

Love Them or Lose Them: Enhancing Technician Recruitment, Engagement, and Development

Ryan Birk, PharmD, MS, BCPS

Director of Pharmacy - BJC HealthCare

Memorial Hospital Belleville, Shiloh, and Memorial Care Center

Ryan.Birk@bjc.org



Speaker Conflicts

- No conflicts to disclose



Objectives

- Discuss technician recruitment opportunities and collaboration
- Outline best practices for technician training, engagement, and development
- Review developing a technician growth ladder



Poll/Survey – Technician Turnover

- What is your current pharmacy technician annual turnover rate?
 - A. < 5%
 - B. 5-10%
 - C. 10-15%
 - D. >15%
 - E. Not sure, but I would like it to be lower



Poll/Survey – Vacant Positions

- How many of your current pharmacy technician positions are vacant or currently training?
 - A. 0
 - B. 1-2
 - C. 2-5
 - D. 5-10
 - E. More than 10



**Beside every great pharmacist is an
excellent pharmacy technician!**



Starting with the “Why”

- Increasing demand for skilled pharmacy technicians
- Limited formal training and education programs
- New Illinois 2024 law requirement
- Increase in the minimum wage to \$15 per hour
- Workforce stability challenges
- Recurring expense for training



BJC HealthCare

1. Alton Memorial Hospital
2. Barnes-Jewish Hospital
3. Barnes-Jewish
St. Peters Hospital
4. Barnes-Jewish
West County Hospital
5. Boone Hospital Center
6. Christian Hospital
7. Memorial Hospital Belleville
8. Memorial Hospital East
9. Missouri Baptist
Medical Center
10. Missouri Baptist
Sullivan Hospital
11. Parkland Health Center
12. Parkland Health Center
Bonne Terre
13. Progress West Hospital
14. St. Louis Children's Hospital
15. The Rehabilitation
Institute of St. Louis



BJC HealthCare

The world's best medicine. Made better.

* Boone Hospital Center became independent on 4/1/21

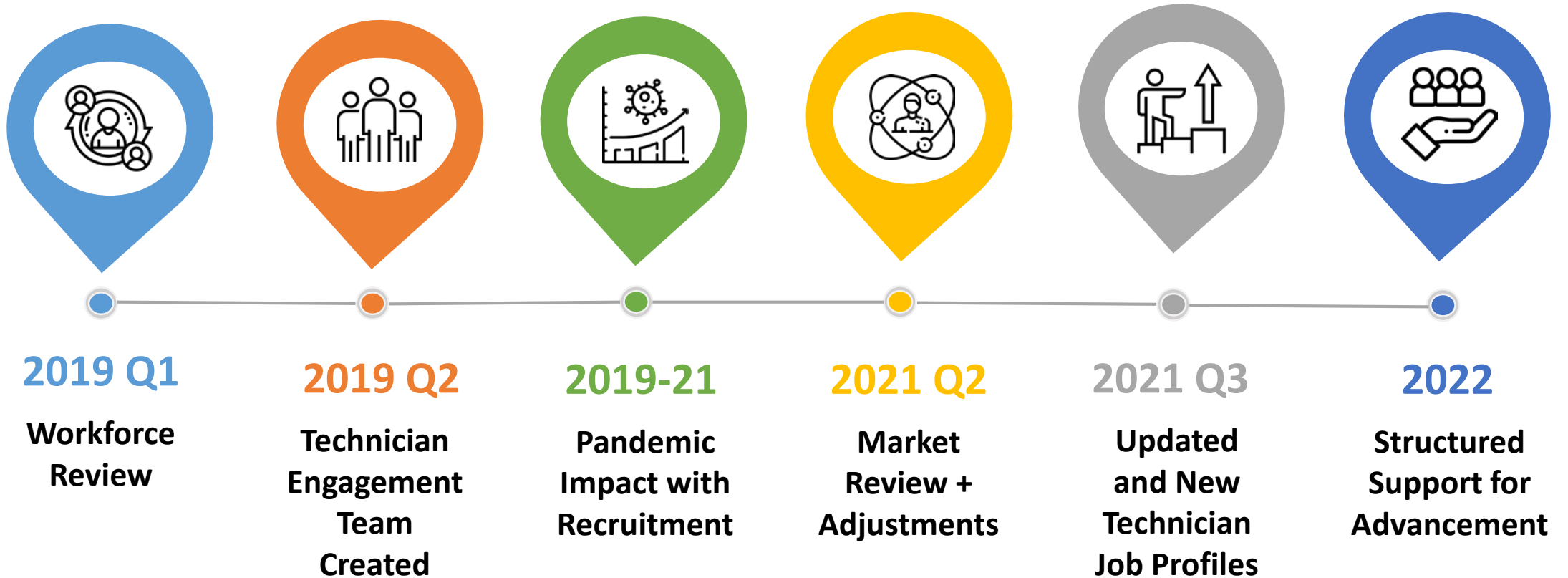


Previous State

- Higher than desired turnover:
 - Key groups:
 - 0-3 years of employment
 - 5-10 years of employment
- Time to fill a position increased by 25% over two years
- Exit Survey Trends
 1. Lack of promotion, advancement, career opportunities*
 2. Work schedule, work hours, work-life



Timeline



Designing a Health System Technician Engagement Team – Case Example

- Structure of team
 - Includes 12 leaders and technicians
 - Representation from all operations of pharmacy
 - Including human resources and compensation team members
 - Leaders at multiple levels and locations
- Virtual meetings were once per month
- Focused on investigating and implementing best practices



