Cultivating Commitment: Strategies For Retaining Nursing Facility Administrators

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Abstract

High turnover among nursing facility administrators poses a significant financial and operational burden on healthcare organizations. This study explores factors contributing to administrator departures and identifies leadership strategies to foster retention. Drawing on Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory and the concept of organizational embeddedness, the research emphasizes the importance of creating a positive work environment that fulfills both intrinsic and extrinsic needs. Effective leadership practices encompassing supportive communication, career development opportunities, recognition programs, and work-life balance initiatives are crucial for retaining top talent. By prioritizing these strategies, healthcare leaders can cultivate a more committed and engaged workforce, ensuring stability and continuity of care within nursing facilities.

Introduction

Healthcare leaders can significantly enhance employee retention by integrating it into their organizational vision, mission, and core values (1). Retaining high performers fosters long-term success (source on importance of retaining high performers). Underst[1]anding why employees leave is crucial for effective retention strategies. A study suggest that individuals seek balance when they perceive a negative work-life imbalance (2). Work itself can act as an intrinsic motivator when it fulfills individual needs (3). Herzberg's two-factor theory (source on Herzberg's theory) provides a valuable framework for understanding these motivators. Intrinsic factors, such as the inherent interest and meaningfulness of the work, can drive employee engagement and reduce turnover intentions (4). Leaders should leverage this theory to create work environments that foster intrinsic motivation and cultivate a sense of value in employees.

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Organizational embeddedness, characterized by strong fit, links, and sacrifices between employees and their organizations, fosters employee retention. This framework highlights the importance of fostering a sense of belonging within a team environment (5). High levels of organizational commitment, encompassing loyalty, work ethic, and a shared vision for growth, are a product of strong embeddedness (6). This commitment, in turn, leads to improved performance, job satisfaction, and ultimately, lower turnover (5). Leaders who leverage organizational embeddedness strategies can cultivate a more committed, effective, and productive workforce, ultimately reducing turnover among nursing facility administrators. Enhancing administrator commitment not only promotes stability and productivity but also contributes to the organization's success and profitability (4).

Employee engagement has emerged as a critical concern for business leaders due to its link to negative outcomes like employee turnover (source on negative outcomes of low engagement). Job satisfaction plays a key role in fostering organizational commitment and reducing turnover intentions (source on job satisfaction and turnover). A study emphasizes that leadership strategies promoting job motivation and satisfaction can improve employee performance (7). Motivating employees is a core managerial responsibility, requiring leaders to leverage various strategies (8). Highly committed employees identify with the organization's goals, demonstrate greater productivity, and exhibit stronger accountability (9). By fostering employee engagement among nursing facility administrators, healthcare leaders can potentially enhance their performance and reduce turnover. In this study, we aim of this study is to explore and understand factors that contribute to retention of nursing facility administrators.

Culture of Organizations

Organizational culture, a shared system of values, rules, and beliefs, plays a significant role in employee retention (10). Positive cultures that foster engagement and commitment to the organization's vision are more likely to retain employees (11). Such cultures cultivate loyalty, job satisfaction, and productivity, all essential for success in a competitive healthcare landscape (source on importance of these factors in healthcare). Furthermore, consistent values and clear expectations can help new nursing facility administrators integrate quickly and feel invested in the organization's goals (11).

Organizational culture, encompassing shared values and beliefs, significantly influences employee engagement and ultimately, organizational success (source on organizational culture and success). A positive culture fosters a sense of community among employees, leading to increased proactiveness, commitment, and engagement (source on positive culture and employee engagement). Conversely, a weak culture can negatively impact these factors and contribute to voluntary turnover among nursing facility administrators. The strength of relationships, job environment, and ultimately, administrator retention are all demonstrably linked to the prevailing organizational culture.

