

# FROM PATIENT CARE TECHNICIAN TO DIRECTOR

FINDING AND IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS TO GROW YOUR CAREER By Dave Richardson

**“YOU** are not the leader you think you are, you are the leader others think you are,” is a message I have heard repeatedly from my mentors throughout my career at DaVita Inc., and it is one of the things I reflect upon often. Working for a company who identified and shaped my leadership skills has allowed me to rapidly advance my career. I believe that, in this day and age, it is imperative to offer professionals in renal care the insight and opportunity to grow. It is those who have worked in the field who often make remarkable leaders.

I began my career in 1997 as a patient care technician with hopes of rising through the ranks of the dialysis community and pursuing management. Unfortunately, the company I worked for did not promote employees without management experience. The question I asked is how do I get management experience without the chance to manage? The answer I found was working for a company that helped mold and guide my skills allowing me to advance from the inside.

## Advancing By Way of Company Support

I started at DaVita in 2001 and soon realized this would be a company that would not only educate, but allow me to expand my career. Programs such as “One For All,” a six-month support program for new teammates allowed me to understand the culture and support of my fellow teammates as I transitioned to this new company.

After seven months, I was promoted to facility administrator. As soon as I took my new position, DaVita offered me several training programs specifically outlined for new facility administrators. DaVita University’s FAST Class allowed me to integrate into the DaVita culture, and understand what company resources were available to assist me in running a successful center.

My story did not end after my first promotion as a facility administrator—under the “DaVita Way of Managing” program I received a mentor, and a four-and-a-half-day extensive program of self-discovery. The goal of the program is to assist managers in mastering their skills and provide them direct feedback. At times this feedback was difficult to hear, but honest and needed for me to develop as a leader and continue my career. I not only received the opportunity to work as a regional operations director in May 2004, but in June of 2007 I was offered the opportunity to take on a larger territory as a group director.

In a matter of six years, I rose from a patient care technician to group director. This did not come easy and I am thankful everyday for the coaching I have received from my mentors, peers and many other great teammates at DaVita.

Due to my own growth and desire to help others succeed, DaVita’s Wisdom Team invited me to participate on a committee to create and help facilitate a new leadership program. The program, called DSS Leadership, tracks high potential teammates and proactively trains them towards management. The goal of the new program was to identify people like me with hopes of becoming a better leader and continuing to grow in their career.

## Results

Four years after implementing the DSS Leadership program, we continue to find more and more leaders. Just last year DaVita promoted 66 teammates to a supervisor or manager level as a direct result of the training they received.

Today, I remain a group director at DaVita with the intent of not only becoming a stronger leader, but mostly helping others to grow and excel as leaders within the DaVita Village. Advancing in this profession takes a partnership between an individual and a company who offers tools to not only train, but promote leaders. **RBT**

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