

INTRODUCTION TO WORKFLOW ROTATIONS

In this resource:

- Definition of a Workflow Rotation
- Explains the benefits of workflow rotations
- Discussion on structure and implementation
- Provides a rotation example

HLC Workflow Rotations 101

Great pharmacy leaders begin here! If you are looking to implement a workflow rotation to enhance your pharmacy's operations, then this resource is for you! This guide explains the benefits of using a workflow rotation and discusses how to create one to bolster productivity. The goal of The Healthcare Leadership Certificate is to coach pharmacists into their best leadership careers through actionable, evidence-based techniques with simple tools and resources. Let's get started

Workflow Rotation Defined

Do you ever feel like every person on the team is paddling with grade A effort, but the ship is going nowhere? Or what about recognizing too much of your day is spent directing traffic or "quarterbacking" the pharmacy team? At the end of the day, you are exhausted, the team is spent, and the results are lackluster. What if there was an easier way?

Too often, team members have the best of intentions to tackle the day, but no one knows who is working on what or where they are in the process. Thankfully, the solution is simple – a workflow rotation.

A workflow rotation is a structured self-managed plan that guides proper workflow distribution and completion. On a more granular level, a workflow rotation standardizes daily operations assigning a person to a specific task for a designated period. While tasks, ownership, and timeframe will depend on your practice environment, the basic principles are universally applicable.

Although simple, a workflow rotation is invaluable in replacing chaos with clarity. The guide assigns responsibility and accountability without requiring constant management oversight.

Benefits of a Workflow Rotation

As leaders in the pharmacy, your role should be as the name implies—lead. In The Healthcare Leadership Certificate course, we discuss using Vaden's Focus Funnel to focus on the right items at the right time as a manager by categorizing tasks.

A workflow rotation is an essential piece in the application of the automation category. A workflow rotation structures essential daily workflow functions into a repeatable process that is automatically ready to use. Said another way, a workflow rotation automates the daily activities of the pharmacy. This removes the burden from the manager on duty to constantly evaluate who is doing what when. Employees simply reference the rotation that provides direction.

Furthermore, a scheduled plan for the day removes duplication of work by assigning ownership to individuals. An employee's essential task for a designated timeframe is prioritized for them. Once completed, then the individual can move onto secondary tasks.

Another benefit is the rotation builds consistency. Regardless of who is working, the plan for the day is the same. Each individual contributor knows what they are responsible to do at any given time during the day and by when. By allowing each technician the opportunity to participate in every workflow station, the rotation inevitably creates training opportunities. This prevents a seasoned technician from monopolizing data entry or a new technician getting stuck at the pick-up area. This allows skill development to be prioritized rather than avoided.

Finally, the balanced workload from a stations rotation provides objective performance data. As training opportunities and knowledge gaps are revealed, managers can tailor team development.

Then during feedback sessions and performance evaluations, quantitative, specific, and direct examples of improvements and remaining gaps can be shared.



INTRODUCTION TO WORKFLOW ROTATIONS

Workflow Rotation Implementation

As a leader, you now understand the value and importance behind a workflow rotation, but simply bringing the plan to the team with a firm “Do this” is unlikely to garner buy-in from the team. In fact, you may get push back from change resisters refuting: “I am an adult and don’t need a chart to tell me what to do. We are smart! Is this really necessary?”

Yes! While such statements are in fact true, the resistance stems from not seeing the value such a rotation provides. Our role is to help the team realize how the guide will make workflow smoother and ultimately their days better. But to help them understand, we must approach implementation with open dialogue.

First, we need to explain what the workflow rotation is and how it helps overall pharmacy operations. The rotation saves the team time since members automatically know what function they are responsible. The workflow guide allows us to focus on what needs done rather than what everyone is doing.



Next, we need to remove the perception that workflow rotations are micromanaging or diminish the role of any contributor. Quite the contrary, workflow rotations provide a basic framework to increase productivity and efficiency across the team. Such rotations empower employees with freedom to act and contribute within the framework.

Let’s elaborate on the freedom within the framework a bit more. Workflow rotations foster collaboration rather than dictation. When explaining the new process to the team, ensure that they recognize the workflow rotation is a guide to establishing primary responsibilities. However, pharmacy is a fluid environment so adjustments will need to be made on the fly.

To combat this, their primary priorities are not all that they are responsible for. At the end of the day, the pharmacy is still a team, and everyone has a role in the accomplishments. When another priority becomes more urgent, say for example a growing line of patients at the register, then other employees will need to temporarily support that priority.



