

AHCA/NCAL/MECF 58th Annual Convention and Exposition

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**W-1. Hire Like Your Business Depends on It
Monday, October 8, 2007 8:00 am – 10:00 am**

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STAFFING ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

This is a quick method for identifying appropriate staffing assessment tools based on your company's business needs.

Step 1. Identify your mission critical positions by estimating the financial impact of staffing decisions using this basic formula:

$$\text{Position Criticality} = (\text{number of hires per year into that position}) * (\text{position salary})$$

Step 2. Determine the business outcomes you want to affect through improved staffing and identify potential assessment solutions to help achieve these outcomes

Business Outcome	Possible Staffing Assessment Solutions
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase number of qualified applicants	→ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web based applications so people can apply off-site at any time of the day; create a clear link from a career site to an application with easy instructions • On-site electronic applications so information can be captured from “walk-ins” instead of assuming they will return after completing a paper application • Statistically validated assessments that prioritize applicants for consideration but only “screen-out” those applicants that have the least likelihood of success on the job • Qualifications questions at the time of application that do not “screen-out” applicants but instead provide information to the hiring manager to prioritize applicants for consideration; ensure that currently identified job qualifications are truly job requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce levels of unplanned turnover	→ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online job-fit measures designed to predict retention • Qualifications questions that clearly communicate job demands and expectations • Online assessments designed to predict employee tenure and identify “early-quits”
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce counterproductive behaviors (theft, faking application information, etc.)	→ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated background checks • Online assessments designed to identify employees who are likely to be terminated for cause
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce costs associated with accidents and injuries	→ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online assessments designed to predict safe work behavior
<input type="checkbox"/> Improve performance levels (e.g., better customer service, greater productivity)	→ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online assessments designed to predict key performance behaviors (may need to conduct job analysis to figure out what these behaviors are)
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce time spent interviewing poor or unqualified applicants	→ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online qualifications screening to remove applicants who do not meet minimum requirements

Step 3. Implement assessment solution incorporated with systematic interviewing methods. At a minimum, this should include the use of structured interview guides. Ideally, it will include in-depth behavior based-interview training for all hiring managers who interview applicants.

Step 4. Track performance of system over time using metrics that measure the quality of hires and staffing efficiency. Possible metrics to consider include the following:

Quality of Hire:

Qualified applicants: Percentage of applicants who meet some minimum pre-screening requirements (e.g., education or certification requirements)

Retention: Percentage of newly hired employees who remain with the company past certain dates (e.g., 30 days, 90 days, 1 year, etc.)

Performance: Measures of employee performance such as supervisor ratings, productivity metrics, patient care ratings, etc.

Training Success: Measures of employee performance in new hire training programs

Termination: Percentage of newly hired employees who subsequently leave for undesirable reasons (e.g., misconduct, negligence)

Safety: Frequency and severity of accidents or safety incidents reported for newly hired employees

Attendance: Time lost due to excused and unexcused absences

Staffing Efficiency:

Time to fill: Elapsed time between the posting of a new opening and the actual day when a new employee fills the opening

Time to hire: Elapsed time between an applicant applying for an opening and the hiring of the applicant to fill that opening

Applicants per hire: Ratio of the number of applicants available for consideration for each job opening (i.e., an indication of the applicant flow for a certain position)

Interviews per hire: Number of applicants interviewed before making a job offer to an applicant

Behavioral Interview Job Aid

The focus of this job aid is to assist with behavioral interviewing, not to provide legal guidelines or advice. Make sure that you have sufficient understanding of the law from your company's sources.

Preparing for the Interview

- ❑ **Review resume (if applicable).** Note career accomplishments to explore during the interview; identify questionable gaps or transitions in employment history; note topics you might use to build candidate rapport.
- ❑ **Review job description.** List key challenges associated with the position; discuss position with other stakeholders who have a strong interest in the hiring decision.
- ❑ **Review interview guide.** Review questions and agenda before meeting with the candidate. If you have not previously been provided training on the legal aspects of interviewing and hiring, or your company's policies, make sure that you take time to do so before the interview.
- ❑ **Prepare meeting space.** Arrange to interview the candidate in a professional workspace; if meeting in a shared space, arrive early to make seating arrangements and advise others of the need to avoid interruptions.

