

Leading Beyond the Paycheck

Unlocking What Really Keeps Your Team Coming Back

Larry Poague, LPN, ARM, CPHRM

North Dakota Long-Term Care Association

1

Let's Get Real

Quick Show of Hands...

How many have tried pizza parties or employee of the month?

How many felt it really moved the needle long-term?

2

The Retention Reality Check

\$5,000+

Cost to replace one CNA

80%

Turnover rate in some facilities

\$4,000-6,000 to replace EVS

The Real Cost

- Patient care quality drops
- Remaining staff burnout
- Recruitment expenses
- Training investment lost

3

Today's Journey

1

Busting motivation
myths

2

Discovery-based
leadership

3

Scheduling as
retention tool

4

Creating
environments that
keep people

4

Motivation Myths

What we've been getting wrong

5

Myth #1

I can motivate my employees

The Truth

Motivation is internal, not external. Your job is to discover what already motivates them and create conditions where that motivation can flourish.

6

Susan Fowler's Research

Why Motivating People Doesn't Work

- External motivation creates dependency
- People need autonomy, relatedness, and competence
- Leaders must help people connect to their own reasons

Stop asking what motivates them. Start discovering why they chose this work.

7

Myth #2

Money is the main motivator

The Truth

Money is a hygiene factor. It keeps people from leaving, but doesn't make them stay.

What matters more: autonomy, purpose, mastery, flexibility, recognition, relationships

8

Myth #3

Everyone is motivated by the same things

The Truth

Different people, different drivers: recognition, growth, flexibility, mission, relationships, autonomy, mastery.

Your job is to discover the unique motivators for each person on your team.

9

The Rah-Rah Trap

When forced enthusiasm backfires

The Forced Approach

- We're a FAMILY here!
- You're all HEROES!
- Mandatory fun activities
- Enthusiasm requirements

The Problem

Rah-rah is a shortcut that avoids the harder work of understanding individual motivators and creating genuine buy-in.

Exhausted healthcare workers can smell BS a mile away

10

Authentic Leadership Instead

<h4>Acknowledge Reality</h4> <p>Night shift is hard with staffing</p>	<h4>Explain Purpose</h4> <p>Why this truly matters</p>
<h4>Give Choice</h4> <p>How would you approach this?</p>	<h4>Respect Styles</h4> <p>Commitment shows differently</p>

Real leadership beats hype every time

11

Interactive Discussion

Think of your best employee who left.

What did they tell you was the reason?

What do you think was the REAL reason?

12

Discovery-Based Leadership

The leader as detective

13

Stay Interviews Not Exit Interviews

Three Questions That Matter

- What do you look forward to when you come to work?
- What would make you consider leaving?
- What can I do more of? Less of?

Ask before they're gone, not after

14

The 1-on-1 That Actually Works

15 Minutes

Monthly check-ins

80/20

Listen 80% Talk 20%

Track What You Learn

- Personal goals
- Work preferences
- Pain points
- What lights them up

15

Pair Share Activity

Pick one employee on your team

What do you THINK motivates them?

What questions could you ask to find out if you're right?

16

Scheduling

Your secret retention weapon

17

Why Scheduling Matters

Schedule = Respect in Action

- Flexibility beats money for many employees
- Predictability reduces stress and burnout
- Life happens – help them manage it

Fair doesn't mean identical. Fair means individualized.

18

Practical Scheduling Strategies

Self-Scheduling
Core coverage plus flexibility blocks

Consistency
Post 2-3 weeks out, avoid last-minute changes

Life-Stage Awareness
Parents, caregivers, second jobs, near retirement

Swap System
Employee-driven trades with clear guidelines

19

Small Changes, Big Impact

Giving time back to your employees

Take-Home Dinners
Weekly or monthly benefit

- Family-size portions
- Saves 30-60 minutes
- Shows you get it

Other Time-Savers

Paid Parking

On-Site Services

Flexible Breaks

Not a pizza party at work – time back with family

20

Group Discussion

What's one scheduling change you could test in the next 30 days?

21

Three Pillars of Retention

Creating environments where people stay

22

Pillar 1: Purpose Connection

Reconnect to the WHY

- Share resident stories in huddles
- Display family thank-you notes
- Celebrate wins beyond pizza parties
- Make the impact visible

People don't leave jobs. They leave when they forget why the job matters.

23

Pillar 2: Growth Pathways

Show Them the Future

- Clear advancement opportunities
- Cross-training as development
- Certification support
- Leadership pipeline from within

If they can't grow with you, they'll grow somewhere else.

24

Pillar 3: Psychological Safety

Create Safety to Speak Up

- No fear of speaking up
- Mistake-tolerant culture
- Support during difficult situations
- Leader accessibility

When people feel safe, they give you their best work and their loyalty.

25

The Calm Leader Paradox

A personal story from 31 years in the Army

The Perception

Some thought I wasn't strong because I didn't yell or get excited. I kept a calm demeanor.

My Rule

I would not go to 11 unless it involved Life, Limb, or Eyesight.
Everything else? We could survive mistakes and learn.

The Long-Term Payoff

Leaders realized I had better sense of my soldiers because I hadn't made them unable to approach me.

26

Technology as Support Not Replacement

Robots & Advanced Cleaning

Free staff from physical strain

- Reduce lifting injuries
- Handle heavy/repetitive tasks
- Allow focus on resident care
- Extend career longevity

Technology should ease burden and increase effectiveness

Not replace the human touch – enhance it

27

Inclusion = Listening in Action

True inclusion isn't about programs or policies
It's about actually hearing what people tell you and taking action
When people feel heard, they feel included. When they feel included, they stay.

28

Your 30-Day Action Plan

Week 1

Conduct stay interviews with 3 key employees

Week 2

Review scheduling – identify one flexibility opportunity

Week 3

Implement discovery conversation in every 1-on-1

Week 4

Assess one system through retention lens

29

Key Takeaways

- Stop trying to motivate – start discovering what already motivates
- Scheduling is a retention tool, not just operational necessity
- Small individualized changes beat big generic programs
- Leadership is listening, then acting on what you hear

30

Remember...

Every retained employee is one less to recruit and train

The best retention strategy is the one you actually implement

31

Questions?

Let's discuss

Larry Poague, LPN, ARM, CPHRM
lpoague001@gmail.com

32