

Projects for Increasing Job Satisfaction and Creating a Healthy Work Environment



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ABSTRACT

Workplace culture is one of the biggest factors driving employee commitment and engagement. Multiple studies have shown that hospitals will perform better over time if employees are committed to their jobs and engaged in what they do. By creating and implementing multiple projects during a three-year period, a team at the University of Florida Health Shands Hospital, Gainesville, increased job satisfaction. Projects included ensuring meal breaks were offered, creating a serenity area, developing the patient ambassador role, actively addressing bullying and unprofessional behavior, assigning a student mentee to work with staff members on culture change, offering regular fun activities, redesigning the unit, reorganizing schedules to reduce stress, implementing education and training initiatives, establishing a Unit Practice Council, and implementing reward and recognition programs. Survey results and anecdotal evidence suggest that these projects combined to increase employee satisfaction and employee retention rates. *AORN J* 100 (December 2014) 670-681. © AORN, Inc, 2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.aorn.2014.01.029>

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Workplace culture is one of the biggest factors that increase employee commitment, engagement, and job satisfaction. Studies have shown that hospitals perform better over time in virtually every measurable category when employees are engaged with what they are doing and committed to their jobs.¹⁻⁴ A high level of workforce commitment is linked to improvement in organizational performance metrics (eg, customer and patient satisfaction). Workplace culture is often ingrained and difficult to change. Developing an understanding of a facility's current culture and defining a vision are the first steps to changing its culture. Changing culture

requires leaders with vision as well as the appropriate management tools to engage personnel in embracing a positive change for a healthier and more productive workplace.⁵

The University of Florida Health Shands Hospital, Gainesville, is an 800-bed inpatient academic surgical facility. Twice a year for many years, managers at the facility have asked employees to participate in a survey to evaluate employee engagement. The results are analyzed, and these surveys provide valuable feedback. This report refers to results from 2011, 2012, and 2013.

The surveys identify strengths and weaknesses of the work environment. Based on the results of

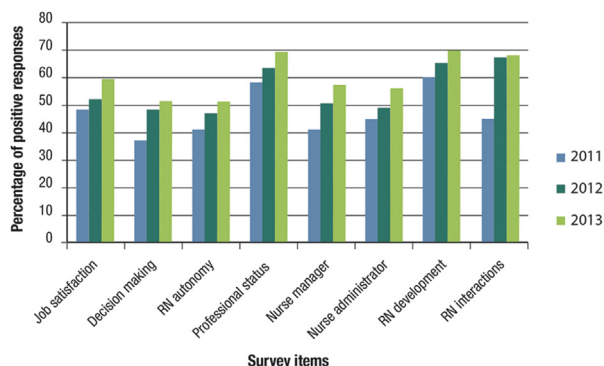


Figure 1. Results from National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI®) RN Survey with Job Satisfaction Scales conducted at The University of Florida Health Shands Hospital, 2011-2013. NDNQI is a registered trademark of the American Nurses Association, Silver Spring, MD.

the surveys (Figures 1 and 2), our facility formed the postanesthesia care unit (PACU) focus group, which included a representative from human resources, a nurse manager, a clinical leader, a nurse educator, and three staff nurses; the authors of this report were members of this focus group. We created an action plan for perioperative nurses based on feedback from the surveys. Our plan included making education a priority; developing a unit practice council (UPC) composed of staff nurses from the perioperative unit who present concerns, issues, and ideas for improvement; and forming a reward and recognition committee. These initiatives helped us increase job satisfaction and create a healthy work environment.

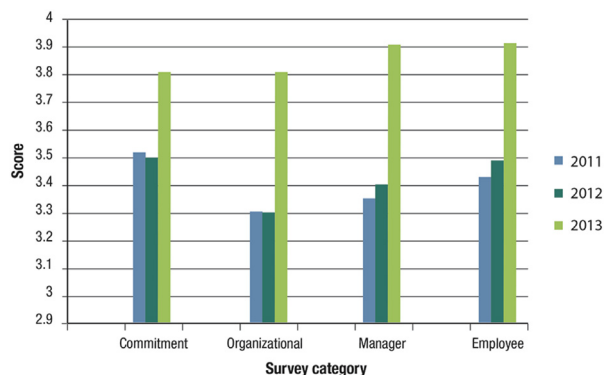


Figure 2. Results from the Morehead survey conducted at The University of Florida Health Shands Hospital, 2011-2013.

The UPC has formed smaller groups, called performance improvement team (PIT) crews. Each PIT crew has a “driver” who sets up meetings and the agenda and recruits team members. The crews do not make or enforce policy; rather, they bring recommendations to the managers for support. The PIT crews report to the UPC and, ultimately, the managers to help the progress of initiatives using a smaller, more intense group approach. For example, in 2013, the pediatric PIT crew implemented a pediatric-friendly cart with all pediatric supplies to provide pediatric-specific equipment and educational materials, the certification PIT crew assisted nurses with information and encouragement to promote certification for each nurse in the unit, the intensive care unit (ICU) PIT crew helped staff nurses become more familiar and better equipped in caring for ICU patients in the PACU, and the unit environment PIT crew looked for ways to further improve the unit environment. Staff members join these PIT crews as a way to further engage in the workplace and, in turn, improve their work satisfaction. By being involved in the solution to problems, staff members can gain a better appreciation for the barriers to change and have greater satisfaction with the results after a positive change occurs.

Our facility uses two standard tools to measure workplace engagement and job satisfaction: the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI®) RN Survey with Job Satisfaction Scales to measure RN satisfaction⁶ and the Morehead survey to measure employee engagement.⁷ Both surveys invite applicable individuals to participate using electronic invitations. The human resources department sends the Morehead survey to all staff members, and the nursing department sends the NDNQI survey to all RNs who have been working on the unit for at least three months; each survey is distributed once a year. Participation in the surveys is voluntary. Weekly reminders are sent during the three weeks the surveys are open for responses. To encourage participation, we set up a computer in a secure

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