

Tip of the Month



How Cultured Are You?

There's an old saying, *find a job you love and you will never work a day in your life*. But as a phlebotomist, how do you find a job that's right for you? The dividing line between delight and drudgery in the workplace often comes down to the corporate culture and how compatible it is with your own core beliefs, goals and work ethic. Corporate culture can be defined as the combination of attitudes, values and expectations held by an organization.

So, how cultured are you? To find out, evaluate your employer's corporate culture in the following areas:

A Culture of Safety. Does your employer provide and promote a safe work environment? Are employees properly trained, supplied with appropriate personal protective equipment, expected to comply with safety protocols, and encouraged to report safety hazards, observed violations or occupational exposures? Employers that embrace a culture of safety not only respond to such reporting, they *value* it. In terms of patient safety, does your facility have and consistently adhere to a written patient identification policy? When risk management isn't management's priority, sooner or later somebody's going to get hurt. It could be you, a coworker or a patient. Bottom line—If safety in the workplace doesn't come first, you won't last.

A Culture of Quality. A culture of quality evaluates processes and looks at how all the parts and people work together. It continually strives to reduce errors and streamline workflow. Does your employer aim for excellence by removing obstacles to doing the right thing, the right way, the first time? Quality also comes from the inside out. Just ask any oyster. The pearl exemplifies one of nature's greatest workarounds. Irritated by sand, the oyster doesn't look for someone to blame, it simply starts the work it knows to do that ends in a quality product. When the corporate culture is one that "cuts corners" or believes "the end justifies the means" confidence in the leadership is lost. Likewise, a culture of blame is one that focuses on problems and misses out on opportunities for long-term improvement.

A Culture of Professionalism. Astute institutions recognize the critical role phlebotomists play in providing good customer service and obtaining favorable patient satisfaction surveys. As frontline employees who are often considered the facility's "public face", the appearance, conduct and abilities exhibited by the phlebotomist shape the patient's experience. Does your employer hold its employees to a high standard of professionalism? Is pride in the profession and continuing education supported by management? Scottish historian, Thomas Carlyle describes culture as the process by which a person becomes all that they were created capable of being. A culture of professionalism embraces that philosophy, with management promoting professional development of its employees.

So, how cultured are you? You'll know you've found the right job when the corporate culture inspires, engages, and motivates you. Undoubtedly, there will be a few irritating grains of sand along the way. But a work environment that is compatible with your own professional goals and beliefs is worth a few workarounds. The end product will be amazing. Just ask any oyster.