Building Rapport with the Candidate

- ❑ **Treat candidates as customers.** Candidates will be evaluating your company as a prospective employer during the interview. Exceed their expectations.
- ❑ **Be on time.** Do not make the candidate wait for you.
- ❑ **Show hospitality.** Warmly welcome the candidate. Offer him/her a beverage and start the conversation by discussing a neutral subject. Be cautious about the conversation and do not use it as a time to talk about marital status, size of family, or other matters that are inappropriate from a legal perspective. The weather, travel, the building, and beverage preferences are all safe topics.
- ❑ **Explain the process**
 - You will be asking questions about their past work experience.
 - All candidates are asked the same questions to ensure a consistent review of their skills.
 - You will be taking notes during the interview to help you recall the conversation.
 - You will need to move at a steady pace to cover all the questions.
 - There will be time for the candidate to ask you questions at the end of the interview.

Asking Interview Questions

- ❑ **Be aware of legal guidelines for interviewing** (see Legal Dos and Don'ts section).
- ❑ **Ask, listen, probe, listen, move on.** Read the first part of the question as written in the interview guide; follow-up with probes until the candidate has given a thorough response; try to spend 3-5 minutes on each question.
- ❑ **Use the SARI model:** Situation candidate was facing that led him/her to take action, Actions taken by the candidate, Results or outcomes of his/her actions, and Interesting features about the situation and/or the candidate's actions.
- ❑ **Get the information you need.** Be courteous but persistent in getting information to effectively evaluate the candidate.

Taking Interview Notes

- ❑ **Use the SARI method.** Situation candidate was facing that led him/her to take action, Actions taken by the candidate, Results or outcomes of his/her actions, and Interesting features about the situation and/or the candidate's actions.
- ❑ **Focus on behavior.** Take notes on specific things the candidate did. Do not analyze or evaluate the candidate during the interview.
- ❑ **Keep it short.** Only write enough information so that you can remember and evaluate responses later.
- ❑ **Keep it confidential.** Make sure the candidate cannot see your notes.

- ❑ **Keep it legal.** Do not say, ask or write anything inappropriate or that you would not want to have repeated in court.

Closing the Interview

- ❑ **Answer the candidate's questions.** Only respond to questions where you are certain of the answer; commit to getting information about questions you cannot answer.
- ❑ **Do not make promises.** Avoid statements that could be interpreted or alleged to create an unwarranted expectation in the candidate's mind of an employment offer or promise of employment; remember you have not made your hiring decision yet.
- ❑ **Give the candidate a clear timeline.** Let the candidate know when and who he/she can expect to hear back from.
- ❑ **Thank the candidate for his/her participation in the interview.** Walk the candidate out or to the next meeting.

Legal Dos and Don'ts

- ❑ **Focus on job relevant topics.** Restrict your questions to those that have direct relevance to the essential functions of the job.
- ❑ **Respect the candidate's privacy rights;** do not probe into topics that are not directly job relevant.
- ❑ **Don't ask questions that the law may prohibit.** These include questions about sex, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, marital status, pregnancy, physical, mental or sensory disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law.
- ❑ **Ask all candidates the same questions.**
- ❑ **Seek qualified legal advice on the dos and don'ts of interviewing.**

Managing Candidate Responses

Vague Response

- ❑ Ask the candidate to provide a detailed description about what he/she personally did; the specific actions he/she took.
- ❑ Put constraints on his/her response (e.g., "give me an example of something you did on your last job or in the last three months").

Silent Response

- ❑ Be patient; tell the candidate to take his/her time and wait up to 5 seconds for him/her to respond (count to 5 in your head).
- ❑ Tell them the answer does not need to be a perfect fit with the question; you will ask for additional information as needed.

Evasive Response

- ❑ Redirect the candidate back to the appropriate topic; ask him/her to focus on specific aspects of the question.
- ❑ Tell the candidate that you need to make sure you cover each area on the interview guide.

