

5 Critical Steps to Successful Supplemental Staffing

One of the most often overlooked areas of supplemental staffing is how facilities can ensure new healthcare professionals a comfortable and satisfying assignment in their new work environment. Ironically, this is a key factor to the success of any supplemental staffing assignment within your facility.

It's easy to assume that once the initial interview process, selection and confirmation have been completed, that the responsibilities end there. You've found a match, they've signed the contract, now what? What happens once the nurse arrives at the facility? It's the responsibility of both your staffing partner and the facility to create as inviting a welcome as possible. This can be accomplished through a variety of means, beginning with the interview process.

The Interview

An expedient interview is critical within the first 24 hours of finding a potential match. When this is implemented, there's a 96% success rate for hiring the "best" qualified candidate. The supplemental staffing industry is such a demand market that it's vital for managers to interview potential candidates as soon as possible, especially with the wealth of opportunities open to health care professionals today.

Although the interview process must be expedient, it must also be smooth and efficient. Nurse managers can prepare potential candidates by providing them with a thorough job description, so that the expectations between both the nurse and facility are understood clearly. With complimentary expectations, the route toward a successful assignment has begun.

The Information

Once an assignment has been confirmed between both parties, your staffing partner should share pertinent facts about your facility, with the nurse, location information and area sights. This initiates the "getting acquainted" process.

Your staffing partner should be able to provide potential nurses with guided information to include first-hand knowledge about your facility and location. Past supplemental staffers are a fabulous link for future nurses. This is especially important to the first-time nurse making a career transition from permanent staff to temporary staff.

We also suggest that the facility send the nurse any additional information, brochures or newsletters about the facility. Some facilities have customized introduction packets that are distributed directly to the nurses with local area information. The more information you can provide, the more personal attention they'll feel they're receiving from you. All of this contributes to making them feel a part of their new work environment, even though it may only be on a temporary basis.

The Orientation

Prior to the arrival of your temporary nurses, make sure your permanent staff and Unit Managers are aware of the new nurses about to come on board. If possible, let them know the names of each nurse, when their assignment begins and perhaps a little background on their previous work experience. This will enhance the working relationship between your permanent and temporary staff, creating a more harmonious environment.

Our nurses have expressed that their most positive assignments begin with orientation classes for all new temporary staff. This creates a real camaraderie amongst the nurses. They get acquainted and familiarize themselves with a group of people in a similar situation as themselves. Facilities that maintain a large usage of temporary nurses typically schedule specific orientation dates for nurses for this exact purpose. This will help them feel like they are a part of the bigger picture, not just a temporary fixture.

The Assignment

During the assignment, it's vital to maintain consistent contact between yourself and the temporary nurses to create a sense of community. This two-way communication will allow each party to freely express themselves and their concerns with understanding and respect. By promoting an open-door policy, the nurse will feel he/she has a voice that's being heard, with opinions that matter.

One of the best ways to achieve this relationship is by providing initial evaluations to the temporary nurses (within the first few weeks). This allows you the opportunity to assess how the assignment is going, and offers the staffing partner a chance to address specific questions that may exist.

The Conclusion

At the conclusion of each assignment, it is suggested to prepare a referral or survey sheet for your nurses to fill out with questions about their experience as well as room for comments or suggestions about the facility. The results of such surveys may be used to share with new temporary staff about your facility, or may provide you with suggestions for future orientation classes.

The most your facility can offer to ensure you're playing a "good host" to your temporary nurses, is to treat them as permanent staff. Successful supplemental staffing is achieved with clearly defined scheduling, responsibilities and expectations.

And remember, your staffing partner is just that. A partner, assisting your every effort to play a good host to your temporary nurses. They are a liaison between your facility and the nurses, from the beginning of each assignment to the very end. Communication is their most powerful tool, ensuring everyone's needs are met along the way. The nursing profession is faced with a multitude of challenges in today's health care environment. Supplemental staffing is designed to complement these challenges by providing qualified, skilled professionals to meet your needs, when you need them.

In the end, the success of supplemental staffing depends a great deal on your playing good host to your temporary nurses. They'll feel welcomed and accepted. So much so, they just might want to stay.