



**WHAT'S WORKING WEDNESDAYS – JUNE 11, 2014**  
**ELIZABETH FELTNER, VICE PRESIDENT, DEFFET GROUP**  
**EQUIPPING EMPLOYEES TO BE TALENT RECRUITERS**

I'm Elizabeth Feltner, with Deffet Group, and we partner with not-for-profit aging services and other organizations across the country to assist with mid and senior management level recruiting, interim management, and CEO on-boarding. Along the way, I hear ideas from our clients that have worked for them with one of their greatest struggles—recruiting and retaining great talent across the board. Some of these ideas are really creative, so I'm glad to be here today to share some of them with you.

**Ascertaining Viability of Current Staff for Recruiting:**

Before you try any of the suggestions to use employees as recruiters, you need to find out—Is your current staff truly engaged? Moving from “employee satisfaction” to “employee engagement,” means you can confidently give a “yes” answer to both of these questions:

- a. Do they feel like they are a part of the mission?
- b. Are they committed to the organization's ongoing success?

Satisfaction and engagement are not the same thing. Engaged employees are much more likely to recommend your community as a place for residents, as well as a place to work—so find out how deeply your community's mission and values resonate with the employee, and grow areas where there are weaknesses.

Research indicates that highly engaged employees have passion and will go above and beyond the core responsibilities of their job descriptions. “Satisfaction” has more to do with “what's in it for me” statements, such as job security, opportunity to use skills, bonuses, benefits, relationship w/immediate supervisor, etc. That might sound like enough to motivate people to want to help you recruit other good team members, but it turns out, it isn't. The fact that THEY are satisfied with their job doesn't mean they'll make the leap to caring about, or investing in, finding other people who would be satisfied there. What does make the difference is engagement: employees who are more concerned with “good for the organization” factors, such as the work itself, relationships with co-workers, and contribution of their work to the organization's goals.

So . . . assuming you have a team in place that can get on board with what we see as a constantly growing need for adding good people to your organization, what can you do?

**Basic methods for utilizing staff as in-house recruiters:**

**1. *Recruit from current employees:***

Begin by bringing the staff together and announcing the open position(s). I was reminded about the importance of this when I heard an example about an organization that did this, and a person came

forward from a completely unrelated department that they never would have thought of for the job, but who now, after more than a year in the role, is doing great.

Deloitte, one of the “Top 100 Best Places to Work,” discovered through exit surveys that 70% of those employees who left to take new jobs and careers outside the company could have found the same jobs and careers within Deloitte. They started a career coaching program for all employees. During the first week of implementation over 2,000 employees took advantage of the program and viewed internal job openings. Career Connections offers job postings as well as career development tools such as self-assessments and articles on job seeking strategies within the company. While none of us are Deloitte, many of their ideas could be adapted to other situations.

So, always begin your recruiting in-house. Employees already working for you will have valuable knowledge of the company and you will know enough about their work to help determine whether they’re right for the job. Sometimes they won’t be the right fit at all, and that can make for challenges when delivering the news. But simply knowing that here’s an employee who really has an interest in growth and development can help you earmark them for future opportunities.

Here are some specific in-house recruiting ideas our clients have utilized:

- Create an emerging leaders program—let them shadow other departments, managers, etc. There are a multitude of programs/free resources available out there for how to do this.
- Provide training for current managers on how to strengthen their “team relation” skills. Remember, most people don’t leave a job—they leave people, and typically, the person they’re leaving is their immediate supervisor.
- Once a week or once a month, have employees with non-clinical/compliance restrictions rotate jobs for one hour. This builds a stronger team and improves communication within the company. Some employees might identify new interests and future roles. Even if you don’t have openings in that area currently, if they indicate an interest and aptitude for a particular role, when an opening becomes available down the road you’ve already got your first point of contact to see if there’s a mutual fit.

You may or may not get employees who actually move into new roles, but you will get employees that feel a stronger tie to your company culture. You’re investing time and resources in them, and that makes them more motivated to invest time and resources in the mission.

