
What Kind of "Manager" Does Your Practice Need?

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Don't start looking for someone to run your office until you know what the person in this position must do. While many of the qualities needed in a successful manager are universal — solution-oriented, delegator, motivator, etc. — more depend on your office's unique needs.

It might seem like a needless exercise, but settling on the position's title is an important first step. Advertising for a "Practice Administrator" is likely to draw candidates with deeper education and experience than those seeking a position as "Office Supervisor."

The title itself may connote certain duties: "Office Manager" says this person runs your office, while "Practice Manager" indicates a person who is more deeply involved in the services you perform at hospitals, surgery centers, and other locations as well as your office. Larger practices often opt to call this person their "Administrator" or even "Executive Director." When the lead physician retains the Chief Executive Officer role, the manager's role could be best expressed by the title, "Chief Operating Officer."

If you are not a part of a health system, hospital, or corporate structure, then the person you select as manager must be able to handle a wide range of key practice functions: compliance, contracting, operations, human resources, facility management, billing and finances. Some of these duties may be delegated; however, the office manager is typically held accountable for the people carrying out these efforts. Within a corporate structure, the person commonly manages the personnel and operations at the office, with responsibility for coordinating the administrative activities that are carried out by the system.

Determining the proper job title should be accompanied by a clear list of the position's responsibilities and accountabilities. It's all part of getting the best person in the right role. It may be the greatest investment you can make to ensure that your practice runs smoothly — and successfully.

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