Pathway to Health System Technician Engagement Team Goals

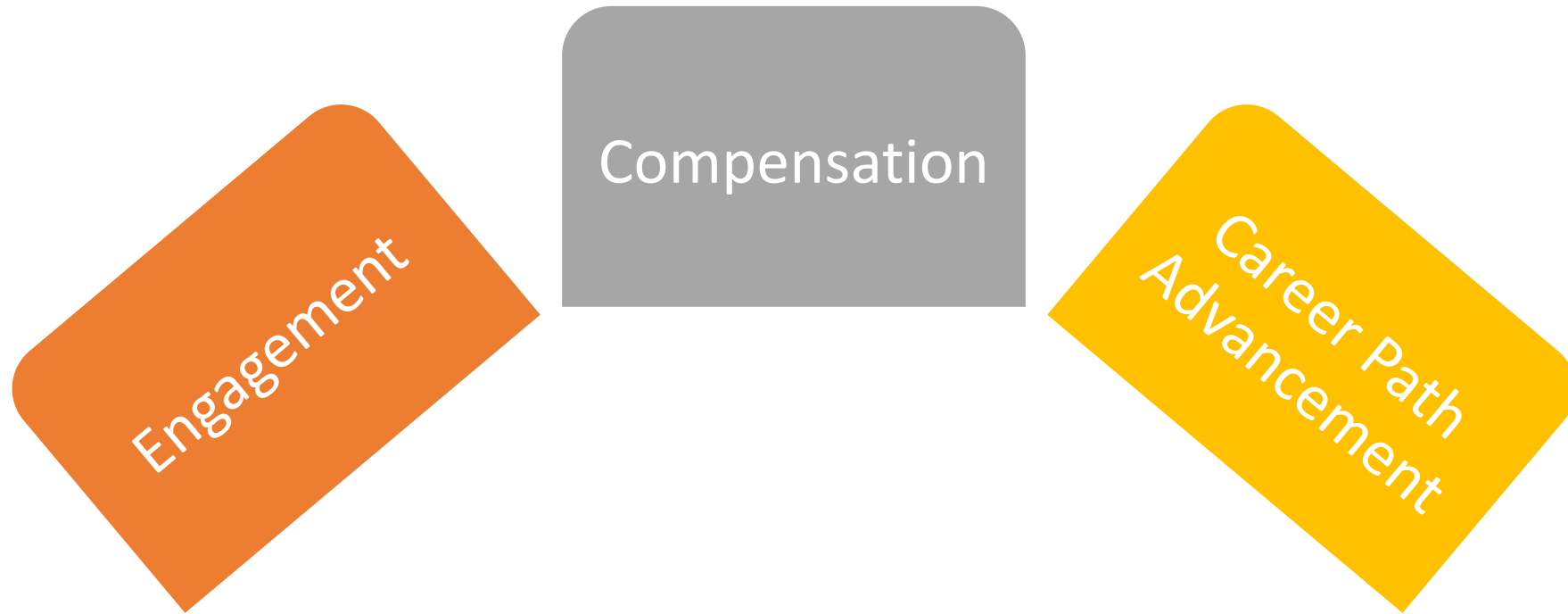


Goals

- Increase high quality applicants
- Retain and improve engagement of highly talented technicians
- Support career and development growth
- Align strategic goals, standard work, and compensation



Initial Focus Areas



Engagement

- Roll out an employee appreciation program
 - Interactive web-based tool
 - Each recognition linked with shared principles
 - Leader expectations
 - Recognize one person per week
 - Recognized everyone on the team at least once per year



Compensation

- Support case for technician review
 - Market analysis
 - Turnover rate
 - Vacancy rate
 - Premium pay
- Standardize technician incentive structure
 - Elevation based on critical patient care need
 - Respond to market conditions



Career Path Advancement

- Develop a technician professional development program
- Investigate and collaborate with technician training programs
- Outline a growth ladder focused on current and future needs



Knowledge Check

Which is a key element in designing a technician engagement team?

- A. Volunteer members
- B. Meeting twice per month
- C. Broad representation of members
- D. Many initial goals



Recruitment and Collaboration



Recruitment Strategies

- Clear job profile description
- Include technician video testimonials
- Post position on multiple social media platforms
- Share your position posting with your social media connections
- Best time to post - 10:00 AM on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays
 - Facebook - 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays
 - Twitter - 8:00 AM on Mondays and Thursdays
 - LinkedIn - 9:00 AM on Tuesdays and Wednesdays



Recruitment Strategies

- Referral bonus – word of mouth
- Community recruitment connections
 - High School or Community Connections
 - Job fairs
 - External training program rotations
 - Career pathways
- Business card to service focused team members
- Private or community college training programs
- Apprenticeship programs



Top Traits

- Team player
- Self-starter
- Problem solving
- Commitment to learning
- Customer service and conflict resolution
- Accuracy and focus in a busy environment
- Prioritization, organization, and time management



Collaboration Case Study

- BJC HealthCare and local community college (CC) collaborating on Technician Training Program
- Leverage teaching expertise of CC
 - Recruitment
 - Learning platform
 - Credits to be utilized for additional degrees
 - Faculty Members
 - Affordable