Inexperienced Response

- ❑ Ask if he/she has experience from settings outside of work (e.g., club or community organization, school, or social activities).
- ❑ Tell him/her the answer does not need to be a perfect fit with the question; you will ask for additional information as needed.

Rambling Response

- ❑ Ask him/her to be succinct; inform the candidate that you have several questions to cover in a fairly short amount of time.
- ❑ Interrupt the candidate if necessary; ask him/her to focus on specific information that relates directly to the question.

Legally Sensitive Response

- ❑ Ask him/her to focus answers on work experiences that are directly related to the question and the position; remind him/her of time constraints.
- ❑ Do not take notes on topics that are not directly related to job performance (e.g., family status, religion, nationality).
- ❑ Keep notes factual and objective; assume that your notes may be reviewed by other parties at a later date.

Rating Candidates

- ❑ **Rate the candidate as soon as possible.** Avoid interviewing other candidates before your ratings are completed.

FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In 2005 and 2006 Kronos® conducted an extensive study examining behaviors and attributes that influence success in frontline healthcare positions that require working directly with residents. The focus of the study was to examine aspects of job performance that depend more on “how” people perform their work, as opposed to “what” they need to know in terms of technical skills and knowledge.

The study identified five performance competencies that are critical for success in frontline healthcare jobs across all the long-term care collaborative organizations included in the study:

- (1) showing commitment to the work team and organization,
- (2) communicating effectively,
- (3) managing time effectively,
- (4) maintaining a safe work environment, and
- (5) providing sensitive customer service.

Based on this research, Kronos developed and validated an online, automated assessment tool called the “Frontline Healthcare Assessment” that statistically predicts candidate performance with regard to each of these competencies.

Kronos also created several behavioral interview guides to assist in evaluating candidates for various frontline healthcare jobs against each of these competencies. Listed below are examples of questions included in these guides. The interview questions are designed to assess an applicant’s prior experience and capabilities related to the five competencies.

Competency #1: Showing Commitment to the Work Team and Organization through following policies and directions, adapting to requests from others, and putting in the effort required to complete assigned tasks and activities.

Interview Question:

Tell me about a time when you had to follow a precise set of rules and procedures in order to complete a task or project. What was the situation? Why were there such detailed guidelines for accomplishing the task? What happened?

Competency #2: Communicating Effectively through appropriately sharing information, speaking effectively, and listening.

Interview Question:

Describe a time when you had difficulty understanding someone because of the way they were talking. What made them difficult to understand? What did you do to better understand this person? What was the outcome?

Competency #3: Maintaining a Safe Work Environment through working carefully, following safety policies and procedures, and maintaining cleanliness and hygiene.

Interview Question:

Tell me about a time when you stopped or changed what you were doing because you were concerned about your safety or the safety of others. What was the situation? Why did you think it was a potential safety risk? How did others react to your actions?

Competency #4: Managing Time Effectively through adhering to work schedules, completing tasks in an orderly fashion, taking initiative to start new tasks and stay busy, and handling multiple tasks at the same time.

Interview Question:

Describe a time when you felt overloaded with work tasks, a time when there simply did not seem to be enough time to get everything done. How did you deal with the situation? What happened?

Competency #5: Providing Sensitive Customer Service through meeting resident expectations, demonstrating concern for others, and treating others with respect.

Interview Question:

Give me an example of when you went “above and beyond the call of duty” for a customer or resident. What did you do? What prompted you to take this action? What was the outcome?

LONG-TERM CARE MANAGER BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In 2006 Kronos conducted an extensive study examining behaviors and attributes that influence success in long-term care manager positions that require overseeing large departments (e.g., Directors of Nursing) or the entire facility (e.g., Administrators, Executive Directors). The focus of the study was to examine aspects of job performance that depend more on “how” people perform their work, as opposed to “what” they need to know in terms of technical skills and knowledge.

The study identified nine performance competencies that influence job success across all the long-term care collaborative organizations included in the study:

- (1) building a strong team,
- (2) communicating across the company,
- (3) developing & executing plans,
- (4) ensuring quality & managing risk,
- (5) ensuring customer satisfaction,
- (6) being accountable & responsible,
- (7) managing stress & adapting,
- (8) understanding & managing budgets, and
- (9) driving growth.

