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Factors that Affect the Retention of Pharmacy Technicians

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Background

The backbone of a successful home infusion pharmacy is the pharmacy technicians, which are responsible for proper aseptic procedures and providing a safe and properly compounded final product to patients. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of pharmacy technicians is expected to increase by 7% from 2018 to 2028 due to the increasing demand for pharmaceutical services.[1]

Experienced pharmacy technicians are a great asset to the growth of any pharmacy. Internal studies have shown that the average time to independent compounding for a previously untrained compounding technician is 6 months to 1 year. Even for those with previous compounding experience, it may take several months for the technician to contribute to production.[2] Overall pharmacy technician turnover rates for this company are on the rise.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to investigate this company's turnover rates and determine if there are factors that would affect the retention rates. The anticipated motivators to the employee retention are expected to be better wages, improved work environment, better working relationship with the management and coworkers, and the prospect to be promoted to a better position.

Methods

A survey created by Human Resources (HR) and Clinical Services was given to the pharmacy technicians of the company. The HR team administered the survey with a general feedback method. Approximately 27% (n=133) provided responses with feedback. The survey responses were collected via interview and allowed to give open ended feedback.

Figure 1: Results of Retention Survey

This graph shows the responses to the retention survey. It presents the top ten most popular responses to the question of what would keep you with the company longer. The remaining responses that were not included had a less than 4% response rate, including having a better work environment, less favoritism, improved teamwork, etc.

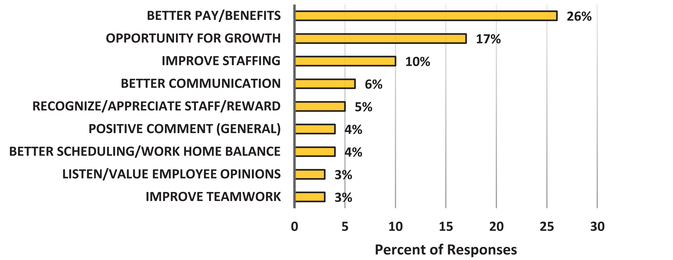


Figure 2: Types of Benefits/Payment

This graph further breaks down the response of better pay and benefit amongst the responses. When seeking better benefits/payment, the technicians specified that wanted more pay, better retirement plans, lower deductibles on insurance and more PTO.

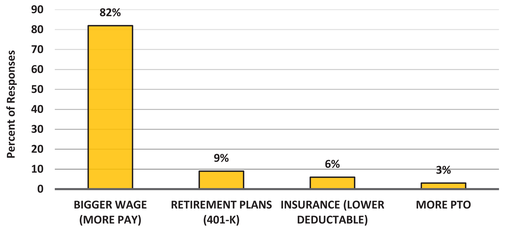


Figure 3: Types of Growth Opportunities

This graph further explains the types of growth opportunities the responders were expecting. The growth opportunities that the technicians were looking for included better training, promotions to managerial positions, more defined career path, and overall more autonomy.

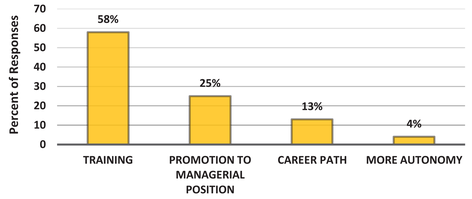
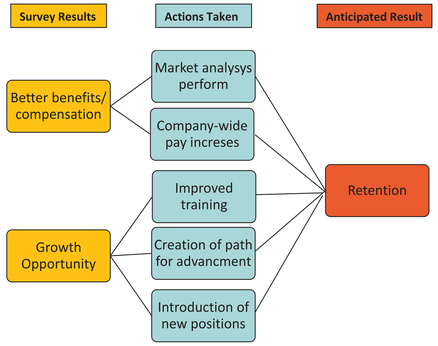


Figure 4:

This is a schematic of the results to the technician survey, the actions that were taken by the company, and the anticipated results to the actions taken.



Results

The annual turnover percentage for this corporation from 2019 to 2020 averages at 46.3% nationwide.

The technician retention data showed that approximately 26% (n=34) of the surveyed technicians were interested in receiving a competitive wage with better benefits. From this data, it was determined that 82% (n=28) wanted better compensation, 9% (n=3) were interested in better retirement plans, 6% (n=2) wanted better insurance benefits with lower deductibles, and 3% (n=1) wanted increased payed time off (PTO).

The second leading point of interest in terms of technician retention was the opportunity for growth and further development with the company, as 17% (n=23) of the technicians showed interest. When looking deeper at the data, it was determined that of the 17%, 58% (n=13) wanted better or more training, 25% (n=6) were seeking potential promotion to managerial positions, 13% (n=3) wanted an overall better defined career pathways, and 4% (n=1) wanted more autonomy.

Discussion

This company has started to initiate several new programs that would address the high turnover rates of the company's technicians. First, a market analysis of their technicians was conducted. Pay raises have occurred across the company to ensure that the technicians were being paid a fair wage and assuring them that they were valued.

Secondly, the corporate teams have been working to improve the training for technicians. These improvements include combining training modules and assessments with real time virtual post-module seminars and hiring technician trainers.

Third, the company is creating a path for advancement for the technicians and introducing new position like Pharmacy Manager for technicians to hold. This initiative will go into effect in the future to keep the technicians both engaged in their careers and helping flatten turnover rates.

References

[1]Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Pharmacy Technicians, https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/pharmacy-technicians.htm accessed August 15, 2020.
[2]Rosenfield, Darby; Kluge, Suzanne; Hocking, Annemarie, et al. Survey of Experience, Training History and Future Needs of Sterile Compounding Pharmacy Technicians within Home Infusion. May 9, 2019.

Disclosures

Authors of this presentation have the following to disclose concerning possible financial or personal relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this presentation: Mateusz Worwa, Suzanne Kluge, Mike Bavaro, Glen Gard, Julie Selfridge, Annemarie Hocking, Darby Rosenfeld: Nothing to disclose.

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