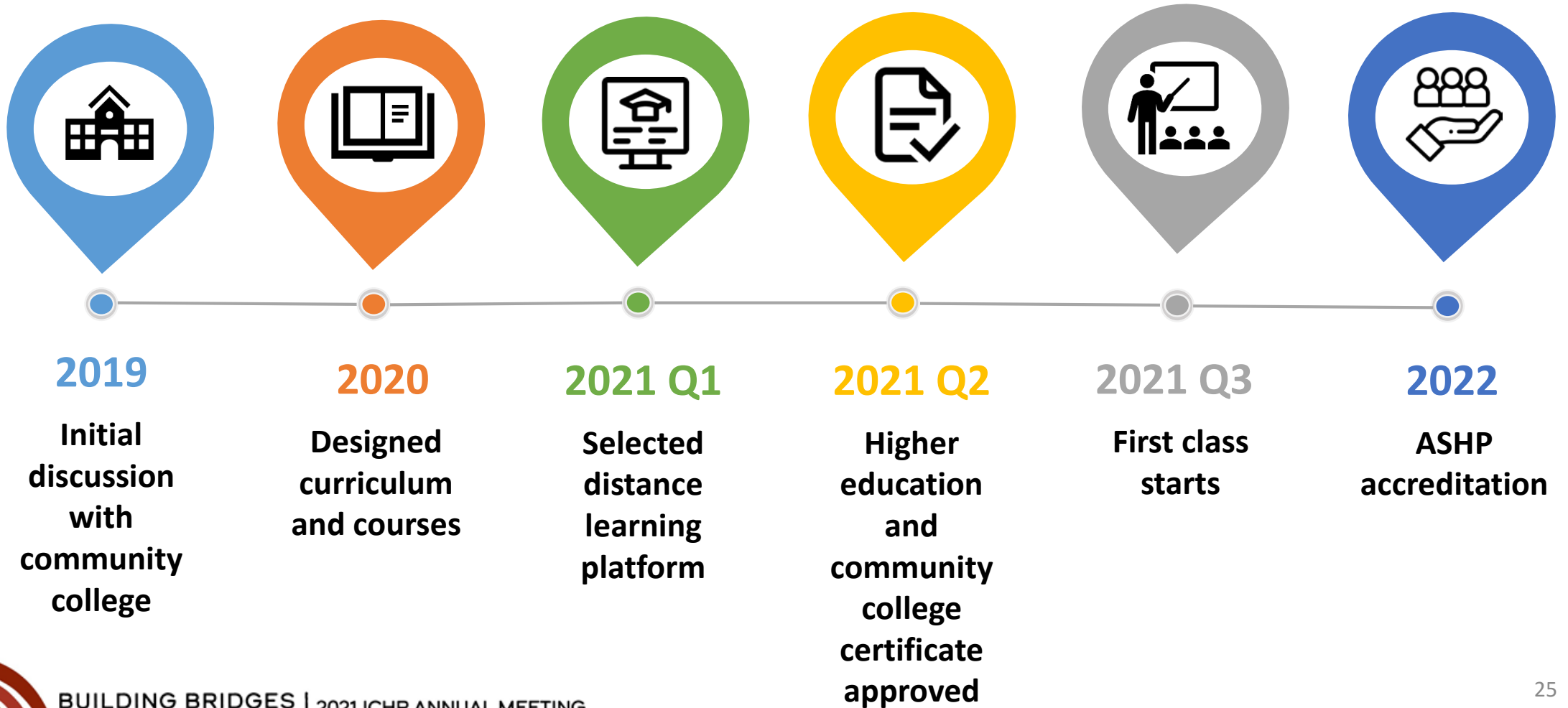


Collaboration Case Study

- Health system experts on current pharmacy practice
 - Initial syllabus and course design
 - Real-world simulation and experiences
 - Expansive experiential sites
 - ASHP accreditation support
 - Leverage employer's tuition benefit program
 - Future employer of program graduates



