick with it. So how can you help them with their training?

Write it down

Training must be an established process within your practice and begins even before you hire the successful candidate. We send a job description and a person specification to all applicants. A job description is a key tool in running any business; the employees have to know what they are expected to do, and how they are expected to do it. Each role within your organisation should have a complete written job description, so personnel changes should be seamless – everything should be carefully documented so that a new employee can be clear about the responsibilities that have been assigned to the role.

How can you help them with their training?

Training is working to the same structure. If one person tackles the recall system in one way, and someone else goes about it another way, then the net result will be complete confusion. This is a good opportunity to ensure that your procedures are standardised. Training decisions are probably best made by discussion among team members with different experience levels and as such will be more willing participants.

Set realistic goals

Finally you will need to make sure that the training process has timeframes. How quickly do you want your new employee to be able to do their job on their own? Set realistic goals, they won’t be able to do everything within the first week, but continuing the training for months on end could be hugely demoralising. It can be sensible to break down the training into manageable sections, then review each phase on completion.

You need to decide the tasks that are best handled by everyone in the practice, and those that only certain people can do. The best way to structure training is to save time and confusion. Having a well-trained, harmonious team will benefit from having a well-trained, harmonious team.

‘Ultimately it is you who will benefit from having a well-trained, harmonious team.’

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