nursing edge

The Nursing Edge is a publication developed for and by the nurses of Hanover Hospital. It is intended to provide information on current nursing-related topics, reference materials and staff recognition in an effort to develop a culture of Passion, Purpose and Potential.

For more information on Nursing at Hanover Hospital, visit: www.happiernurses.com.

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On the Cover: The staff who recently transitioned to work on the new private rooms medical-surgical unit.

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Maintaining that Edge to Stay Relevant in the Work Place

by Pat Saunders, RN, MS, VP of Nursing

“I can’t believe summer is already over.” I’m pretty sure I say this every fall when the leaves are changing color when I grab a woolen sweater as I go out the door. It shouldn’t be a surprise, yet these innocent transitions sneak up on us whether we are aware of them or not. Who hasn’t been amazed to enter a store and find the glitz of the upcoming holiday all around while you’re still wearing flip flops?

In the same way, the years slip by when the invitation to the employee awards banquet arrives. Five, ten or maybe twenty year recognition awaits and you ask yourself, “How did this happen?”

I should know. As someone who has celebrated my 39th birthday more than 20 times, I've often reflected on where I hoped to be at different stages in my career. Sometimes I have been satisfied with my growth, yet there are other times I could have and should have accomplished more. Throughout, I typically found that the shortcomings were of my own doing.

I often wonder if other nurses are as busy at their jobs that they neglect opportunities to learn new things, to stay current in our field or to build and maintain professional networks? Remaining relevant in today's work world is critical since no one is guaranteed a job for life! The good news is that staying relevant is entirely possible with a little practice and discipline. Here are a few tips from leaders in the industry that may be helpful if you want to create that edge!

1. READ. Carve out 30-60 minutes a week to review career news, our trade journals or conduct Internet searches for relevant practice issues.

2. NETWORK. Learn what others do within and outside of the hospital, how their work influences your work and what skills can advance your career. Set networking goals!

3. MENTOR. Seek out a professional mentor, gain insight from their observations about you and ask for career guidance.

4. GIVE BACK. Mentor others!

Now the key is to get moving. Whether you are just entering the workforce or you've devoted a lifetime to care for others - professionals who are ready (think relevant), willing and able to adapt to meet the latest challenge will enjoy success!

REMEMBER: Maintaining the status quo is not a marketable job skill.
Transitioning to private rooms with enhanced, focused patient care, Hanover Hospital has transformed 30 semi-private rooms on the M2 medical/surgical unit into 16 private rooms. These patient rooms and staff work areas will also receive a face lift during the conversion.

Going forward, the major focus of M2 will be for cardiac and neurovascular services. This will involve extensive training for many of the staff members who work in both Critical Care and M2. Select staff are completing a nine-week cardiac rhythm recognition course enabling them to monitor our telemetry patients. The 24 hours/day, 7 days/week monitor technicians will be responsible for monitoring and interpreting the rhythm patterns of patients’ hearts in order to report any irregularities or variations to nursing and physician providers.

All staff members will receive advanced training pertinent to their specific duties. The RN’s specialized education will involve:

- ACLS training
- Cardiac rhythm education (nine week, online, self-guided program) plus onsite active training.
- Specialized stroke education to care for stroke and cardiac patients.

Hanover Hospital’s cardiology services will be expanding as well. The new cardiac and neurovascular unit will provide comprehensive patient care and better transition of care between units.

While the facelift will be a breath of fresh air to everyone, the training will provide more personalized patient care and recovery. Whether affected by the facelift or participating in the extensive training, everyone is excited about the future of this unit.
On any nursing unit, you are immediately aware of a variety of sounds. Call bells going off, phones ringing, physicians dictating orders, service advocates entering data and visitors asking questions. You also hear TVs, overhead pages and staff members talking and moving about as they are often all together at a central nursing station. However, when you open the doors of new medical-surgical unit (M4) at Hanover Hospital by waving your hand over the new motion detector door opening system, these kinds of sounds are nearly absent. Some might say, “The silence is almost deafening.” What has made the difference?

The newly renovated 16 private room unit features technology that reduces the day-to-day noise to a mere whisper. While greeters are available at the unit reception area to welcome visitors and families, the physicians and nursing staff have separate work areas. Each nurse carries a specially designed pocket phone which is connected to their patients’ call bells. The patient presses a button to choose one of four options: toilet, water, pain or nurse. The signal goes directly to the patient’s assigned nurse or PCA. This state-of-the-art nurse call system does away with loud bells and alarms that disturb other patients and allows the nursing staff to take care of each patient’s need much more quickly.