Collaboration Timeline

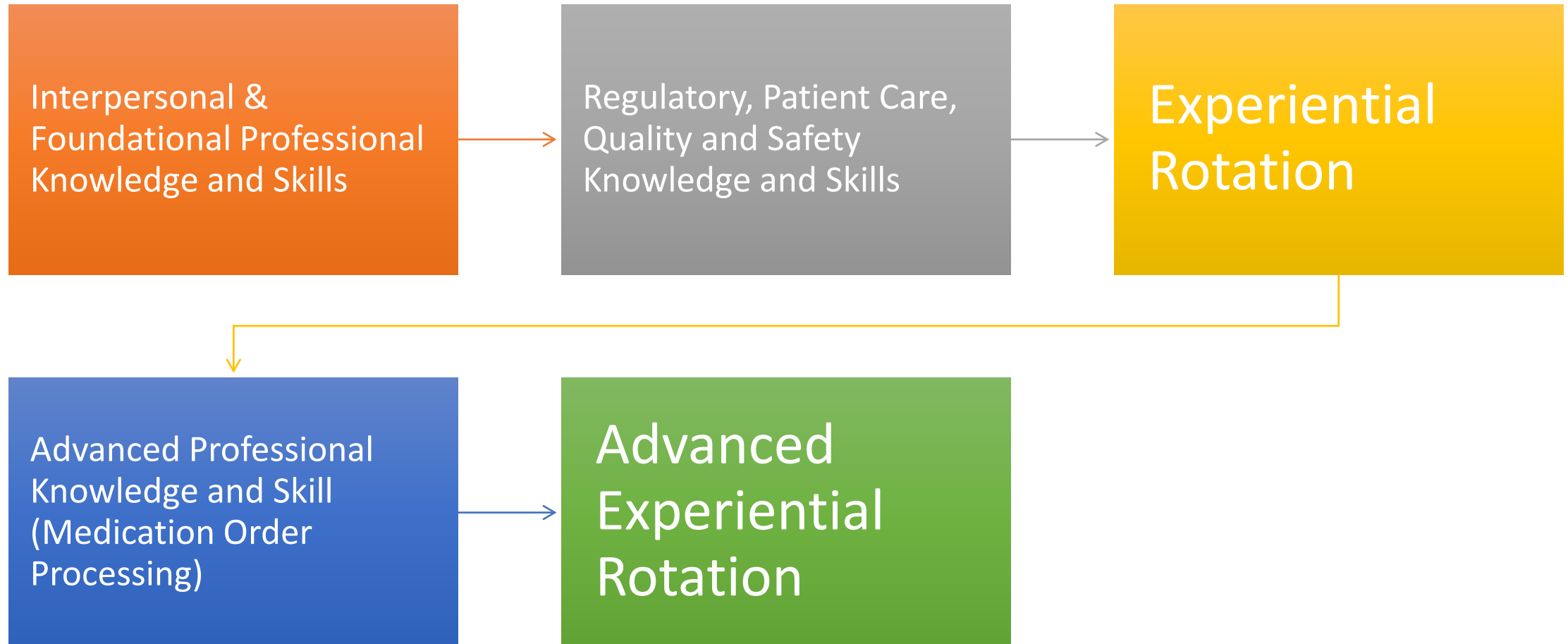


Program Outline

Didactic	•120 hours
Simulated	50 hours
Experiential	130 hours
Added hours (any category)	100 hours
Total Hours	400 total hours (over at least 8 weeks)



Program Outline (Didactic, Lab, Experiential)



Knowledge Check

What is a benefit of collaborating with a community college on a technician training program?

- A. Leverage current resources
- B. Affordability
- C. Reduction in creation time
- D. All of the above



Open Ended Response

List one challenge you experienced with technician recruitment or turnover.

And

- One action you will try to improve them.



Open Ended Response

List one action you will try to improve them.



Training, Engagement, and Development

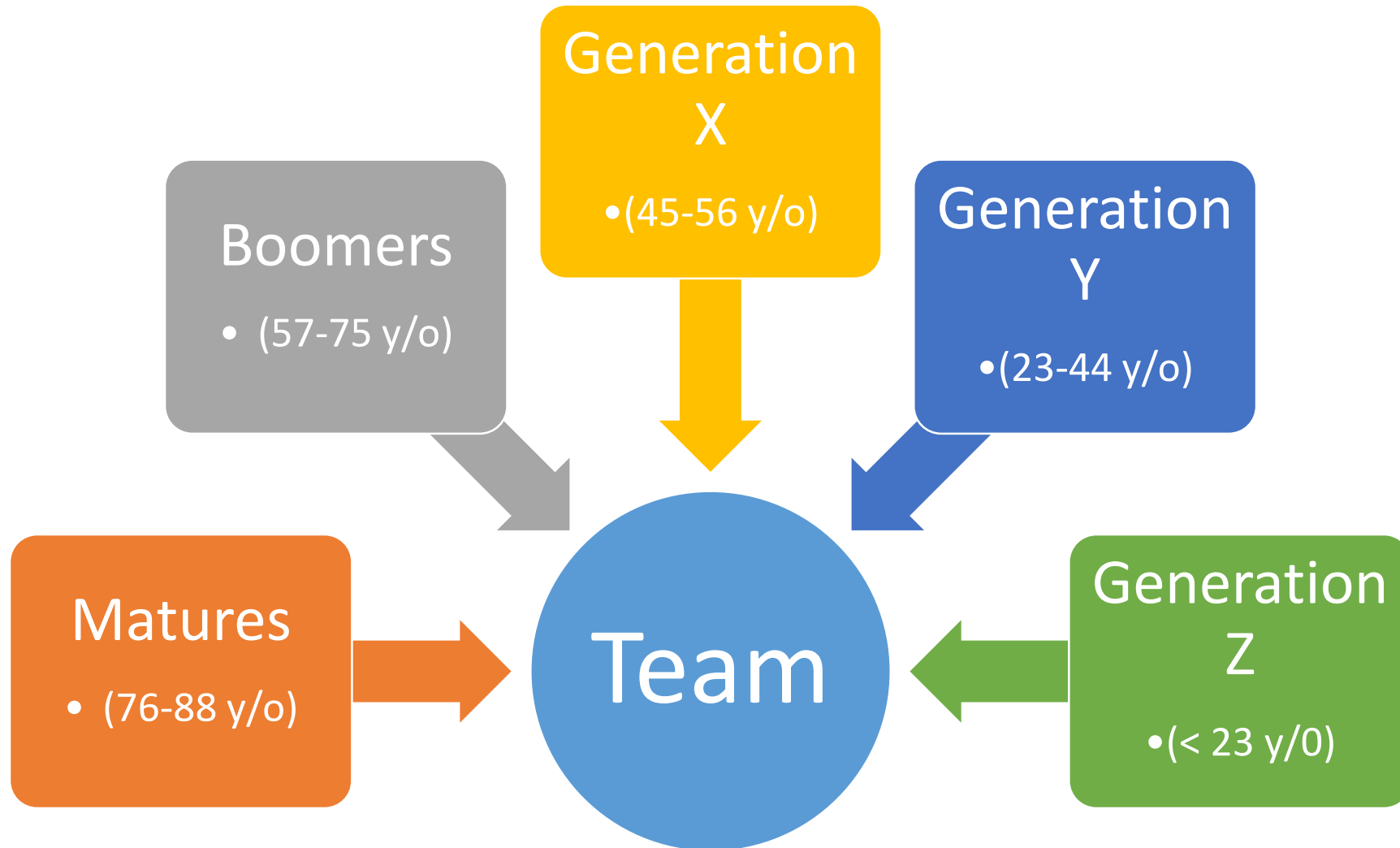


Technician Training Techniques

- Current state: On-the-job training and competency-based exams
- Majority self-identify as “best by doing” learners and prefer experiential training
- Formally assessed: ~40% of technicians learn by a combination of learning techniques



Generations of Our Team



Traits of Our Team

Matures (76-88 y/o)

Work focused

Communicate in writing

Feedback – No news is good news

“Just do the work.”