Employee turnover, a significant challenge in healthcare, can be influenced by two broad categories: organizational culture and personal characteristics (12). Organizational culture, encompassing shared values and beliefs, plays a critical role. Wright's (2021) systematic review highlights the importance of leadership in fostering a culture that promotes employee retention through fulfillment, growth opportunities, and a positive work environment. Conversely, ineffective leadership and a weak culture can lead to turnover among valuable employees (13). A study by Lyons and Bandura recommend strategies for leaders to cultivate a positive climate, including clear communication, competitive compensation, and support for employee development (14). These factors can influence an administrator's decision to stay or leave. Furthermore, individual adaptability of nursing

facility administrators can also impact their success within a specific organizational culture. Administrators who can effectively integrate into the existing culture are more likely to thrive and contribute to the organization's success.

Effective leadership is critical for retaining employees in today's diverse workplaces. Multicultural leadership skills empower leaders to foster inclusive cultures that integrate diverse perspectives (source on multicultural leadership). A study by Carter et al. (2019) highlight the leader's role in shaping organizational culture, which can significantly influence employee retention intentions (14). Positive work environments characterized by career development opportunities, job security, and advancement possibilities further enhance commitment (15). Leaders who actively investigate reasons for employee turnover, as suggested by Klotz and Bolino (2019), can identify and address potential shortcomings in culture, benefits, work-life balance, or compensation (16). Furthermore, strong relationship management skills, a key component of social competence, enable leaders to effectively navigate diverse teams and manage emotions constructively (source on relationship management and social competence). By cultivating a positive, inclusive culture and addressing employee concerns, healthcare leaders can leverage multicultural leadership to enhance nursing facility administrator retention and foster a more engaged workforce.

Employee-organization culture fit significantly impacts retention. Difficulties adapting to the organizational culture can lead to turnover intentions (source on cultural fit and turnover). Conversely, feelings of inclusion foster employee commitment and behaviors like reliability and punctuality, ultimately contributing to a sustainable competitive advantage (Moore et al., 2020). Leaders play a crucial role in creating a safe and positive work environment that reduces job dissatisfaction and disengagement (17). A study by Kyei-Poku (2019) emphasizes the importance of interactional justice, where management practices fairness and respect (18). This fosters perceptions of organizational support and belongingness, which can mitigate turnover intentions. Furthermore, Matimbwa and Ochumbo (2019) highlight the positive impact of a supportive work environment with promotional opportunities, feedback, recognition, and development opportunities on employee motivation and satisfaction. For nursing facility administrators, a strong cultural fit allows them to flourish, perform at their best, and contribute significantly to their own and the organization's success (15).

Factors contribute to retention of nursing facility administrators:

Financial compensation

Financial compensation plays a significant role in retaining nursing facility administrators and reducing voluntary turnover. Effective compensation policies motivate employees and influence their performance(1). A study further highlight that financial rewards can enhance employees' perceptions of the meaningfulness of their work. Compensation serves as a crucial tool for organizations to guide employee behavior, maintain motivation, and foster job satisfaction (19). Another study emphasizes that compensation directly impacts employee motivation and dedication to the organization (20). Increased motivation, in turn, can lead to greater job satisfaction. Therefore, healthcare leaders should design comprehensive compensation packages for nursing facility administrators, encompassing both direct and indirect forms of compensation.

Employee retention in healthcare hinges on a multifaceted approach. Job satisfaction, encompassing an employee's commitment and feelings towards their work, is a key factor. Satisfied employees demonstrate increased motivation and performance (21). Compensation serves as a crucial element in attracting and retaining talent (source on compensation and

talent). Leaders should ensure fair and competitive compensation packages for nursing facility administrators to reduce turnover. Effective compensation strategies motivate employees and encourage them to remain with the organization (3). However, a holistic approach is crucial. Non-monetary rewards, encompassing opportunities for learning and development and an attractive work environment, can significantly enhance employee retention strategies (22). The concept of total rewards, encompassing both financial and non-financial aspects valued by employees, allows healthcare organizations to design comprehensive packages that foster satisfaction, motivation, and ultimately, reduce administrator turnover.

