

Atlanta Beltline Workforce Partnership in Healthcare

90-Day Manager Interview Summary

Introduction

In May 2014, the *Atlanta Beltline Workforce Partnership in Healthcare*, a workforce development initiative in partnership with *Grady Health System* and supported by *Atlanta CareerRise*, graduated its first cohort. Of the 14 individuals who graduated, 9 were hired by Grady and placed in one of their facilities. In an effort to improve the execution of the program moving forward, brief interviews were conducted with Grady managers directly responsible for supervising the new hires. The interview questionnaire asked specific questions about the manager's experience onboarding the employee, as well as how that employee compared to others the manager has supervised in a similar role. Managers were also asked to rate employees according to Grady-specific competencies for which participants were trained. In all, there are 7 managers across the 9 employees. One manager supervises 3 of the graduates. Six managers, including the 1 supervising 3 graduates responded to the request for an interview. This resulted in an 89% response rate.¹ Of the 8 graduates for whom we obtained feedback, 4 served in an administrative roll and 4 served as nursing assistants. Each of the supervisors interviewed had fairly extensive experience onboarding and supervising new hires, and therefore were able to compare their experience with the participant to their experience managing others in similar roles.

Findings

Though the survey instrument was succinct and straight-forward, the feedback provided strong insight into the effectiveness of the training program and the quality of the graduates. Generally speaking, each of the

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The Atlanta BeltLine Workforce Partnership in Healthcare is providing participants with job readiness training, technical training, and coaching support required to secure full-time, entry-level healthcare employment as the first step towards a healthcare career. The innovative, employer-focused program combines the complementary strengths of New Hope Enterprises, The Center for Working Families, Inc., and Atlanta Technical College to prepare unemployed people in Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods for entry into clinical and administrative careers at Grady Health System. Initiated with investment from Atlanta CareerRise in spring 2013, additional program support has been provided by the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency and the Georgia Department of Labor. In mid-2014, the Atlanta BeltLine Workforce Partnership in Healthcare was cited by the White House as one of 35 model programs from across the country.

¹ This is based on the number of participants for which we received feedback and not the number of managers.

managers interviewed expressed being impressed with their graduate. Participants were described as “eager to learn,” “assertive and positive,” “extremely proactive and very focused,” “detail oriented and eager to please” and overall “excellent.” When asked how their onboarding process compared to others in a similar role, 6 managers believed the participant performed better than expected; 1 responded that they had performed the same as others.

As earlier mentioned, managers were asked to score employee performance between 1 (for low) and 10 (for high) according to five core competency areas for which they were specifically trained. Those competencies are: 1) patient or customer oriented, 2) action oriented, 3) stress tolerant, 4) professionalism and 5) adaptability. They were also asked to provide comment on the employee’s punctuality. Across all participants and competencies, scores ranged from 7 to 10. The graduates received the highest marks for professionalism, with 6 out of the 8 receiving a 10. The area for which participants collectively scored the lowest is “stress tolerance”. Table 1 provides an average score for each competency. Hiring managers were also asked if the graduates had improved, stayed the same or worsened over the course of their first 90-days in each particular area. Overall, there were only two instances in which a manager thought a participant’s performance worsened.^{2 3}

She is well-loved. Every nurse who works with her has praise for her. She thinks outside the box and is always smiling, active and running.

Hiring manager on graduate’s general performance.

Table 1: Grady Health System Core Employee Competencies

Average Score (Scale 1 – 10)

Customer Oriented	Action Oriented	Stress Tolerant	Professionalism	Adaptability
8.75	8.625	8.5	9.5	8.75

None of the graduates were identified as having challenges with punctuality.

As a result of their impressive performance, certain employees have been given added responsibility and/or opportunities. For instance, one graduate was recommended for overtime at a prestigious surgical group and another with a division that does special procedures. A third has taken on leadership responsibilities related to community service activities within the office.

When it came to their utilization of similar training programs, 4 of out of 7 managers mentioned not having used workforce development programs to identify job candidates in the past. One manager mentioned working with AARP at a point in time and the remaining two mentioned using a specific temporary agency which one described as “horrible.” When asked if they would consider hiring individuals through this program in the future, all said that they would. One even mentioned having shared their positive experience with other managers likewise responsible for hiring.

While most of the feedback was glowing, it was mentioned that a few graduates have struggled with certain aspects of their new job, even if those challenges are relatively mild. For instance, two were identified as lacking self-confidence,

² One was in the area of being customer oriented and the other, action-oriented (different participants).

³ Because the values given the employees are relatively high across the competencies, there is little distinguishing improved or stayed the same, as scoring a 9 or 10 means there is little room for improvement.

especially when it comes to independent decision-making. Another was thought to not be as communicative as she ought to be when issues or problems arise. The manager for each of the participants said they had shared their observations with the respective employees and are working with them to overcome these performance-related concerns.

Managers were lastly asked to provide their thoughts on how the program might be improved moving forward. One manager mentioned possibly incorporating a stronger cultural competency component into the curriculum as Grady employees deal with people from all over the world. Another suggested that the program work with participants post-hire to ensure their attire remains professional. This manager acknowledge that newly employed individuals might not have the resources to purchase an adequate work wardrobe and therefore recommended a partnership with non-profits such as *Dress for Success* to make sure the graduates have sufficient work clothes for a week or more. This same manager suggested providing some training on the inner-workings of a large institutional, bureaucratic employer. She sensed that one participant in particular was a bit naïve on hierarchical protocol and how things generally get done in a place like Grady. The manager also recommended a stronger component to help them with self-confidence. Another simply referenced the importance of enlisting mature individuals, even if their experience in a particular role is limited. Lastly, one manager recommended shifting from 12 hour training shifts to 8 hour training shifts for the CNAs so that there is a bit more redundancy in the carrying out of their duties.

Conclusion

Findings from the 90-day manager interviews confirm that supervisors are highly pleased with their *Atlanta Beltline Workforce Partnership in Healthcare* program graduates. Based on manager experience, they have outperformed their peers at a similar stage. During one of the interviews, a manager offered a potential explanation for the participants' high marks.

“They want to positively represent the Beltline and STRIVE. This is very evident through general conversation and their comments. They are grateful for the opportunity and understand that Grady has a commitment to the community. They get it.”

Based on this early feedback, it does seem that the Atlanta Beltline Partnership in Healthcare is adding real value at Grady Health System. However, the real impact for both the employees and the employer is yet to be seen. The hope is that strong performance early-on will lead to more quantifiable evidence of career advancement, as well as employer satisfaction in the future.