Boomers (57-75 y/o)

Live to work

Meetings

Positive feedback = compensation

“Pay your dues.”



Traits of Our Team

Generation X (45-56 y/o)

Work to live
Send an email
How am I doing?
“What can the organization do for me?”

Generation Y (23-44 y/o)

Life and work style
Text message
Tell me nice and now
“I want it all now.”

Generation Z (< 23 y/o)

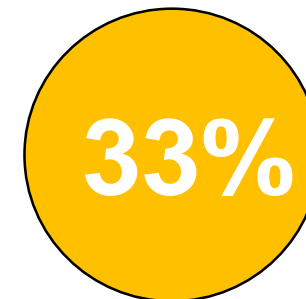
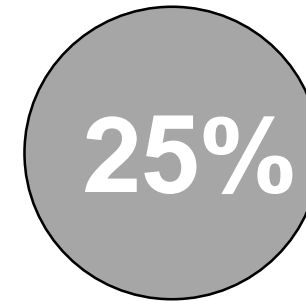
Ready to work
Fast - Visual Comm.
Short-term own goals
Search for truth with everyone together



People Leader Support

- Baby Boomer (57-75 y/o):
 - Coaching-style feedback
 - Specific goals and deadlines
 - Put into mentoring roles
- Generation X (45-56 y/o):
 - Immediate feedback
 - Flexible work arrangements
 - Opportunities for personal development
 - Highlight organizational support
 - Work-life balance

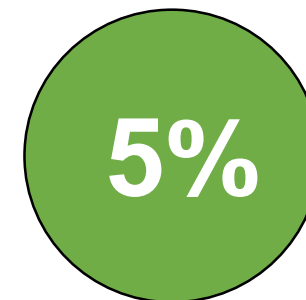
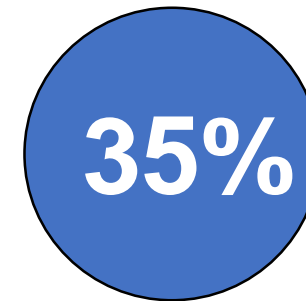
Workforce Percentage:



People Leader Support

- Generation Y (23-44 y/o) (Millennials):
 - Immediate feedback
 - Flexible schedule and “fun” assignments
 - Get to know them personally
 - Manage by results
 - Stay conversations with change
- Generation Z (< 23 y/o):
 - (New) Technology all the time
 - Multiple projects at the same time
 - Diversity focused
 - Connect with Generation Y managers
 - Work-life balance

Workforce Percentage:



Knowledge Check

You received a text message from your team member asking about funding for a themed pharmacy week. Which generation of employees are they attempting to engage?

- A. Boomers
- B. Generation X
- C. Generation Y
- D. Generation Z



Engagement Suggestions

- Brief pre-employment question to get to know the person (Welcome gift!)
- New employee mentors and buddies
- Manager connection at 3 days/3 weeks/3 months
- Monthly one-on-one with direct reports
 - Build and keep relationships with employees
 - Address issues and follow-up
 - Dedicating time to share their thoughts and concerns
 - Opportunity to recognize birthdays and milestones



Engagement Suggestions

- High participation rate for annual employee survey
 - Provide an incentive to complete
 - Engagement champions to promote participation
 - Anonymous feedback focused (typically third-party)
 - Focus on impacting department future/goals
- Employee survey follow-up
 - Small workgroup to review department results and feedback
 - Department picks one value or daily actions



Engagement Suggestions

- Work-life balance
 - Technician opportunity to reduce FTE
 - Hire an additional technician with extra hours
- Digital recognition program
 - Include in leader standard work
- Podcast for the team to share personal stories



Engagement Suggestions

- Pharmacy Technician Unit Practice Council
 - Decision making body

- Continuous improvement event - Pharmacy technician led
 - Better workload balance
 - Expiration reduction
 - Improve workflow



