



**CENTRAL
SERVICE**

CELEBRATING

YOU

INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL SERVICE WEEK

OCTOBER 13-19

With International Central Service Week nearly upon us, IAHCSSM believes it is a perfect time to celebrate all of you...the CS professionals who are dedicated to the discipline and committed to giving it their all to manage their many critical (and, often, challenging) roles and responsibilities safely, consistently, methodically, and meticulously.

While CS Week celebrations are indeed worthwhile and deserving (you'll find useful tips in this issue on how to make the very most of your celebratory week), one thing remains certain: the work you do each day warrants far more than seven days of acknowledgement. With that in mind, we're dedicating the heart of this issue to the various ways CS professionals excel and advance in their vital positions to ensure that patient safety and customer service remain the foremost priority.

On the pages that follow, you'll find a wealth of information and affirmations from fellow CS professionals and other experts, including technicians, managers, educators, students, and vendors. Some shared inspiring stories about how they got their start, why they chose a career in CS, how they are personally committing to ongoing education and professional growth, and all the ways their collective departments are dedicated to doing the same. These contributors' backgrounds and stories may differ, but one common thread is evident: each is proud to be part of the CS "family" and is willing to roll up their sleeves and put in the hard work required to ensure that quality and patient safety are never sacrificed.

No doubt about it, you should be proud! Your job is difficult, yet you expertly tackle it with grace and gusto. Thank you for all you do!



CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF SUCCESS

By Jennifer Burrell

Who enrolls in sterile processing education courses? Often, they are long-time sterile processing technicians who want to improve their job-related knowledge, skills and performance.

As the Director of Education at IMS, I have been lucky enough to be involved, either directly or indirectly, in the certification of nearly 500 employees and customers. Typically, I get copied on an email from the course instructors who let me know that an employee or customer had passed his or her certification exam. Up until a few weeks ago, I've rarely had the opportunity to see the excitement of our customers and the sense of accomplishment they have in passing the exam.

In March, 2013, four sterile processing technicians from Advocate Sherman Hospital in Elgin, IL, enrolled in a certification course provided by IMS. Much to the excitement of the facility, all four passed the exam the first time they took it. The response from the C-Suite was tremendous. In my 18 years in Sterile Processing, I have never seen such praise, support and excitement from a group of leaders. Chief Nursing Officer Judy Balcitis, who presented the staff with their certification pins at the conclusion of the monthly employee recognition awards ceremony, stated, "The employees received their certificates from CEO Rick Floyd, were given their pins, and were guests of honor at a party that followed the ceremony. We wanted to show them how proud their senior leadership was of their achievement."

Below is an excerpt from a letter one student sent to the course instructors:

"I DID IT! I just wanted to say thank you for all of the hard work you both put into these classes to help us better our self-es-

teem and get a better understanding of why we do the work we do -- and to make sure it is done properly, according to the rules and regulations. I must admit that I have 20-plus years working in sterile processing and I had no clue why things were done a certain way and whether they were right or not. At that time, I was not certain, but I can honestly tell you that I have more knowledge now than I had before this class."

This education program was championed and initiated by OR Manager Robin Moses-Otterstein. Sterile Processing Department Manager Michelle Milner drove the program with the students daily to make sure they were participating. Robin and Michelle provided guidance and encouragement throughout the certification process. Earning their certification boosted these employees' morale, increased their confidence, and validated their competency. Henceforth, they exemplified a willingness to change processes and promote quality. Robin Moses-Otterstein noted, "The increased confidence also helped strengthen the already supportive relationship between SP and OR staff." This was evidenced by improved communication, understanding, and teamwork between the departments.

Employer-sponsored education is one of the most effective means to promoting compliance, safety, and efficiency in sterile processing. And, as the success at Advocate Sherman Hospital shows, it is a concrete way to show employees that you care about them and are invested in their career development.

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