Business and Management Skills

HOD Executive Summary

House of Delegates *Fall 2014*

Introduction

Business and management skills span all areas and levels of practice and help elevate the profession of nutrition and dietetics. Without business and management skills, RDNs and DTRs do not have the expertise needed for advancement beyond entry level jobs. Management skills "are mandatory, not optional, in every area of dietetics practice" (1). "Development of management and leadership skills should be woven throughout the fabric of our didactic and supervised practice curricula of our future practitioners, not isolated in foodservice management courses or experiences. Enhancement of these skills should be an essential component of our continuing professional education" (1). Management provides RDNs and DTRs opportunities to "see and seize the chance to step up and lead" (1).

History of Past Mega Issue Discussions

The mega issues of management and leadership have been discussed in the House of Delegates (HOD) in the past. During the spring 2003 HOD Meeting, a dialogue was conducted on the Future of Management in Dietetics. In the fall of 2008, a Management Work Group found that insufficient progress had been made in integrating management skills across all areas of dietetics practice and developed a set of recommendations (2). Subsequently, management and leadership were discussed at the spring 2010 HOD Virtual Meeting. The objective of this dialogue session was to understand and value management and leadership skills as essential components of all areas of practice and recommend methods to internalize a management and leadership mindset that assures career success.

Current Mega issue

In March 2013, the delegates from five Dietetic Practice Groups (DPGs) (Dietitians in Business and Communications- DPG-32, Management in Food and Nutrition Systems- DPG 41, School Nutrition Services- DPG-42, Clinical Nutrition Management- DPG-44, and Food and Culinary Professionals- DPG-46) submitted a new mega issue for consideration by the House Leadership Team: Business and Management Skills. They believe that a HOD discussion on business and management skills will:

- Result in a plan, including strategies and resources needed, so that ALL MEMBERS IN ALL PRACTICE LEVELS AND AREAS can develop and enhance their business and management skills in order to advance their careers to higher administrative levels;
- Generate attention on the breadth of business and management positions in all practice areas for RDNs and DTRs, as well as the broad range of responsibilities and the shortage of highly skilled professionals;
- Identify compelling reasons for RDNs and DTRs to consider academic coursework, including continuing education, in business and management as a priority in advancing their career path in dietetics;
- Address key dissatisfactions identified by Academy members, such as low salaries and limited recognition by other fields.

Despite the previous HOD dialogue on management and leadership in 2010, the five DPGs felt a more defined mega issue on business and management skills would engage members from all practice areas and at all practice levels to develop and enhance their skills.

Mega Issue Question:
How can all Academy members utilize, expand and sustain business and management skills to take advantage of current and emerging professional opportunities?

Meeting Objectives:
Participants will be able to:

1. Identify benefits and successful outcomes of utilizing business and management skills.
2. Expand members' awareness, utilization and development of business and management resources.
3. Develop strategies to utilize, expand and sustain business and management skills.
4. Apply business and management skills in all areas of practice.
5. Recognize, seize and create business and management opportunities.

Workforce Demand Study
The current work environment is changing and RDNs and DTRs' knowledge, experience and skills must evolve to meet future practice needs. The Dietetics Workforce Demand Study Task Force identified 10 change drivers that affect dietetics workforce supply and demand (3). The change drivers which directly impact RDNs' and DTRs' need for enhanced business and management skills to meet the demands of a changing work environment are:

- *Interdisciplinary Teaming Drives Innovation*
- *Generalists Gain an Edge on Specialists*
- *Technology Transforms Nutrition Counseling*
- *Food Industry Transforms for Public Priorities*

RDNs in Management
According to a 2010 study published by Sauer, Canter and Shanklin (4), RDNs in management positions (defined as those who manage employees or financial resources) expressed overall satisfaction with their jobs. Their level of satisfaction did vary significantly amongst RDNs with different job titles, but overall RDNs in management were satisfied with their pay.

Dietetics Practitioners Compensation and its Link to Management
The Compensation and Benefits Survey 2013 (5) indicates that "supervisory responsibility is strongly associated with wage gains; those with direct and/or indirect supervision of 100 or more employees have a median hourly wage 50% greater than the typical RDN. Those with no supervisory responsibility earn about 5% less than the typical RDN." Budgetary responsibility is also strongly correlated with hourly wages. "Those responsible for budgets of $1M or more earn a median hourly wage 42% greater than

those with no budget responsibility" (5). With only 42% of RDNs with supervisory responsibility and 25% of RDNs managing budgets, there is a great opportunity for increased RDN responsibility and wages.

Major factors associated with DTR compensation are the same as for RDNs: education, experience, responsibility and location. DTRs in food and nutrition management appear to have the highest wages (5).

What RDNs and DTRs Want

RDNS and DTRs have expressed concerns about their chosen profession. Respondents to the 2008 needs assessment (6), which included a sample of 6,955 individuals (58% response rate), felt the four greatest challenges facing the profession were recognition of the value delivered to the larger society (77%), public awareness of the field (75%), reimbursement for services (74%), and compensation (74%). Concern about respect, recognition, and rewards—the three R's—has been a persistent theme dating back to the mid-1990s. The 2006 Environmental scan (7) showed that RDNs want to be recognized, more visible and more respected in society for their values and their expertise. In 2012, Susan Laramee and Margaret Tate, in their introduction to the Dietetics Workforce Demand Study Task Force Supplement (8), indicated that the profession must "support dietetics practitioners in the development and advancement of career skills and competencies that meet the demands of society and the workplace."

What Employers Want

The 2006 Employer Qualitative Research Study (9) solicited the views of 140 employers of RDNs and DTRs with the focus on entry-level practitioners. The majority of employers identified management skills as a weakness for entry-level RDNs. Employers wanted RDNs who look at the big picture and think strategically, run and justify programs, understand healthcare as a business, add value and are entrepreneurial. Employers wanted RDNs with the following skills:

- ability to work in a team
- ability to work across levels/departments in the organization (patients, doctors, nurses, techs, administrators, cooks)
- supervision
- coaching/mentoring
- negotiation
- accounting and finance
- budget and cost control
- inventory control
- quality assurance and performance improvement
- marketing/selling;
- revenue generation
- reimbursement, sales, and grant writing.

Similarly, employers identified management skills as weakness for DTRs, including performing on interdisciplinary teams, supervisory skills and budgeting and accounting (9).

Academy Resources that Support Business and Management Skills Development

The Academy values and recognizes the importance of business and management skills in advancing the profession. Various resources document the need for development of further skills amongst RDNs and DTRs and provide opportunities for development of those skills by supporting and or developing the following programs:

- Academy Opportunities to Serve
- Academy eMentoring Program
- Visioning Report
- New Model of Differentiated Entry-Level Nutrition and Dietetics Practice
- Standards of Professional Performance for RDNs and DTRs
- Professional Development Portfolio
- Center for Professional Development
- Nutrition Services and Coverage
- Dietetic Practice Groups

Conclusion

The field of food and nutrition is diverse and expansive and will continue to grow and evolve. It is critical for RDNs and DTRs to utilize, expand and sustain their business and management skills in order to seize current and emerging professional opportunities. RDNs and DTRs can hold many prominent positions in a variety of environments, from healthcare to industry and from local public health to world-wide endeavors; the sky is the limit. RDNs and DTRs can position themselves as leaders and change agents to influence the future of food and nutrition services locally, nationally, and globally. It is our duty to propel the profession forward, and we can do that if we create a culture that values and exemplifies business and management principles and expertise.

References

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