The private room-only suite also contributes to the quietness of the unit. By not sharing a room with another, patients can leave their TVs on as long as they want and hard-of-hearing patients can turn the sound up. Family and visitors also love the spacious room accommodations, which include a recliner and multi-functional sofa sleeper. One patient says, “This is almost like staying in a nice hotel!”

The nurses’ smiles are instantaneous when asked about the time-saving “care hubs.” Located between patient rooms, the care hubs replace the traditional, centrally-located supply closets which hold linen and personal items such as toothbrushes. By being right outside of each patient’s room, they also save us steps,” says Kathy Hansbrough, an RN on M4.

Patient safety is a priority, so the new bed alarm system is invaluable. The system detects three different pressure levels indicating whether a patient is turning over, trying to sit up or trying to get out of bed. Also appreciated for both patients’ and nurses’ safety are the new ceiling-mounted lift systems to assist in moving patients.

Where Technology Promotes Healing & Happier Nurses

UNIT FEATURES ALLOWING EASE OF CARE INCLUDE:

- Technology-integrated beds
- New call system
- Ceiling mounted patient lifts
- Care Hub supply closets
- Computer monitors in every room

Gather a group of nurses, PCAs, and service advocates together in the work area of the new M4 unit, and you sense happier, more confident staff. Being aware of their patients’ needs in an instant and being able to respond more quickly is an asset to everyone. The features of this unit enable faster healing by reducing patient stress and anxiety and lowering the potential for hospital-acquired infections.

Jennifer Murray, RN, enjoying the transition to the new M4 unit.

Hanover Hospital’s New Medical Surgical Unit
As any nurse will tell you, care for acute and chronic wounds can be a challenge, often requiring ongoing and specialized treatment. Wounds that won’t heal are traumatic to both patients and nurses because they can be complicated and cause a great deal of pain and suffering. The reasons for the wound can be varied—diabetes, vascular disease, surgery, radiation, trauma, burns and pressure from being immobile. Their treatment requires special attention and a gentle touch because procedures to keep wounds from worsening or becoming infected can be very painful and stressful.

Wound care nursing is an emerging specialty in hospitals, extended care facilities and home nursing. Because of the nature of wounds, the sight of a wound or smells occurring from infections and compromised flesh can be overwhelming. The wound care nurse must be able to touch and dress these wounds, all the while encouraging the patient who is most likely in pain and embarrassed by the situation. However, most wound care nurses will tell you that they have chosen their specialty because of the tremendous satisfaction they feel from seeing their patients improve. With today’s wound care options – new medications developed specifically for different wounds and now the addition of therapies in total wound care center – nurses are even more excited about their work.

Hanover Hospital recently opened a Total Wound Care Center. It adds state-of-the-art treatment options and protocols to treat these chronic wounds, including hyperbaric oxygen therapy, negative pressure therapies, bioengineered tissues and biosynthetics. Patients may also participate in clinical trials and multi-center studies. The Hanover center is a member of the Healogics™ network, which employs a rigorous scientific approach to explore, test, find and develop the clinically proven methods and technologies which reintroduce the body’s innate ability to heal. Healogics™ brings expertise to wound care with their history of proven success in about 500 clinics nationwide. Nurses in the center are also able to stay abreast of their specialty with ongoing education as part of their routine.

MEET THE DIRECTOR:
Faye Gardner, MSN, RN, WCN, is the program director and a member of the Hanover Hospital management team. She will tell you that her career path did not include wound care nursing when she received her nursing diploma credential from Geisinger, or her BSN from Penn State University. However, as her education went on to include a Masters in Nursing Education Administration from Mountain State University and an Applied Healthcare Informatics Certification from Johns Hopkins University; she realized this was the career for her.
MAKE THE MOST of Your Employee Evaluation

by Donna Cardillo, RN, MA

For many people, their annual employee evaluation is a ritual in which their supervisor goes down a checklist of various characteristics and performance indicators. They remain passive through it all, believing they have no control over the content or the process.

In reality, an evaluation is an opportunity to review your past accomplishments, reflect on your current position, and outline your future. And since a raise, bonus, or future promotion may hinge on that evaluation, you have a vested interest in making the most of that meeting and written report. So, rather than letting the cards fall as they may, be proactive.

Pave the way: About a month before your evaluation, give your supervisor a summary of your professional accomplishments and activities from the prior year. Your supervisor can’t possibly keep track of everything you and your coworkers do in the course of a day. If you submit this report any less than a month before your scheduled evaluation or anniversary date, your supervisor may have already completed the evaluation, and you’ll miss the opportunity to have input.

