

Athletic Trainers in Administrative Positions: Where Do I Start?

BY ROB SANDMANN, MED, ATC, LAT

At some point during the career of every athletic trainer who works in an emerging setting, the question has been asked: “How do I get a job like yours?” It seems like a million dollar question, but those asking the question have started some of the legwork in their current athletic training setting (whether they realize it or not).

I started my current career 10 years ago in a high school in the mid-cities area of North Texas. An orthopedic surgeon and the director of rehab at the local hospital came into my athletic training facility looking for a team to cover. Little did I know that was the start of my transition from the secondary school setting to the clinical setting.

Between taking care of athletes and water breaks, the physician told me how ATs were utilized at his fellowship site and his wish to bring that model to his practice. Fast forward two years, and there was a vacancy for a manager of the sports medicine institute at that local hospital. That job eventually catapulted me to into working solely for his practice three years later.

Why do I need to describe all of this background information? There are several things to consider when making the decision to move into an emerging setting. My college professors drilled into us the importance of networking. I got involved with the Board of Certification as a test site administrator and joined the North Texas Athletic Trainer

Society, which helped me build many contacts for my network. For me, networking was the first step toward moving to an emerging setting.

The second step is deciding which setting you want. My opportunity presented itself to me by way of the hospital job and my team physician knowing he wanted to set up a similar use of ATs in his clinic. Before I left the hospital and moved into his private practice, he and I evaluated what services

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to bring to his practice. I put together a job description, but the salary was a little trickier. I took into account several things: my current salary, the NATA Salary Survey, current salaries of ATs in similar positions and what I thought was fair. I brought this information to him and convinced him to move forward with his plan, and I was the right person to make his plan a reality.

As I started the job, his vision quickly became reality. I increased revenue into the

practice by bringing Durable Medical Equipment (DME) in-house, which more than paid for my salary. Student athletes now had a conduit to get into the physician’s office, which increased his volume of patients and made the athletes, parents and ATs happier because the athletes were getting seen in a timely manner and they had a contact inside the office they could call anytime with a question or problem.

After several years I moved into the administrative side of the practice, managing physical therapy and all of the clinic services. I learned these skills from a combination of things, but like most athletic trainers I have a willingness to learn and a desire to take on new challenges.

“How do I get a job like yours?” Take a chance and explore the opportunities out there. There may not be a clear-cut job in front of you, but use your skills to help an employer develop that opportunity. Remember there is probably an AT in the setting you are exploring, so seek them out and figure out what they have done that would help you in your new setting.

For more information about emerging settings and the Clinical and Emerging Practices in Athletic Training (CEPAT) committee, visit www.nata.org/CEPAT or contact Sandmann at rob@txortho.net. §

Rob is currently the assistant administrator for clinical services at Texas Orthopedic Specialists, a sub-specialty orthopedic clinic. He is the chair of the SWATA CEPAT committee and is the District Six representative for the NATA CEPAT committee.