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## **Winning at Employee Recruitment and Retention in the Work From Anywhere (WFA) Future**

An expanded employee recruitment market for healthcare and other industries, with previously limited work from anywhere (WFA) options, will be one of the lasting changes from COVID-19-driven remote-work adoption. Organizations traditionally limited by the local talent pool will now more readily recruit statewide, regionally, or nationally. It's important to note that hiring an employee from another state can be, from a regulatory standpoint, like opening a branch location in that state. Consult your legal, accounting, human resources and insurance departments before beginning the process. The requisite steps aside, consider some of the recruitment expansion benefits from a wider acceptance of remote work.

- Organizations in smaller or rural communities can recruit from a nearby town or a metropolis across state lines with deeper talent pools
- Organizations in higher-cost regions can recruit from lower-cost regions
- Mature workforces are susceptible to targeted recruitment from outsourcers and/or from organizations launching electronic health record (EHR) implementation projects
- Employees will have greater flexibility in choosing the where they work, without sacrificing where they live
- Employees have a wider potential of part-time opportunities that can transition to full-time with satisfying experiences

## **Winners and Losers**

Like with most changes, organizations will become either net winners or net losers. How do you position your organization as a net winner in the changing labor market? This can be an expansive topic, but the short answer is, good leadership. It's often said that employees don't leave organizations, they leave managers. It's equally true that, great leaders attract and retain good to great talent at a higher rate than average to poor managers. I have built out entire departments within months just by hiring a great manager. The manager's former employees kept calling, making recruiting relatively easy.

Effective training programs, fair compensation, and resources to do the work are still required, but you create an incentive for good employees to move to your organization and a hedge around existing team members by maintaining good leadership.

## **Build the Hedge**

Great leaders, the type that deliver high performance, have the respect of their team and anticipate the next challenges – they are indispensable. There are typically not enough of them, so when you do have them, ensure that you live the organization's values and that you are supportive, while challenging them to continue to grow.

Most organizations have a core group of steady managers with some poor managers. Steady managers are typically tenured managers with dependable performance, who occasionally exceed expectations. Steady managers are an undervalued and under-developed asset. They can flourish with coaching, development and encouragement to instill confidence.

## **Maximize Resources**

Emerging and often younger leaders are another undervalued resource. Healthcare organizations are known for writing job descriptions that only incumbent managers can fill, which lock out younger emerging leaders from advancing until they have nearly a decade on the job. When organizations do manage to get out of their own way and promote emerging leaders, they are infrequently intentional about their development. Once promising star managers leave their department, or retreat, afraid of risk taking and challenging historical practices. Younger leaders growing up in a virtual world of gaming and social media may bring some unique value to communication and engaging with WFA team members.

## **Address Weaknesses**

Finally, we keep too many poor managers in the wrong role. The two common archetypes of poor healthcare leaders are the incredibly likable person with an underdeveloped leadership skillset and the personally competent jerk/tyrant. Organizations allow their workforce to suffer as casualties of their poor leaders' indecision, fear, inflexibility, disorganization, or disengagement. Both archetypes can sometimes be redeemed. The likable incompetent may need to be paired with another leader or step-down while continuing development. The high performing jerk/tyrant can sometimes benefit

from an intentional personal and professional improvement plan, including counseling, but often they are best redeployed to lead processes and technology, rather than people. Ultimately, some will not survive the intentional development or redeployment efforts.

### **Prepare Now**

The open season on employee movement may still be months to a year away in your market, but it doesn't mean you should wait to be intentional around your managers. Some revenue cycle executives have shared that their managers struggled more with the forced transition to remote work than their team members. Start now with an intentional development plan that focuses on the virtual communication and coaching skills necessary for managing a remote workforce. Extend your personal coaching time, invest in coaches and facilitators to reframe their mindset from viewing the present time as surviving crisis to seeing opportunity. Internal human resources consultants, university based certificate programs, and/or choosing a consulting/advising firm that matches your values and vision should all be considered. Organizations with courageous, flexible, imaginative, caring, and inclusive leaders will win in the new remote employment marketplace.

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#### ***About the author:***

**Wendell White and HealthRev Advisors** create high performing leaders and teams that allow their clients to maximize revenue cycle value. Wendell is an innovator, speaker and principal for HealthRev Advisors, LLC. He lives in Richmond, VA.