

Ten Tips For Keeping Caregivers

A Generations white paper



One of the most challenging things about the homecare business is hiring and retaining dynamite caregivers. Caregivers who are on time, responsible, skilled, honest, and truly caring are an agency's greatest asset. They are definitely out there to be found, so take a look at your policies. How do you fare when compared to these ten tips?

Tip One: Reward Great Things

Rewards are not benefits, and benefits are not rewards. A reward is something given for a job well done or to celebrate an achievement. Consider how your business chooses to celebrate birthdays, accomplishments, and other events. Include employee referrals in the benefits picture, and be sure the reward for bringing a new caregiver into the business is enough incentive to keep your current caregivers looking for new caregivers. Ultimately, rewarding caregivers fosters a sense of pride in the work they are doing and the company they are representing.

Tip Two: Benefits—It's More Than Just Insurance

As insurance costs spiral out of control, it's possible that you will not be able to offer health coverage. What else can you offer to entice a caregiver? Perhaps you can pay a little more per hour to enable caregivers to purchase coverage. But having a benefits package doesn't just mean offering health insurance. How about a short-term group disability policy, or paid time off for vacations or illnesses? Offer various forms of leave like bereavement, medical, family (birth of child,) or jury duty. Unusual benefits like memberships to an auto club or fitness center may be popular. Consider tuition reimbursement, gift certificates, or tickets to a local sporting event. Be creative and generous with benefits, no matter what you offer.

Tip Three: Make It An Enjoyable Place To Work

People like to work with others who are fun. Fun often involves laughing—even at small mistakes or misunderstandings. Can you find humor in difficult situations? Do you get angry when a caregiver gets lost on the way to the home of a new client, or do you exercise patience and understanding? While this can be a serious situation, try to find the humor in what is happening, and share the lighter side of life with your caregivers.

Tip Four: Connect With Your Caregivers

Involve caregivers in decisions. No involvement means no commitment. So when you're thinking about having a community-wide event, ask the caregivers what they'd like to do. Or take a survey to see what type of improvements they'd like to see in the business. Listening and acting on issues or concerns as they arise is a sure-fire way to retain great caregivers. You might even write personal notes of encouragement to the caregivers who are struggling with a difficult case. Failing to acknowledge the human connection with each and every person working with your homecare business guarantees that you will lose the best people you have.

Tip Five: Share Your Enthusiasm

Do you love the business you're in? Do your caregivers know it? How do you show that passion? Does it shine through everything you do? Share your vision and enthusiasm with caregivers and office staff and watch the good vibe spread throughout your organization.

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Tip Six: Invest In Their Education

There are few official requirements to become a caregiver. The job has flexible hours and a low education requirement, so caregivers can be unskilled and poorly trained when they arrive at your doorstep. Do you seek ways to improve their knowledge and skills in the business? Training people today means you will have good employees in the future. Consider offering self-improvement types of courses like etiquette and grooming, but also programs to improve the caregiver skill set like client privacy/confidentiality and communication. Investing in people today means investing in the future of your business—with highly skilled caregivers. Offering educational and training benefits now ensures that you will have terrific caregivers in the future.

Tip Seven: Keep Them Safe

Being safe in the workplace, and on the way to the workplace, ensures caregiver satisfaction. Provide detailed driving instructions to each assignment, preferably using a mapping interface with your home care system. Be sure your employee handbook has safety rules and regulations that must be followed. Be committed to the safety of all caregivers. If you are not vigilant about their safety, they may try to find another employer who is.

Tip Eight: Quality Wages

If you are hoping to retain quality people, you must pay quality wages. Though as a business owner you are walking a tightrope between quality wages and quality care at a low rate, you cannot simply base your wages on cost alone. Pay a decent wage, having annual reviews, and give wage increases as performance mandates.

Tip Nine: Communicate Policies and Procedures

Have your policies and procedures well established and make sure that every single caregiver understands those policies. Have a printed manual that each new employee receives. Include written job descriptions, emergency contact information, and details about the various benefits your company offers. Ambiguous policies and "word of mouth" procedures create unease. If you are clear about what the expectations are, your caregivers won't ever have to play the guessing game. And they'll appreciate that.

Tip Ten: Build Community

A great team of caregivers works and plays together. Plan team and morale building meetings and activities throughout the year. Be sure to have a bulletin board in the office, and think about a caregiver electronic bulletin board or discussion board. Have uniforms, name tags, and magnetic signs for vehicles so that the public also sees the business and caregivers as one positive and unified force. If your caregivers feel like "family," they are less likely to look for greener pastures.

About Generations Homecare System

Generations is a leading provider of homecare software. The program manages your clients, caregivers, and scheduling, and also interfaces with QuickBooks seamlessly for billing and payroll. To find out more about how Generations can help you with your homecare software needs, contact us today. Via phone (989) 546-4512, e-mail info@homecaresoftware.com, or web at www.homecaresoftware.com