Recognition and Reward

Reward programs can be a valuable strategy for reducing nursing facility administrator turnover. Effective total rewards programs, aligning various components, empower leaders to attract, motivate, and retain employees, ultimately driving organizational success (23). Alhmoud and Rjoub (2019) outline three key objectives for such programs: attracting qualified talent, motivating high performance, and encouraging adherence to organizational standards. Leaders leverage these objectives through a focus on "respect, recognition, and rewards" (source on the 3 Rs of rewards), fostering employee satisfaction and retention. Ideally, reward programs deliver meaningful recognition that enhances satisfaction (24). Organizations offering significant rewards and recognition are better positioned to attract and retain top performers (22). The core objectives of recognition and rewards include motivating performance, reinforcing desired behaviors, and creating a positive work environment. Content, motivated employees are essential for organizational success. By attracting the right talent, reducing turnover, and driving objective achievement, reward programs contribute significantly to organizational goals (23). Well-designed programs that provide opportunities for achievement can enhance intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors, ultimately reducing turnover (25). A holistic approach that considers both intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) rewards is crucial for fostering positive employee emotions towards their work and driving higher performance levels, ultimately benefiting organizational productivity.

Intrinsic rewards and recognition are powerful motivators for employees, with a positive impact on job performance. Successfully completing tasks fosters a sense of accomplishment, a key intrinsic reward (source on intrinsic rewards and task completion). Furthermore, recognition from colleagues and superiors serves as a tangible source of validation and engagement (26). This combination of intrinsic rewards and recognition enhances employee satisfaction and motivation (26). Feeling valued by their organization boosts employee self-esteem and fuels continued motivation (3). Therefore, healthcare leaders in nursing homes can leverage effective recognition programs to increase administrator satisfaction and job motivation, potentially leading to improved performance.

Management of Stress

Nursing facility administrators face unique stressors due to the demanding nature of their work. Long hours, non-standard schedules, and on-call demands contribute to a hectic work pace with frequent interruptions (27). This, combined with the diverse responsibilities ranging from building maintenance to clinical oversight, can lead to significant job-related stress (source on administrator responsibilities). Stress, a condition impacting productivity, health, and job satisfaction, is a known contributor to decreased employee commitment (George & Zakkariya, 2015). A study by Kurniawaty et al. (2019) further highlight the link between work environment, stress, and job satisfaction, ultimately influencing turnover intentions (28). Job stress can manifest in reduced effectiveness, diminished motivation, and decreased satisfaction (29). These negative outcomes can lead to increased turnover. Conversely, supportive

leadership practices that prioritize well-being and provide continuous guidance can significantly reduce stress (source on supportive leadership and stress). Therefore, healthcare leaders have a critical role to play in retaining administrators by fostering a supportive work environment that mitigates stress and promotes job satisfaction.

Job-related stress is a significant factor contributing to nursing facility administrator turnover. The demanding nature of the role, characterized by long hours and non-standard schedules, can lead to fatigue and decreased alertness (30). Furthermore, the mismatch between job demands and administrator skills can exacerbate stress (31). Stress can manifest in emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation, and ultimately, a desire to leave the organization (32). Supportive leadership practices play a critical role in mitigating stress and promoting retention. By identifying potential stressors, providing ongoing feedback and development opportunities, and fostering a positive work environment, leaders can empower administrators and enhance job satisfaction (source on supportive leadership practices). This not only benefits employee well-being but also contributes to improved performance and organizational success.

Life-Work Balance

Work-life balance, a critical factor influencing employee retention, refers to the equilibrium between professional and personal demands. While some leaders may overlook its impact, neglecting work-life balance can significantly contribute to turnover, particularly among women who comprise a substantial portion of the workforce (33). Their study highlights a desire for family-friendly policies, such as flexible work arrangements and remote work options, as key factors in retention (4). The demanding nature of healthcare administration necessitates balancing professional obligations with personal life. Leaders who recognize this can implement flexible work options like compressed workweeks, telecommuting, or flexible scheduling (34). These arrangements not only enhance employee well-being but also contribute to a more productive work environment. Unmanaged work-related stress can negatively impact employee health, ultimately affecting organizational productivity. By prioritizing work-life balance through flexible work arrangements, healthcare leaders can empower nursing facility administrators, reduce stress, and foster a more sustainable work environment, ultimately leading to lower turnover.