Based on this research, Kronos developed an online, automated assessment tool that statistically predicts candidate performance with regard to each of these competencies as well as developed behavioral interview guides to assist in evaluating candidates for long-term care manager jobs against each of these competencies. Listed below is an example behavioral interview question associated with each of the nine critical competencies. The interview questions are designed to assess an applicant’s prior experience and capabilities related to these nine competencies.

Competency #1: Building a Strong Team through staffing, training & instructing, and recognizing & valuing others.

Interview Question:

Tell me about a time when your team accomplished a major objective, but one particular individual performed extraordinarily well and went above and beyond the efforts of the rest of the team. What did you do to recognize the achievement?

Competency #2: Communicating Across the Company through working cross-functionally, working across organizational levels, and listening.

Interview Question:

How do you adjust your style when interacting with people from different levels within the organization (frontline workers to senior executives)? Give me an example of a time you did things differently due to the varying levels of the people involved.

Competency #3: Developing & Executing Plans through creating plans, managing multiple tasks, and keeping things on track.

Interview Question:

How do you determine the importance of different kinds of work? Give an example that illustrates how your approach to prioritizing tasks has influenced your work. What things do you do to communicate your priorities to others?

Competency #4: Ensuring Quality & Managing Risk through working systematically and maintaining & improving quality.

Interview Question:

Describe a time when you were working on a project or in an environment where you were constantly being asked to deal with requests, questions, and other distractions. How did you balance responding to these distractions while staying focused on your longer-term goals? What did you do to keep on track?

Competency #5: Ensuring Customer Satisfaction through focusing on customer needs and making a strong first impression.

Interview Question:

Describe a time when you did not “get off on the right foot” when meeting with someone; a time when you had difficulty building a strong rapport with someone. What was the reason why you had difficulty? How did this affect your behavior with this person? What sort of relationship did you end up having with this person?

Competency #6: Managing Stress & Adapting through coping with pressure & stress and adapting.

Interview Question:

What strategies do you use to reduce pressure and stress? Are there things you do to keep things from becoming too stressful or tense on the job? Give me an example showing how you have used these strategies in previous jobs.

Competency #7: Being Accountable & Responsible through accepting responsibility, showing commitment to values, and adhering to policies & procedures.

Interview Question:

Tell me about how you work to encourage behaviors that are consistent with the organization’s values. What kinds of things do you do to promote the values embedded in the organization’s culture?

Competency #8: Understanding & Managing Budgets through managing profit & loss and demonstrating financial acumen.

Interview Question:

What methods do you use to ensure that people in your organization think about profit and loss issues when they are making decisions? Tell me about a time when you were able to get people in your company to rethink their decisions or actions based on more carefully considering the impact they were having on profitability.

Competency #9: Driving Growth through establishing & leveraging networks and attending to market conditions.

Interview Question:

How do you stay current in your industry and competitive knowledge? What kinds of things do you do to ensure you know enough about your company and the competitive landscape it is in? Give me an example.

The Top Five Factors That Make Great Frontline Healthcare Workers

by Autumn Krauss, Ph.D.

Background

The healthcare industry is the fastest growing industry in the country, largely because of the increasing number of people in older age groups that need healthcare services. Approximately 32 percent of occupations in the healthcare industry fall within the frontline service group. Furthermore, these frontline service occupations are the segment that is projected to have the largest growth by 2014 at 33 percent.¹ This substantial industry growth, along with the new positions created by it, is a key factor contributing to the staffing shortage facing long-term care today. The other factor is the high turnover rate for these positions resulting from the low pay, low status, poor benefits, and high physical and emotional demands of these roles.²

To address this staffing shortage, healthcare organizations need to develop and implement a strategy to fill frontline positions by recruiting outside of the healthcare industry. While that means hiring individuals into these positions with no experience in healthcare, one must keep in mind that workers without a background in healthcare can be hired and trained quickly to work in frontline roles.

