



FOCUSING FIFTH FRIDAYS ON FUN, FELLOWSHIP, AND FULFILLING TRAINING

Ashlie Barefoot, MBA, COE

Many practices recognize the need for staff training and development. Even more practices realize that incorporating fun into the workday can encourage team building and staff cohesiveness and improve overall morale. With busy clinics and high-stress work conditions, however, many administrators are left frustrated about the lack of time, or ideas, for fulfilling this need.

In our practice, a dedicated effort to host monthly staff meetings and training opportunities became increasingly difficult. It seemed the more we grew, the more complex schedules became, and getting everyone together outside of clinic became near impossible. But if training is critical, and teambuilding is essential to long-term success, what does a practice with these time limitations do?

Here's our solution.

WHAT WE CALL "FIFTH FRIDAY"

A few years ago our practice addressed the need for staff professional development and educational opportunities by implementing what we have since termed "Fifth Friday." Since every calendar year has four months in it with five Fridays, we commit the last Friday of these months to a full day of staff education, training, and fun. By closing clinics and gathering all of our staff in one central location, we are able to host an efficient day dedicated entirely to staff development.

HOW IT WORKS

The agenda for each Fifth Friday meeting is set by the administrator (see **Figure 1**), but then the content is delegated to employees and doctors accordingly. At least one of the Fifth Friday sessions every year is committed entirely to fun, with the other three sessions focused on the area that is most in need at the

time of the meeting. For example, if we have a lot of new employees, we may commit the meeting to training and education. If we have issues brewing within the practice such as team conflicts, teambuilding might be a priority.

Every Fifth Friday starts with mandatory attendance at a group staff meeting, followed by breakout sessions targeted to the more specific needs of our registration, scheduling, and clinical staff. The break-out sessions often include training by outside equipment vendors or consultants as well as topic-specific discussions focused on resolving team issues or brainstorming new ideas. Breakfast and lunch are included, and the day typically ends by 2:30 p.m.

DON'T FORGET FUN

The "Fun" Fifth Fridays are equally important and can become an effective teambuilding tool to improve staff communication and morale,

FIGURE 1. SAMPLE AGENDA, FIFTH FRIDAY

Fifth Friday Staff Training

Friday, March 31, 2017

TIME	CLINICAL AND DOCS	REGISTRATION/ SCHEDULING
8:30	Breakfast and arrival	Breakfast and arrival
8:45 – 9:30	Staff Meeting (All staff)	Staff meeting (All staff)
9:30 – 10:00	Vital Tears – Guest speaker All techs	Phone Skills Training (Alcon) (in break room) Registration + scheduling teams
10:00 – 10:45	InflammaDRY training All techs	Phone Skills Training Cont'd. (in break room)
10:45 – 11:15	Clinical Updates/ Reminders All techs Topics: LASIK, Handheld K's, Phenol Red/ Vision & IOP checks; Sacrificing Accuracy for Efficiency	Scheduler Team Meeting Registration admin: Turn phones ON until 11:00 —Check messages, return phone calls, prep for Monday clinic
11:15 – 12:30	Refracting 101 (led by OD) All techs	Business Office Updates/ and Registration/ Scheduling Joint Team Mtg. All registration + scheduling
12:30 – 1:30	Tech assessment and quiz (led by Docs) All techs	Lipiflow
1:30 – 2:00	OSHA (ALL)	OSHA (ALL)
2:00 ADJOURN		



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especially across different teams within the practice. Sometimes fun is literally fun: a spa day, a limo ride to a great restaurant, a day of bowling, or a scavenger hunt have all been successful outings for our practice.

Teambuilding ideas can be disguised as fun as well by focusing on staff togetherness and team-work. A ropes course, practice trivia

contest, and role-playing exercises are all fun-natured activities that force employees to work together to accomplish similar goals.

THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Whatever the chosen theme, day, or time, with proper doctor buy-in and mandatory attendance, Fifth Friday can work for you. **AE**



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