## **2. Equip current staff members to recruit externally**

Here are some examples from our clients of successful approaches, both small and larger scale:

- Ask employees to provide three referrals, reasons why they’d recommend them, and if willing to provide it- contact information. You could make this part of the orientation process, and then you’d have a bank of contacts. You can also revisit the list after the employee has been there a period of time and make updates. To implement , HR might make cold calls. While this may feel uncomfortable at first, it becomes easier. Develop a script, for example: “Hi, this is \_\_\_\_\_,

the HR Director for \_\_\_\_\_. Your friend, \_\_\_\_\_ has been doing a great job for us, and she mentioned you as someone she could see fitting in really well with our organization's culture. \_\_\_\_\_ didn't say you would necessarily have an interest, just that s/he thinks highly of you/your work ethic. Currently, we're hiring a \_\_\_\_\_ but we may have future roles in other areas that would be a good fit for you. Would you have an interest in learning more about what we do? Do you have a current resume you could send me?

- One ED implemented a reward approach on his campus and the state-wide organization ended up implementing it in all of their facilities. It's called "Refer a Friend." If they hire the referred individual, after their 90 review the employee gets \$250. At the new hire's 6 month review, the employee gets \$500. At their 1 year anniversary, they receive another \$500. The organization did a cost/benefit analysis and when calculating the cost of turnover and recruitment as well as the higher degree of employee satisfaction for being rewarded, they called it "an absolute no-brainer." To keep the program manageable, they do it within a 3-month window each year, usually the last quarter, because that's always a difficult time for hires. Some years they only did it for 30 days. He said you don't leave it open-ended primarily because it loses visibility – the campaign approach works better.
- Another organization is rewarding residents for referrals. If residents refer someone who becomes an employee, they receive a rent reduction after the employee's 90-day review. This organization also provides employees with shirts that have the logo and company name and on the back it might say "Follow me to \_\_\_\_\_" or "Ask Me about \_\_\_\_\_." They are tracking the results both from a resident marketing and a new hire status for a year and then will re-evaluate.
- Have an in-house meeting with key staff to generate unique recruiting ideas. We've had clients do this and some really creative ideas have emerged. This first one was from a large organization that was opening two facilities in their community. They developed 15-second wacky commercials to be shown in the local theater before the previews were shown. It did not cost much to buy the time. Rather than hiring a professional studio to produce the commercials, they reached out to current employees and asked them to create their own 6-second videos of them performing their unique talents. They emphasized creativity and silliness. They then created an intro slide with the company logo and the words "Featuring the Elite Talent of (company name) and inserted the most entertaining employee clips. They closed with a slide that asked "What is Your Elite Talent? Apply now" with the recruiting web address displayed on screen. They ended up with several commercials that were absolutely hilarious, but left people scratching their heads, thinking, "What the heck does that company do?" That curiosity then drove them to jump on their mobile devices and check out the company's recruiting website to read about the available positions. They found incredible new recruits they would likely not have found otherwise. The cost was low, the response was high, and it boosted employee morale by allowing them to be an integral part of the campaign.
- Make buttons for your staff and encourage them to wear them for two weeks after a position has been announced, that simply says, "Do You Want My Job"? or "Ask Me About Openings at \_\_\_\_\_." Provide those employees with HR business cards to give out. I met a CEO at the national

LeadingAge conference last year who did this very thing, and wore it to all of her conference sessions. She had announced her upcoming retirement and began getting the word out to people who might be interested.

- Have special business size cards printed for every employee in the company, with the company name, phone number and website printed on them with the words “Now Hiring” stamped across the front in red letters. Then have a place on the back that reads, “Tell them \_\_\_\_\_ said you are awesome.” Ask every employee to keep these cards with them wherever they go. When they came across someone doing a great job at something, to give that person a hiring card and to write their own name in the blank line on the back. It didn’t matter if it was a person in the drive-through window at McDonald’s, the cashier at the shoe department in the mall, or the waitress that went the extra mile. They realized that you can teach skills so if someone had the right attitude, they were willing to teach them the skills. They reported that, “You would be amazed at the type of great employees we were able to find from very diverse backgrounds using this program.”
- Another low cost strategy: Ask employees to post openings on their Facebook pages or twitter accounts. Social media continues to grow as a vehicle for getting the word out.