Whereas nurses and other professional positions need to be selected based on their educational background and technical skills, frontline workers should be selected based on their “soft skills” — their attitudes, personality, and interests that make them likely to be effective in the job. However, this is an area in which hiring managers often feel that they can “size up” an individual to determine whether they have the soft skills necessary for healthcare. To effectively address the labor shortage and successfully recruit from outside healthcare, it's important to recognize that the systematic assessment of a frontline applicant's “soft skills” is no less important than assessing the technical expertise of nurses.

In order to incorporate such an approach into one's selection strategy, it's important to have a clear understanding of the important behaviors that are critical for success in frontline positions. In doing so, hiring managers will be able to systematically screen frontline applicants by using a consistent standard.

Given the high turnover rates for frontline positions, it is clear that not all individuals possess the fundamental characteristics to be effective in these types of positions. A large cause of frontline turnover, particularly the involuntary kind, is not the result of the inability of frontline workers to learn the skills required for their jobs. The real problem is that, once on the job, they neither apply what they have learned nor do they engage in the appropriate behaviors. While the cost of a bad frontline hire is substantial for a healthcare organization, the benefit of selecting an individual who later goes on to be successful in her frontline role and remain with the company is invaluable. Armed with a clear understanding of the behaviors that define performance in these positions, one can develop a more targeted and effective selection process, resulting in more successful frontline hires made and more costly bad hires avoided.

The Kronos® Talent Management Division recently undertook a research study to systematically analyze and understand performance areas critical to success in frontline healthcare positions. The study involved operators, risk managers, and human resource managers of leading healthcare organizations and included nearly 500 frontline workers. What we learned will enable organizations to more effectively select frontline workers from both within and outside the industry.

Top Five Performance Areas Identified

As a result of the research, the Talent Management Division identified five performance areas that were unanimously endorsed as critical for success in frontline healthcare positions by the experts from all collaborating organizations. These performance areas are described below in terms of the important behaviors that encompass them.

The five top factors that make great frontline healthcare workers were found to be:

1. Communicating effectively
2. Showing commitment to the work team and organization
3. Managing time effectively
4. Maintaining a safe work environment
5. Providing sensitive customer service

1. Communicating effectively — Our research showed that effective communication was an integral part of frontline healthcare workers' performance, especially when considering the usual content of the communications (e.g., medication, pain), the difficulty that may arise when attempting to communicate with debilitated patients or elderly residents, and the potential consequences for ineffective communication (e.g., discomfort for residents, misdiagnosis).

Additionally, being able to communicate in both written (e.g., noting resident behavior on charts) and verbal (e.g., sharing updates with coworkers on the next shift) forms is imperative for effective communication as a frontline healthcare worker. Finally, effective listening behavior is just as critical for a frontline healthcare worker as is sharing important information. The table below shows what effective and ineffective communication looks like in behavioral terms.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY	
is not...	is...
Leaving out key facts or critical pieces of information	Responding to requests for information in a timely manner
Speaking to others in a condescending, abrupt, or rude manner	Presenting information concisely and succinctly
Interrupting and talking over others	Using verbal and non-verbal cues to let people know the listener is listening to them

2. Showing commitment to the work team and organization — The second critical performance area that was identified through our research efforts focuses on those behaviors that support both the work team and the organization. The behaviors that were identified by the healthcare experts ranged from accepting responsibility for mistakes to taking direction from others, but they all possessed consistent themes in that they were focused specifically on providing exceptional service by supporting coworkers and upholding company policies. The research clearly showed that frontline healthcare workers must be willing and able to work effectively in a team setting, since all of the services provided to patients and residents require coordination with coworkers who are also frontline employees (i.e., other caregivers) or employees at other levels (e.g., multiple nurses providing direction).

SHOWING COMMITMENT TO THE WORK TEAM AND ORGANIZATION	
is not...	is...
Making statements or doing things that reflect negatively on the company	Fully complying with legal and company policies, rules, regulations, and standards
Refusing to assist co-workers when asked	Willingly cooperating with others to be more efficient in completing daily tasks
Openly expressing frustration, anger, or depression when under pressure	Remaining productive, positive, and energetic in stressful situations

Additionally, this coordination and teamwork often occurs during stressful circumstances, requiring frontline workers to control their emotions, help out without hesitation, and adapt quickly to changing priorities. Finally, given the extensive rules and regulations for the healthcare industry, it is imperative that frontline workers appreciate the importance of these rules and support any changes necessary to ensure policy compliance. See the table above for examples of behaviors that do and do not represent commitment to the work team and organization.