In the same way, completing their primary task does not mean that associates are devoid of helping others. Empower the team member to evaluate the next pressing “to-do” or another teammate that may need help. This is the collaboration piece because on a different day, he or she might be the one needing the support.

Lastly, the workflow rotation allows each member of the team to participate in various steps of the process. As the team cycles through areas of responsibility, contributors become more confident in their skills, efficiency increases, and productivity improves. The evidence will be in the results when busy days become a breeze.

The success of the rotation is largely dependent on the buy-in from the team. At initial rollout, encouragement to check the rotation will be needed. After seeing the positive outcomes of implementation, team members will begin to self-regulate without prompting as teams come to love the process, consistency, and results.

An important note is that the fair distribution of work afforded by the workflow rotation will give the manager insight into individual performance. While supporting one another is important, constantly picking up someone else’s slack is damaging. Leaders should use the objective performance measures to provide ongoing feedback to individuals to strengthen the team.



INTRODUCTION TO WORKFLOW ROTATIONS

Workflow Rotation Creation

The process to create a workflow rotation can be approached in three simple steps:

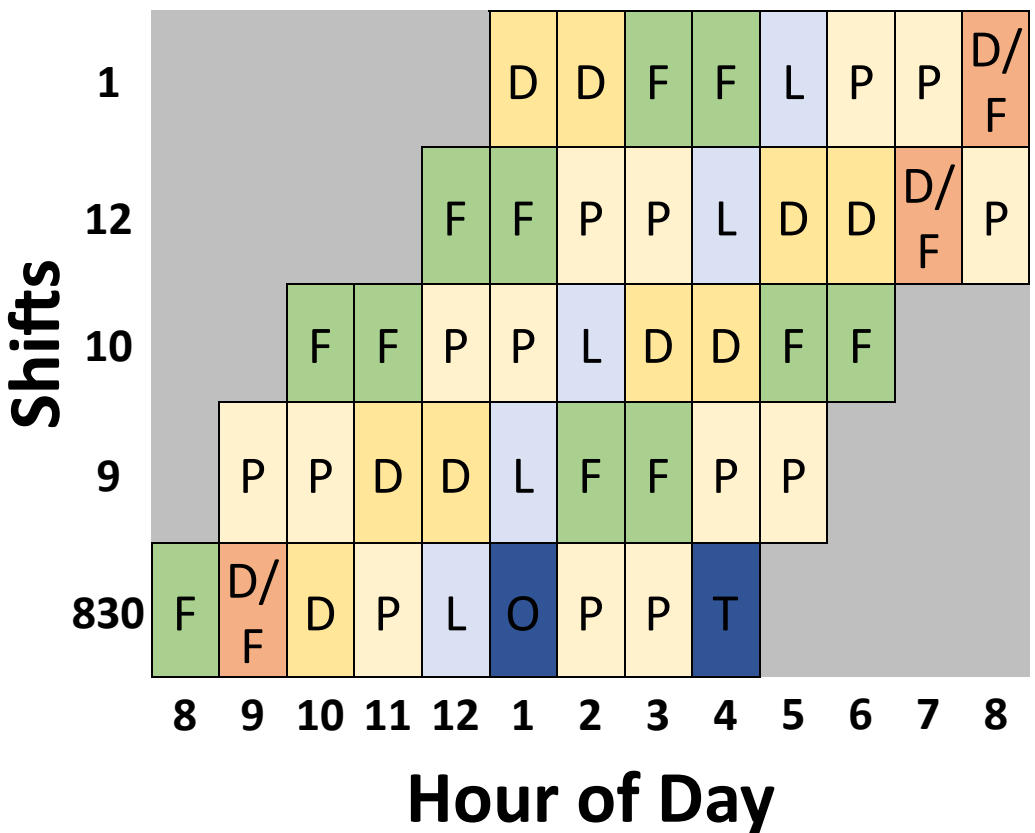
1. Identify the primary functions that need to be accomplished
2. Determine essential shift times
3. Coordinate functions and shifts

Although the format can vary from index cards with shift responsibilities to mapped out on a whiteboard, we recommend using a chart graphed out along an X and Y axis. The best format is the simplest. While a chart sounds complicated, it is not.

A workflow rotation chart provides a pictorial representation. Such a chart is intuitive to use, easy to read, and typically the best method for implementation. Post the workflow rotation in an area readily accessible to allow the team to self-manage their actions.

Workflow Rotation Example

Workflow Rotation



Legend	
F - Fill/Production	O - Order
D - Data Entry/Intake	T - Task
P - Pick-Up/Register	L - lunch/meal break

