

Davis Perkins University Hospital: Hiring Dilemma in the Emergency Room – Case for Chapters 12 and 13

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Janet frowned; she was frustrated. A nurse manager and emergency department nurse practitioner, she had worked in the emergency department of a large university hospital, Davis Perkins University Hospital, for the past 12 years.

She stared at the papers on her desk and thought to herself: “How will I choose who to hire?” Janet reviewed the resumes and the remarks of the hiring committee again. One candidate, Brian, had recently graduated from one of the top nursing schools in the local area, but Janet believed he may not be prepared to prioritize the multiple demands of a high stress and dynamic emergency department. On the other hand, Sheila, had a year more clinical experience than Brian, but one of the hiring committee members, Alex, had voiced concerns about her ability to be a “team player.”

The comparison between Sheila and Brian could not be more different. Not only did they differ on level of work experience, both candidates seemed to have very different personalities. The hiring committee noted Brian’s “good sense of humor” and ability to “deescalate conflict” that were lauded by his clinical references. Sheila, they summarized, had demonstrated strong technical skills and scored slightly higher on the category of “Work-Related Judgment” on the Nursing Career Battery pre-employment test than Brian. Some of her best competencies associated with this assessment included safety intervention and quality orientation. Brian, however, scored higher on “Work Style and Disposition” on the test than Sheila, and some of his best competencies included communication and decision making.

► Background on Davis Perkins University Hospital

What was it like to work at Davis? Davis Perkins University Hospital is a large hospital in an urban city center in the northeast United States. As a teaching hospital, it is affiliated with a top ranked University. Nurses describe the culture as a learning environment where medical and nursing students are trained in the health care field. The hospital carries an international reputation in the best patient care and is a leading research center that adopts cutting edge technology.

What was it like in the emergency department? The primary role of the emergency department at Davis is providing treatment for seriously injured and ill patients that either walk in the door or are transported via ambulance. The top reasons that the emergency department at Davis experienced patient visitors was very similar to most other large urban hospitals (McGee & Kaplan, 2007). The emergency department also

treats a substantial quantity of primary and urgent care patients because of the lack of availability for primary and urgent care within the system.

The emergency department employees were a close-knit bunch, and turnover had been greatly reduced over the past 5 of Janet's 12 years. Employees would often celebrate birthdays together, and the work environment was highly cooperative and collegial. Students who rotated through the emergency department as part of their training would often describe their experience as a highlight in their overall curriculum. The emergency department had finally become a team, Janet reflected. What was bothering Janet now, as she considered the two candidates for a registered nurse opening in the emergency department, was the comparison between the two in light of the new president of the hospital system's speech about culture. Deciding on which candidate to hire would have been a routine decision that she did not give much thought to in previous years. But this time the decision felt different.

► The Culture Speech

The president of Davis Perkins University Hospital health system, James Cannon, had been in his position for 6 months when he made his "culture speech." He had previously worked as a president for a prestigious hospital system in the southeast United States. His reputation for successfully building a hospital culture that aligned with the mission of quality, patient care, and research at his previous place of employment was featured in the latest Davis Perkins University Hospital employee newsletter. He was quoted in this article as enthusiastically stating "I will build a strong culture at Davis Perkins University Hospital (DPUH) with the help of every single employee." Shortly after, he made his famous "culture speech" at DPUH's administrator's planning retreat:

There are four pillars of our culture at Davis Perkins University Hospital that we must honor at all times and in all roles. The only way to achieve our fundamental ambition of doing good for our patients is to create the right culture based on these four pillars. The first pillar is *trust*. Employees must trust each other and their supervisors, it is the essential ingredient that helps us do our jobs. Supervisors need to prioritize trust in all of their hiring and promotion decisions. The second pillar is *relationships*. Our hospital is founded on relationships. This means everyone from housekeeping to physicians to nurses. We are in the people business and without relationships we will not be successful. Everyone that works at Davis should prioritize relationships—relationships with patients and with each other. The third pillar of our culture is *teamwork*. I will be at every new hire orientation to remind employees that they are not alone. From the first moment on their new shift, they are a part of a team. The fourth pillar is *quality*.

Everyone needs to take pride in their job and each detail of their job to make sure that we have a culture of quality. We should always identify areas for improvement and correct them. We need champions to drive the change management process on our health care teams in order to continue improvement. Culture matters and it will help us achieve our mission at Davis Perkins University Hospital.

The cheers and applause that greeted his culture speech were loud and heartfelt.

► The Decision

As Janet reflected on her decision, she wondered who the best fit on her team in the emergency department would be.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the central problem in this case?
2. What connection do you see between the president's speech and the choice of candidate?
3. When recruiting and selecting any candidate, what are some of the best methods to follow?
4. What questions do you think the hiring committee, and Janet should ask from "Who's on The Team" to help make the decision?
5. Based on the information you now have, what course of action would you recommend that Janet take and why?

Reference

McGee, L., & Kaplan, L. (2007). Factors influencing the decision to use nurse practitioners in the emergency department. *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, 33(5), 441–446.