Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Staffing Strategies: Adapt A Paid-Time-Off Model To Manage Employee Absences

Allow your staff this simple freedom and get out of the babysitting business.

If your organization isn't already using a paid-time-off (PTO) system to track employee absences, you may want to consider making a change. It can seem overwhelming, but the long-term benefits will surely outweigh the short-term transition hang-ups.

Why Go With PTO?

Thirty-four percent of employees call in sick at the last minute. When an employee doesn't show up, that leaves you to figure out how to cover her work.

Hidden plus: Giving employees the chance to plan their time off also gives them the opportunity to make sure their work is covered.

Get to know PTO: Paid time off used to be referred to as no-fault absenteeism. See the following list to become familiar with the ins and outs of PTO.

How PTO works:

·   The reason your employee is away from work shouldn't matter to you. Whether he is sick, taking care of a sick family member, or on the golf course, the fact remains that his work needs to be covered. So tracking sick days used versus vacation days used is no longer necessary.
·   If an employee doesn't use all of his paid time off in one year, at the end of that year either the time rolls over and is added in January, or the employee gets a check in December for the amount of time remaining. Some companies opt to only give a maximum of one week's paid time. You could allow your employees to sell back their unused PTO hours once they've maxed yet another example of putting your staff in charge of how they use their time.
·   You can set the rule that if an employee takes more than 18 days time off, she's fired. Obviously, different rules and laws will apply in a case of long-term illness or leave of absence.

See The Benefits Of A PTO System

The PTO model makes younger workers happy because, for most younger workers (those in the Generation X and Millennial generation), time is more valuable than money. Older workers (Baby Boomers) will also be happy, because if they don't use the time, then they are compensated. Money is more valuable than time to older workers.

Some advantages of the PTO system include:

·   You won't feel as if you have to babysit your staff.
·   Employees maintain control over their time.
·   Employees don't need to come up with lies to take the days off.
·   Prospective hires will be interested in working for your company because most of today's workforce

enjoys managing their own time.

A different perspective: The PTO system benefits those employees who rarely need sick time. But this system helps your organization keep vacation time and sick time separate so employees can feel comfortable about taking sick time and not having it cut into their vacation time.

Your Problems Solved

Does giving your staff the responsibility of managing their own time off seem like you're giving them too much freedom? We've outlined some potential problems you may foresee and their solutions below:

Problem: You may be afraid to switch to a PTO system because certain essential workers, like nurses, can all choose to be out on the same day.

Solution: Just set a rule that they can't all be out on the same day. Employees know that the workload must be covered. Most employees are respectful of and compliant with this. Worrying about everyone taking the same day off shouldn't be a problem. Even a small organization, where coverage may be a problem, you need never encounter a situation when you are short-staffed due to time off. When your schedule is completed ahead of time, you always have at least one backup person for each staff member.

Problem: PTO may encourage people to come in to work sick.

Solution: If employees do show up sick, don't be afraid to send them home. If an employee has a contagious illness, because you're in a health care setting, it's best for him to not be there.