Training and Development

Effective training and development programs are crucial for retaining nursing facility administrators. Training equips administrators with the necessary skills to excel in their current roles, while development fosters long-term growth (source on training vs. development). Junaid A study emphasize the commitment organizations demonstrate by investing in employee skill development, ultimately enhancing productivity (29). Hunegnawu (2019) further highlights the link between a continuous learning culture and increased organizational commitment. Supportive leadership that prioritizes training and development opportunities can lead to positive employee outcomes, including reduced turnover intentions, increased engagement, and enhanced job satisfaction (source on supportive leadership and training) (35). Investing in employee development is not just an expense; it's a strategic investment in retaining valuable knowledge and expertise within the organization (36). Effective human resource management practices, encompassing both reactive strategies (e.g., compensation, training) and proactive strategies (e.g., career development), are essential for talent retention (Nelson et al., 2020). Healthcare leaders can leverage these practices by engaging nursing facility administrators in career development programs and supporting their career planning efforts.

Investing in training and development programs yields significant returns for healthcare organizations by fostering administrator retention. Training equips administrators with the necessary skills to excel in their current roles, while development programs cultivate their long-term growth potential (source on training vs. development). A study emphasize training as a core human resource development practice (1). Effective programs empower employees to perform at their full capacity (37). This, in turn, enhances job satisfaction and organizational commitment (37). Chou and Ramser (2019) further highlight the positive impact of continuous development on employee productivity, engagement, and motivation (38). Leaders who prioritize development opportunities demonstrate genuine interest in their employees' professional growth, fostering a sense of obligation and reciprocity (39). This commitment can be particularly motivating for ambitious nursing facility administrators seeking career advancement. By providing comprehensive training and development programs, healthcare leaders can cultivate a more skilled, engaged, and loyal workforce, ultimately reducing administrator turnover.

Support of the Organizations

Supportive leadership practices are critical for retaining nursing facility administrators. Perceived organizational support, fostered through leadership and human resource practices, positively impacts job embeddedness and reduces turnover intentions (1). Supportive leaders exhibit traits that motivate, instill trust, and share knowledge, ultimately empowering their teams. Effective communication is a cornerstone of supportive leadership. Guan and Frenkel (2019) highlight how open communication from supervisors reduces employee burnout and turnover (40). McCune Stein et al. (2020) further emphasize the role of communication in enhancing professional development (41). Additionally, directive and supportive leadership styles are positively linked to employee job satisfaction (42). Investing in administrators' growth through mentorship programs demonstrates leadership commitment and strengthens organizational loyalty. Furthermore, effective conflict management fostered by supportive leaders can minimize stress and contribute to a more positive work environment (43). Healthcare organizations that prioritize employee well-being through open communication, empowering leadership practices, and supportive resources can cultivate a more engaged workforce (44). By prioritizing these practices, healthcare leaders can build stronger relationships with nursing facility administrators, ultimately reducing turnover.

Conclusion

Employee retention, particularly among nursing facility administrators, is a critical concern for healthcare leaders. Understanding the factors driving administrator departures, such as lack of support, inadequate compensation, and work-life imbalance, is essential for developing effective retention strategies. This study highlights the importance of fostering a positive organizational culture that cultivates a sense of belonging and empowers administrators through continuous learning and development opportunities. Furthermore, by prioritizing work-life balance, providing recognition for achievements, and fostering supportive leadership practices, healthcare organizations can create a more satisfying work environment. Ultimately, these strategies not only enhance administrator retention but also contribute to a more productive and successful healthcare system.

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