3. Managing time effectively — The healthcare work environment is often characterized by extreme time pressure to provide services to a large number of residents or patients in a short amount of time. While effective time management is an important part of most frontline customer-focused jobs, it becomes even more critical in this type of environment. In healthcare, work must be prioritized carefully, the length of time needed to accomplish tasks must be estimated accurately, and work must be completed systematically to ensure no oversights or mistakes are made; otherwise, the consequences could be life-threatening or at least cause the residents/patients a great deal of pain, anxiety, or discomfort.

From our research, we identified three components to displaying effective time management for frontline healthcare workers. First, frontline workers must adhere to their work schedule by maintaining consistent attendance and punctuality. Second, they must approach their work in an organized fashion. Third, frontline workers must prioritize their tasks and then switch their attention between tasks throughout the day to ensure every-

MANAGING TIME EFFECITVELY	
is not...	is...
Completing work in a disorganized, haphazard manner	Efficiently working on multiple tasks at the same time
Wasting time on trivial activities that are not critical to achieving work goals	Working consistently and reliably throughout the day
Frequently making requests to change work schedule at the last minute	Being available and ready to work on the days and shifts scheduled to work

thing is accomplished. Here are more examples of what behaviors constitute effective and ineffective performance when managing time as a frontline healthcare worker.

Without these core time management and multi-tasking skills, frontline workers would never be able to provide service to as many patients and residents as they do every day.

4. Maintaining a safe work environment — No other service industry is as fraught with safety concerns as is healthcare. By nature, patients and residents are usually at a heightened risk for illness or injury and in need of care that may pose a safety risk if not executed properly. During the course of our research, all experts agreed that frontline workers must always consider the safety implications of their actions.

Effective safety behavior is important for frontline healthcare workers because of the potential danger to themselves as they complete many of their activities (e.g., lifting patients), the potential danger to the residents and patients if they are not safety minded (e.g., dropping a resident when not using equipment properly), and

MAINTAINING A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT	
is not...	is...
Ignoring safety policies an employee feels are inconvenient or unnecessary	Asking for appropriate assistance when performing physical tasks
Having to be regularly told or reminded to follow safety policies	Using appropriate safety and protective gear
Leaving workspaces dirty, cluttered, and disorderly	Taking steps to ensure appropriate levels of sanitation and hygiene

the potential for organizational liability if safety policies are violated and subsequent injuries occur (e.g., forgetting to activate a personal alarm for a resident who later breaks her hip). For frontline workers, effective safety performance means not only practicing appropriate sanitation and safety procedures when working with residents and patients but also calling attention to safety violations and encouraging others to think about safety while they perform their jobs. The table above contains some more examples of ineffective and effective behaviors for this performance area.

The behaviors that comprise this performance area are arguably the most important of all of the performance areas, since it is more dangerous for residents and patients to have a frontline worker who is ineffective at this performance area than to have the facility or hospital understaffed.

5. Providing Sensitive Customer Service — Frontline positions in many industries (e.g., retail, dining, and grocery) typically require a large proportion of customer-service behaviors. However, customer service in health-care is characterized by a much more intimate service provided to the residents/patients, and thus requires a high degree of sensitivity by the frontline workers. As such, frontline healthcare workers must engage in sensitive customer service to be successful in their jobs.

Sensitive customer service means demonstrating tolerance and understanding, as well as patience and concern for individuals who are often sad, hurt, confused, or angry. The nature of the frontline jobs results in the workers establishing a long-term relationship with their residents/patients, being privy to personal and private issues, and, in many cases, completing tasks of an intimate physical nature (e.g., brushing hair, dressing). Because of the extent to which patients and residents rely on these frontline healthcare workers for assistance, insensitive, rude, or aggressive customer service could greatly impair their health, well-being, and psyche. The following table shows some additional attributes for providing sensitive customer service.