One Med – One Location

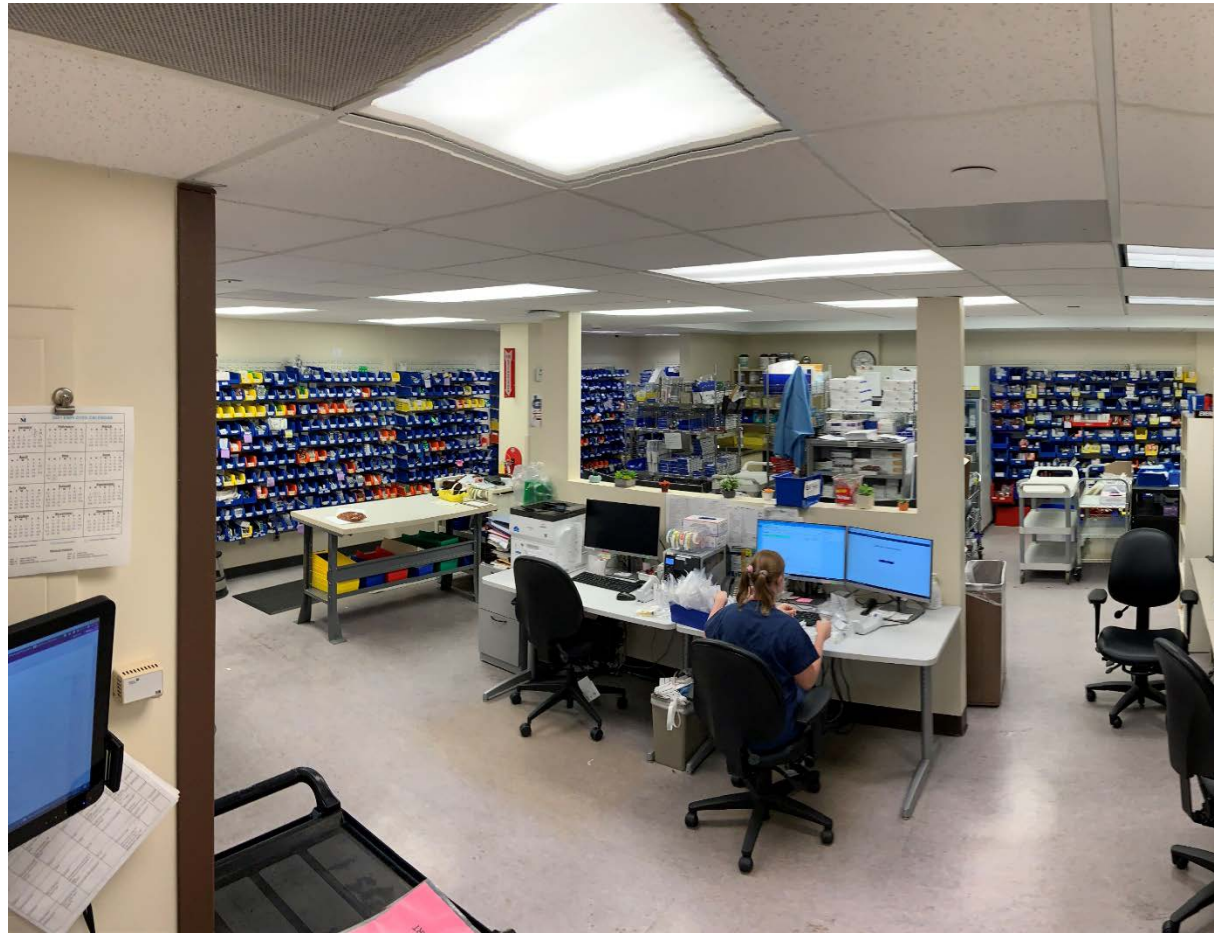


Photo property of speaker.



Open Ended Response

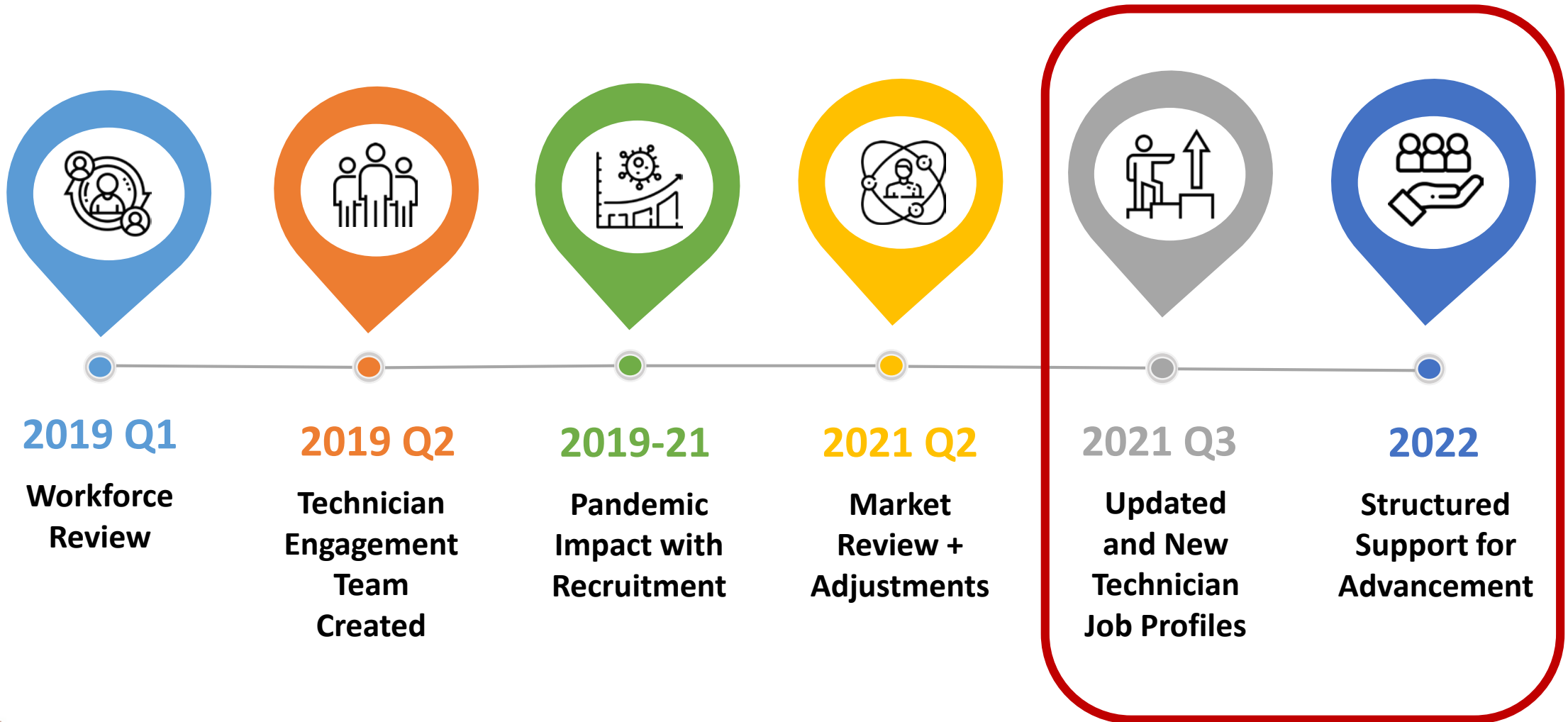
List one item you have tried to improve engagement for your team.



