

Healthcare Banking Bulletin

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Skills Gap Assessments

The gap between the skills that employees currently have and the skills they need to be proficient at their jobs are called skills gaps. As leaders, it is our responsibility to identify these gaps and to approach skills gap assessments and training from a position of positivity.

Most of us on the administrative side of the healthcare industry began our careers in entry-level positions and climbed the ranks after sufficient on-the-job training, and experience. Since this type of learning is more organic in nature it can often lead to skills gaps. The fact is that most employees cannot identify what they don't know, which is why it is incumbent upon leadership to take the necessary steps to get their teams up to speed.

So Why Do Skills Gap Assessments Matter?

Let's say we have a new hire who has 10 years of experience working as a front-desk manager in a primary care practice. Her new role will be as front desk manager at a multispecialty clinic. During her skills gap assessment, we reveal knowledge gaps related to the referral management process and copay differences between primary care and specialty clinics. This can quickly and easily result in increased patient A/R or denied claims if not addressed. On the Brightside, once these gaps have been identified, they can be addressed through training.

**How to Perform Successful Skills Gap Assessments**

It's important to approach skills gap assessments and training from a position of positivity. Think of this as an opportunity to invest in your team members and recognize their contributions to the practice. Most employees want to put their best foot forward and this gives them the resources to succeed.

Step 1: Document Needs and Competencies

You can identify needs and competencies from job descriptions but, you should also include department managers in the discussion of required skills by position.

Step 2: Create a Chart of Departments and Identified Competencies

Create a table with columns for every role and rows for every skill. Then mark off each to create your chart.

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Step 3: Prepare the Perception

Skills gap analyses serve 2 purposes: professional development and organizational security. Consider announcing during a routine staff meeting that you are going to begin individualized professional development opportunities, which start with assessing skills and areas where additional education may be needed to ensure that the organization is doing everything possible to support the needs of the team.

Step 4: Assess Your Team

There are several methods you can use to perform assessments, and determine which is best for your organization and culture:

1. Surveys
2. SWOT
3. One-on-one meetings

Also, think about adding an “open suggestion” policy to your “open door” policies. This will encourage staff to strive for continuous improvement as it relates to themselves and the organization as a whole.

Step 5: Develop Training Plans

Whether you outsource training, develop it internally, or use a combination of methods, you need to ensure that the programs you put in place are comprehensive.

These activities can affect how quickly you get paid for your services and how much effort is required to obtain those payments. In addition, skills gap assessments and training are beneficial to all team members regardless of their previous or current positions.

References

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