Don’t mention routine job duties and responsibilities in this report. Rather, list committees you’ve sat on, special projects you’ve worked on, and presentations you’ve made, such as inservices, grand rounds, and community education. If you’ve periodically filled in as a charge nurse or worked with students or new hires, mention that, too. Include professional association activities, completed CE courses, and any formal education or certification you are pursuing. Keep good records during the year so you don’t have to rack your brain for this type of information come evaluation time.

Make the time: Be sure to schedule your performance evaluation appointment when both you and your supervisor will not be rushed. This might be at the end of the work day, over lunch, or before the work day begins, depending on the environment you work in. If either party is rushed, ask for another time to come back and discuss your career plan.

Get it in writing: A lot gets lost during any verbal exchange. Don’t hesitate to take some notes during your evaluation about specific points brought up by your supervisor, both good and bad. Ask for a copy of your written evaluation. You’re entitled to it. This will allow you to go over it again later and be certain you understand it. You can also keep a copy in your professional portfolio for future reference.

Negotiate points as necessary: If you believe you deserve a higher rating than you received in a particular category, don’t hesitate to say so and give examples why. You might say, “You gave me an ‘average’ rating in the coworker relations category. I think I deserve a ‘very good’ considering I’m working in a high-stress environment with a few people who have very difficult personalities.” Your supervisor may or may not agree, but it’s a good idea to plant the seed.

Communicate professional goals: Let your supervisor know if you’re planning to go back to school or working on becoming eligible for certification in your specialty. Mention what you’d like to accomplish in the future. For example, if management or staff education is in your plans, say so. Ask your supervisor for advice, guidance, and support in attaining your goals.

Express what you need and want: Let your supervisor know what would make your job easier or more productive. For example, you might say, “I could do a much better job if I had more dedicated time without interruption to complete projects.” Don’t whine or complain — offer reasonable, workable solutions. Also, let your supervisor know if you’d like more responsibility, more challenging projects, or to work on something specific, such as a quality improvement project.

Ask for feedback and advice: In most cases, your supervisor has a certain format to follow when presenting an annual evaluation. Sometimes rating scales are used and other times written comments are called for. But don’t leave it at that. Ask specific questions: “What do you see as my strong points?” and if not already discussed, “What specific areas could I improve on?” This type of question can yield valuable information for future improvement, understanding, and perspective.

Write something: There is almost always the opportunity for an employee to write something on the evaluation. It’s a good idea to write something positive if you can about your job, your workplace, your supervisors, or your coworkers. If you disagree with any points made or think you have been unfairly rated, you should write that, too.

Stay professional: If something is brought up that you don’t agree with, don’t get angry or defensive. Hold your temper and remain professional. You might ask, “Can you give me a specific example of that?” If a perceived shortcoming is mentioned, you might ask, “What would you suggest I do differently?” Make an effort to understand your supervisor’s perspective.

An annual evaluation is an opportunity to review, reflect, and make plans for the future. Make the most of your next employee evaluation by taking an active role before, during, and after the meeting.

The York-Adams Chapter of the American Red Cross selected Susan Cook, LPN, as a 2013 recipient of the Heroes of York & Adams Counties Award. Susan works on E4 (Med Surg Unit) at Hanover Hospital. The award is given to persons who have performed an extraordinary act of courage to save someone’s life, by going above and beyond their normal duties. Susan was honored for saving the life of a young man who collapsed while bicycling. She was driving to a college class at HACC when she saw him buckle. Instinctively she recognized immediately that the man, who was now unconscious, was in full cardiac arrest. Due to her years of nursing experience, she knew the situation was critical, requiring advanced assistance. Another driver who also stopped, called 9-1-1 which brought paramedic assistance. Susan and the emergency team, with the aid of a defibrillator, provided pre-hospital basic and advanced cardiac care to revive and transport the patient.

On this particular day, Susan admits that she was overwhelmed with working and studying to become an RN and seriously considering leaving the health care field. She says it changed her mind. This made her realize that she is and always has been in the right profession. While she may never be involved in a life and death rescue again, she knows she has the skills to save a life, and she would respond again without hesitation.
Hanover Hospital is dedicated to environmentally and socially responsible operations. We are proud to print this newsletter on 70lb. Endurance Silk Text, an industry-leading environmentally responsible paper.

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NATURE PHOTOS:
A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

White, sterile hospital environments are almost a thing of the past. Instead we are applying soothing paint colors and hanging photos of nature. Nature art is proven to have restorative, calming and healing values. It gives the mind and soul a rest from stress and concern and causes you to pause a minute to refocus your thoughts.

A series of incredible colorful photos of natural scenes are now adorning the walls of several units of the hospital. Taking a walk through one of these areas is like getting a breath of fresh air.