

UTILIZING A MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S TALENTS AND SKILLS

“While you may not be able to see what I am doing, you know when it is not being done.”

- Quote from an anonymous medical director



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As technology advances, services have become contactless, faceless, and automated. Telephone systems answer calls. Emails and video conferences have replaced verbal and face-to-face communications. As the amount of human interaction decreases, the value of each interaction increases. This holds true both for external clients and internal employees. A medical director utilizes their skills to bridge communication gaps and facilitate workplace efficiency.

Current business practices emphasize a “customer service” based approach. Clients can often choose from multiple service providers offering similar services in the same geographic area. Often, factors guiding this choice are straightforward (cost, scope of services, geographic location). All factors being equal, most clients will choose a service provider that provides the best customer service in addition to the requested services.

While building the client relationship, a skilled medical

director pairs a client's needs with medical expertise. Through conversation, education, and on-site visits/interaction, a medical director develops a baseline knowledge of each client. Medical expertise combines with this knowledge to create a customized approach for each client. The client benefits from streamlined processes, focused services, and a cost-effective approach. This is a “win-win” for both parties.

Ideally, all services are standardized in scope and delivery, regardless of the client. Clients customize a set of services specific to their needs and the clinic provides the services. What happens when clients need services that are outside their typical business realm? A perfect example. . . . COVID-19.

The pandemic has changed how business is conducted. Manufacturing facilities had to navigate infection control measures, symptom screening of employees, and return to work requirements. Healthcare companies tackled symptom

tracking, COVID testing, and shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE). Everyone had to decipher everchanging public health guidance and laws. Medical directors coordinated education, training, and consulted with clients to incorporate public health requirements in non-healthcare-related industries. They advised healthcare-related businesses on how to protect their employees and meet Federal, State and local requirements. By understanding the client's business needs, a medical director tailors an approach specific to the client.

While client relationships focus on customer service, clinic functions are "team based". Clinic employees may be cross-trained to perform several roles. Providers may perform specialized services (such as travel medicine) in addition to the standard evaluations. In this role, the medical director is the "coach" of the team. As the "coach", the medical director creates protocols, coordinates processes, and positions team members accordingly. The medical director also recruits talents to meet demands. Whether it be clinical staff or providers, the medical director seeks the skill set to meet the needs of the team.

Finally, the medical director serves as the liaison between management, clinical staff, and providers. They position staff and providers to meet clinic growth and service line expansions. As the facility grows, they address questions and needs prior to communication breakdown. Most importantly, the medical director develops a rapport with the staff and providers. This fosters an environment that respects the individual, promotes teamwork, emphasizes continued improvement.

The medical director role requires more than a degree. It encompasses medical expertise, interpersonal skills, and a willingness to adapt to growth and changes. The same skill set that builds relationships with clients creates unity amongst team members and coworkers. The ability to grasp a client's requirements allows the medical director to anticipate the needs of clinic service lines. The patience required to address customer concerns encourages professional growth in team members. While difficult to quantify, the absence of a qualified medical director is certainly noticed. The impact of a skilled medical director goes beyond the tasks listed in a job description.



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