health field is essential to attract new people and keep current lab professionals in the field.

By educating people about the exciting and challenging opportunities in medical laboratories, making it possible for more people to move into the field, and offering better pay and more schedule flexibility, the current shortage can be eased, creating a skilled, motivated workforce to meet the country’s increasing reliance on diagnostic testing. “With demand increasing, this field offers an excellent chance to gain secure employment and also an opportunity to move quickly up the ‘corporate ladder’ as older workers retire,” adds recruiter Kelly Gutilla. “We need to communicate that message to those who will make up the future lab workforce.”

Tomorrow’s lab: the stuff of dreams

By Phil Bookman

Tomorrow’s clinical labs are sure to lean on whiz-bang technologies and testing procedures only dreamed of today. Will the methods most labs rely on to train workers of the future be cutting-edge, too? For every tool and test that is sold in the years ahead, labs must train workers to use these wares with precision. That is a big job. A lab manager should not rely on old-fashioned methods to tackle the task.

ARUP Laboratories of Salt Lake City is one company that has tapped leading-edge technology to train workers: a learning-management system (LMS). For ARUP, the LMS maintains precision in the lab, tracks employee know-how, and makes sure employees meet a host of training requirements.

Before the LMS, ARUP kept track of training by hand, not unlike most labs. Using notebooks, computer spreadsheets, and databases, the Utah lab recorded the results of training, fielding calls from employees asking for classes. The Utah-based lab also sought a system that allows technicians to train each year. This is time its training staff would spend recording the results of training, fielding calls from employees asking for transcripts or class schedules, and preparing for inspections.

The ARUP workforce can launch the system from a PC in the lab. Lab professionals can fire up the LMS to download a quick-and-easy copy of what they have learned — handy for performance reviews, as well as for charting what training to take. For managers, the LMS proves their teams have completed mandatory training requirements. Because the LMS delivers online training, workers can leapfrog material that they might otherwise have to sit through in a class. In some cases, the system can cut training time by as much as 50%. Last, the learning-management system lets managers analyze a workforce’s strengths and weaknesses. For instance, top executives can compare what their employees know against the organization’s goals.

ARUP met its goals by building tomorrow’s lab today and underpinning its training with a learning-management system. What could an LMS do for other labs with similar challenges? Tomorrow will be here before you know it. [continues on page 30]

References


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