

Capture the Energy of a Motivated Staff Work Smarter

By
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You can raise productivity two ways. **Work harder** or **work smarter**

For clinical nurses, working harder usually means caring for extra patients. Since recent research has shown that high patient assignments result in medical errors, working smarter is a better choice.

For managers, working harder usually means managing multiple units. Managers can work smarter and cope with this increased workload by developing staff autonomy.

Use my new book, **Smart Nursing—How to Create a Positive Work Environment that Empowers and Retains Nurses**, as a step by step guide to capture staff energy that is now going to waste. Smart Nursing contains over 500 practical tips that enable clinical nurses and managers to raise productivity without burnout.

Smart Nursing is more than the title of this book; it is a system of strategies that enable nurses to use their *full professional capacity* to deliver safe patient care in a variety of clinical settings; at the same time, it empowers managers to work with staff more effectively. Indeed, the wisdom behind these strategies is that they blend healthcare knowledge with business expertise. More than helping nurses to maximize the “nursing process” with commitment, competence, and compassion, the Smart Nursing strategies also address the bottom line for managers. In short, the dollar difference between the present level of nurse productivity and a nurse's full professional capacity is the potential cost savings that Smart Nursing offers.

How to harness new sources of energy

- *Build relationships*

Good relationships energize both managers and staff resulting in positive attitudes. Staff can then use all of their energy doing their work instead of having to spend time surviving dysfunctional environment. Negative healthcare environments interfere with productivity and have become obstacles to nursing excellence. The lack of courtesy and respect chips away at a nurse's sense of self, sapping his or her energy and motivation. This prevents employees from using their full potential. Managers avoid using fear and punishment. They substitute relationships, communication, and education instead.

With trust and good communication, managers are able to start building commitment. Commitment enables you to build a culture where people feel a sense of freedom to 'be themselves' as they work together. This kind of freedom enables staff members to use their full professional capacity.

- *Access your higher self*

A positive environment is the foundation of high productivity because it allows nurses to access their higher selves. You probably have had experience using your higher self during particularly harmonious periods of your life. Think back to when you were working on a project that you especially enjoyed. Recall your energy level. You wanted to spend more time on your project, didn't you? And the time that you spent working seemed more like play than work. You were accessing your higher self and capable of achieving more work than usual. It's the same for nurses working in a staff-friendly culture. Contrast this to when you were involved in unsatisfactory work. Time dragged, and you felt like procrastinating and putting the work off as long as possible. That's how the present atmosphere saps nurse productivity.

- Nurture your Sense of Purpose

Staff with a sense of purpose have more energy and are more productive. People with a sense of purpose see the big picture. They see themselves as important to the whole. These are the employees who have an entrepreneurial attitude.

Many of the safest organizations empower their nurses to make staffing decisions. They have the authority to determine the number of staff members needed to provide safe care. These nurses are not given this authority without preparation. Their managers coach them so that they fully understand their unit's staffing strategies. They are also held accountable for their decisions and how well they fulfill their responsibilities. The managers and nurses work as partners to achieve their desired staffing patterns. They trust each other. Nurses on these units have entrepreneurial attitudes. I.e. They feel that they have a personal responsibility for their organization's success.

Consider using these untapped sources of energy. Accessing these energy sources will raise productivity without burnout. Using this kind of energy improves safety the right way by harnessing the hearts and minds of your staff. A strong motivated staff is what builds commitment. It raises patient satisfaction resulting in loyal patients who continue to return to your facility.

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