PROVIDING SENSITIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE	
is not...	is...
Doing things according to employees preferences with little thought about what others might prefer	Displaying confidence and patience when dealing with residents/patients to make them feel at ease
Ignoring or downplaying residents/patients needs and requests	Showing a personal sense of ownership and responsibility for meeting residents'/patients' needs and resolving residents'/patients' concerns
Treating others as though they are a burden	Expressing interest in others' feelings and concerns

Of all the experts who shared accounts of frontline healthcare workers' actual job behavior, those related to this performance area were the most striking in terms of the emotional side of working with the elderly, sick, and disabled. Of all of the performance areas, providing sensitive customer service provides the most benefit for resident and patient satisfaction.

What to Do with the Knowledge

For frontline healthcare workers to be successful, they must be good performers across all five of the performance areas. It is of little benefit to the organization or the residents/patients if a frontline employee consistently shows up for work (i.e., good performer of managing time effectively), but the employee does not follow safety policies or takes unnecessary safety risks (i.e., poor performer of maintaining a safe work environment). When selecting, developing, and managing frontline employees, it is important to consider all of these performance areas, as they are all critical for success.

In light of the labor shortage and the need to hire individuals from outside the healthcare industry, this information is invaluable for the development of important initiatives aimed at selecting effective frontline healthcare workers.

First, selection assessment tools can be developed with the purpose of evaluating whether an applicant is likely to be effective in performing these critical components of the job. Tools such as personality assessments and behavioral interview questions allow one to systematically assess the applicants' "soft skills" that drive these behaviors.

Second, by using these performance areas as the basis for hiring decisions, terminations for cause should be significantly reduced because the behaviors that are often the reason for involuntary turnover (e.g., not showing up for scheduled shifts — *Managing Time Effectively*, treating residents/patients in an inappropriate manner — *Providing Sensitive Customer Service*, endangering residents/patients by ignoring safety rules — *Maintaining a Safe Work Environment*) will be evaluated at the time of hire.

Third, communicating these performance areas to frontline applicants, especially to those who have no prior healthcare experience, will provide them with a realistic preview of what their jobs will entail. This realistic preview limits the number of employees who quit early after being hired because they did not really understand the job.

Fourth, frontline workers' performance can be evaluated against these performance areas, which allows for consistency between the factors that are considered at the time of hire and how employees are evaluated once they are hired. It also ensures that performance is not evaluated based on criteria that are not critical for the job. By leveraging this information, programs can be developed to select high-potential frontline healthcare applicants and manage them effectively throughout the employee life cycle.

¹Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Career Guide to Industries, 2006-07 Edition*, Health Care, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs035.htm> (visited August 30, 2006).

²Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2006-07 Edition*, Nursing, Psychiatric, and Home Health Aides, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos165.htm> (visited August 31, 2006).

About the Author

Dr. Autumn Krauss is a senior assessment scientist at Kronos and responsible for the development and validation of assessments used in the personnel selection process and the development and delivery of training programs for hiring managers. In her role she has served as the primary developer of several selection tools for the healthcare industry, including the Frontline Healthcare Assessment and the Healthcare Manager Assessment.

Besides her work with Kronos, Autumn has experience collaborating with healthcare organizations, having been the project manager for a CDC-funded research study examining the causes of CNA turnover in long-term care facilities. She has authored journal articles, book chapters, and encyclopedia entries as well as conducted workshops and numerous conference presentations on her primary research areas of personnel selection and occupational safety and health.

Autumn earned her Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from Colorado State University in 2005. Previously, she earned a Master's degree in the same discipline also from CSU and a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and business administration from La Salle University in Philadelphia, PA.

About Kronos' Talent Management Division

Kronos is the leading provider of talent management solutions focused on improving workforce quality and productivity for the nation's top employers. Deep industry expertise, extensive client experience, and knowledge gleaned from more than 65 million job applicants combine for a proven solution that integrates hiring automation, employee-selection programs, and performance measurement to drive measurable business results. Workforce Acquisition™ is currently deployed in more than 38,000 locations nationwide for over 125 leading companies and brands, including Avamere Health Services, Albertsons, Circuit City, PetSmart, Uno Chicago Grill, and Burgerville restaurants. For more information, visit www.kronos.com



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