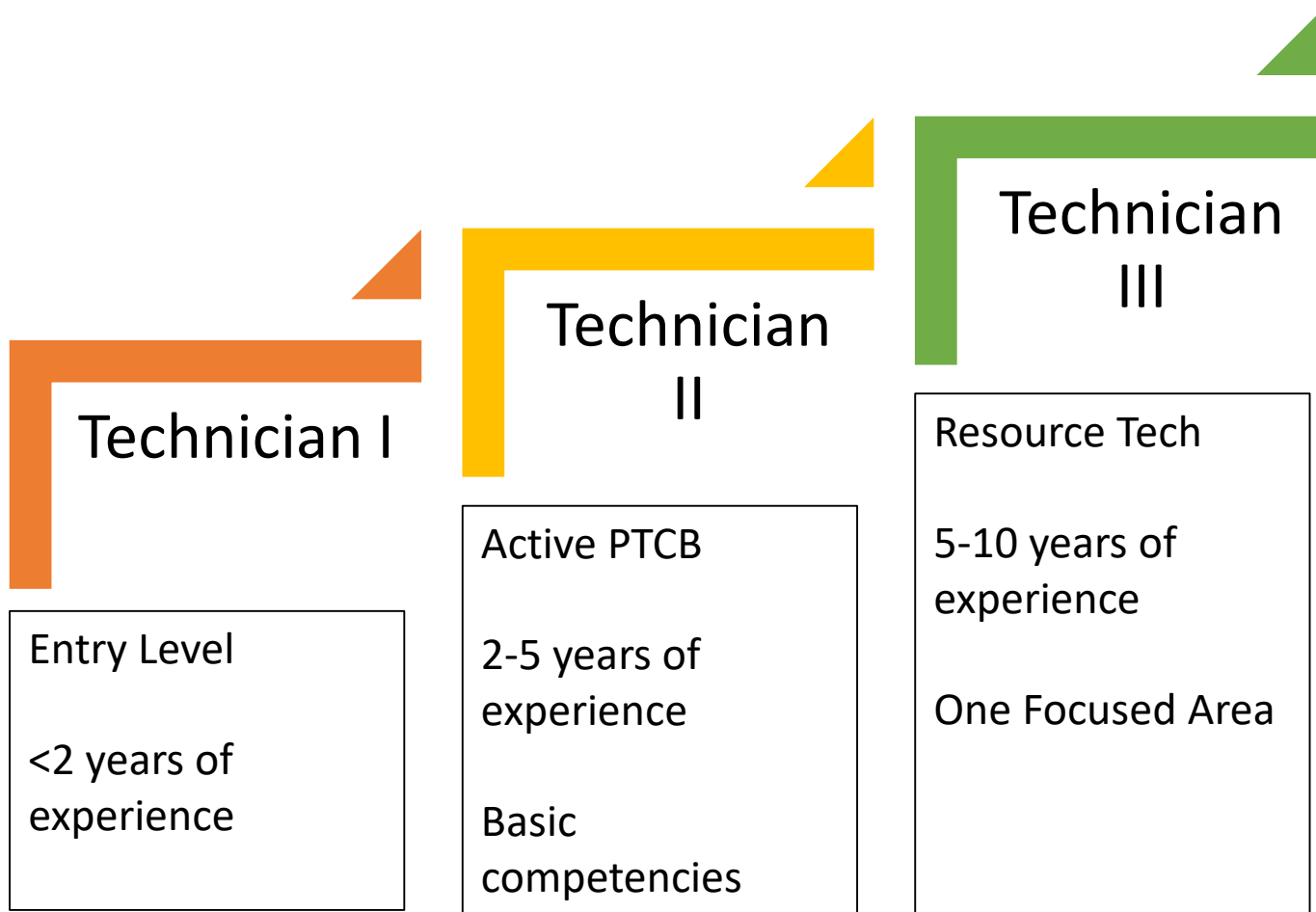
Path to a Technician Growth Ladder



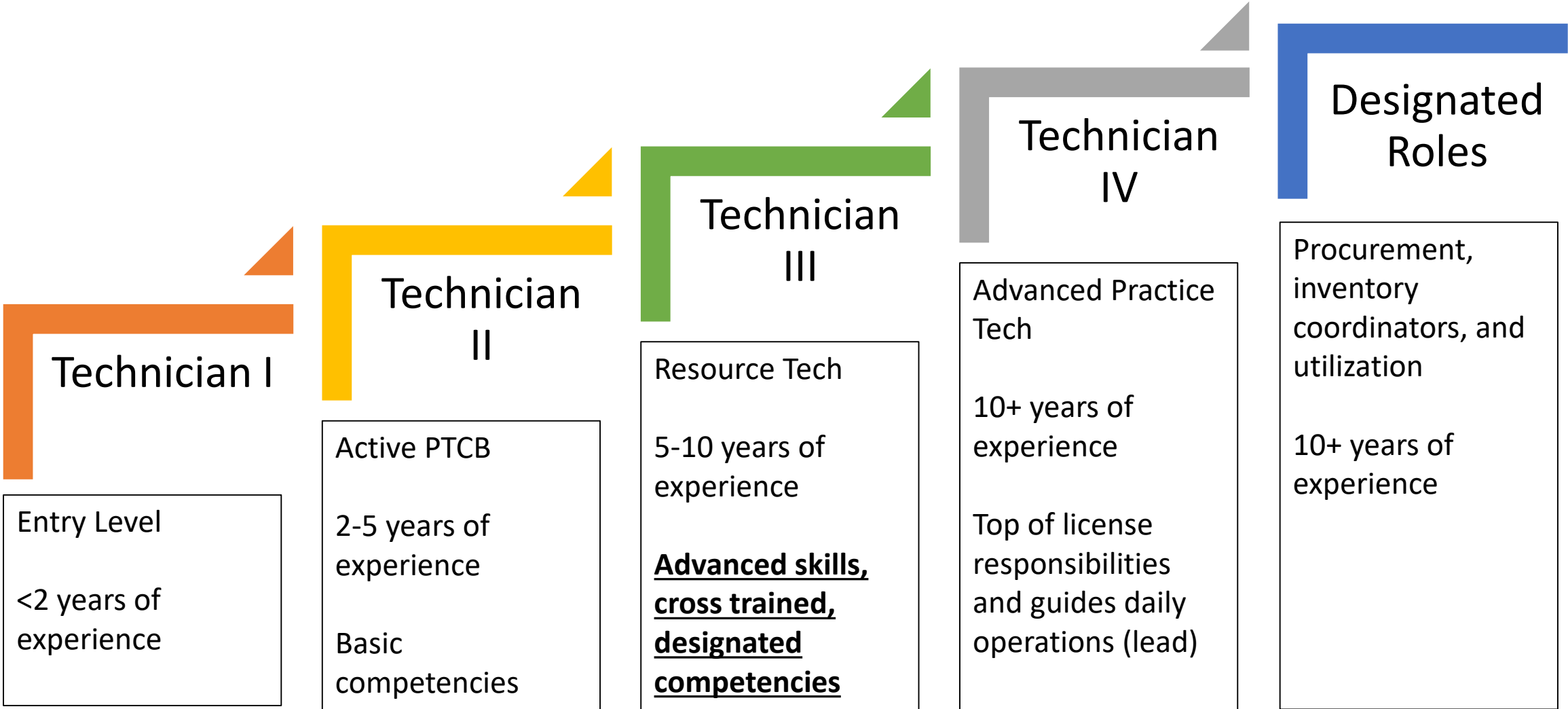
Technician Support Timeline



Previous Technician Profiles



New Technician Profiles



Obstacles

- Differences in state law
- Diversity in hospitals size and scope
- Range of pharmacy service lines
- Market review for advanced job description

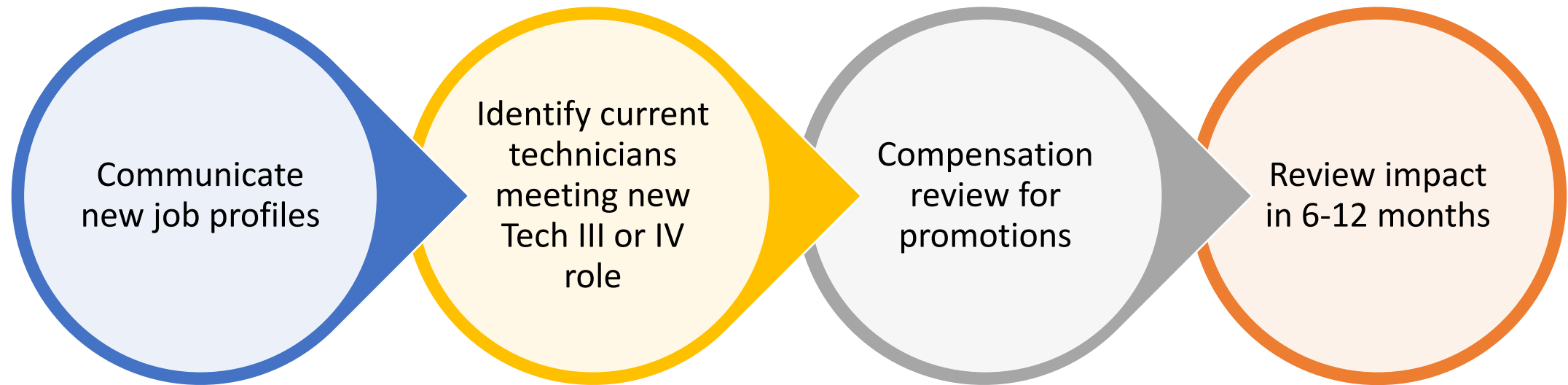


Pillars for Success

- Market drivers
- Focus on future patient and team needs
- Human resource and compensation representation
- Focused enhancements vs. comprehensive overhaul
- Detailed roles and descriptions with each job profile
- Executive leader support



Next Steps



Knowledge Check

What will support implementing a technician growth ladder?

- A. Abundance of applicants
- B. Exit and engagement survey results
- C. Range of pharmacy services
- D. Differences in state law



Love them or Lose them: Enhancing Technician Recruitment, Engagement, and Development

Ryan Birk, PharmD, MS, BCPS

Director of Pharmacy – BJC HealthCare

Memorial Hospital Belleville, Shiloh, and Memorial Care Center

Ryan.Birk@bjc.org



Questions?

