

E-mail Was Not The Way To Go To Resolve This Dilemma

Jun 1, 2006

One of my staff nurses sent an e-mail to a per diem nurse at home, accusing her of failing to finish a task by the end of the shift. Since she copied me and the DON in on the e-mail, the per diem nurse assumed that the e-mail had my blessing, and resigned. To make matters worse, I later learned that the required task had actually been completed. Help!

What a mess! First, call the per diem nurse and apologize. Tell her that you don't condone what the staff nurse did and will take steps to address that situation. Then see if you can convince her to return to work.

Next, tackle the problem of inappropriate communication between staff. Tell your full-time staffer that if a situation like this arises in the future, she should speak to her colleague face to face and not "hide" behind e-mail. Doing so facilitates a true dialogue, where the full timer could have uncovered the fact that the task had been done after all. If after a one-on-one conversation, there's still a problem, tell the full timer to bring the matter to your attention and you will help her resolve it.

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Here's How To Manage Your Time More Efficiently

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I'm definitely out of my league when it comes to getting more done in less time and I don't have time to read the countless books on time management. How can I manage my time more efficiently?

The many resources on time management emphasize the same few points: establishing priorities, delegating responsibility, saying No, and organizing your work area.

While it does take time to determine what your priorities are, it's an important, and necessary, first step. Establish priorities by dividing them into four categories: do it now; do it soon; put off until later; doesn't need to be done. Obviously, you'll work on the first group first.

Delegating is a crucial skill that managers need to learn. Start by identifying and separating out those tasks that need your personal attention. The others that are left can then be delegated to a trusted employee. Take time to lay out this process, making sure your instructions are clear, and, preferably, in writing. Be sure to give a due date. Remember not to confuse delegating responsibility with dumping work on someone, employees know the difference.

It's also important to learn how to say No to new projects others want you to take on. If you don't think you would enjoy or benefit from an activity that you've been asked to participate in, decline. Chances are, someone else will appreciate the opportunity to get involved.

Organize your life by simplifying it. Get rid of clutter. Look through items in your office, and decide when and how often you'll use them. Give away useful items that you no longer need to someone who will make good use of them. Be cautious about keeping things for sentimental reasons only.

If the prospect is overwhelming, break it into small tasks and agree to do one a day. The small gains toward gaining control of your life will begin to show right away.

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