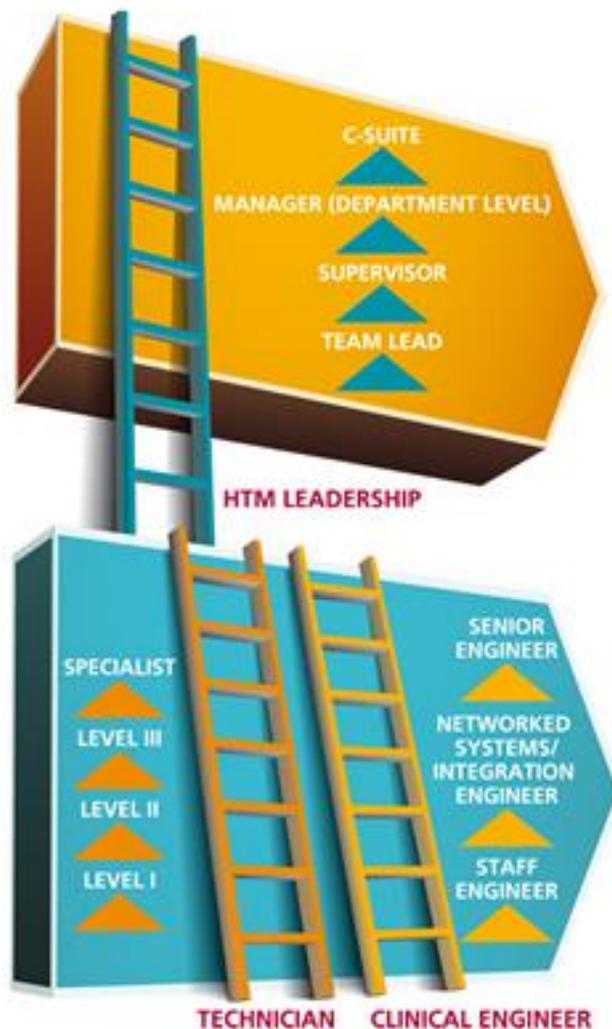


Where Do I Go from Here? Climbing the Ladder to Management

Finding a job usually isn't difficult for graduates of healthcare technology management (HTM) programs, according to Frank Painter, CCE, adjunct professor of biomedical engineering at the University of Connecticut.



“There’s a shortage of staff in both the area of biomedical equipment technicians and the engineering side, but there’s really a shortage on the engineering side,” Painter said during an AAMI podcast about the education of HTM professionals. “It seems as though at the time of graduation, there are two or three or four jobs per graduate to step into.”

But once you’ve gotten a foot in the door in a healthcare setting, what do you need to do to progress your career?

More Education

According to AAMI's Leadership Development Guide, additional academic credentials are often needed. Supervisors, department managers, and members of the C-suite are required to have a bachelor's degree in a related discipline, but managers and C-suite executives may also need a master's degree.

"The number of master-degreed individuals in our HTM profession is very low, and I believe that that stems from this historical perspective of 'you can learn this on the job' and 'it's a skillset that we can evolve over time,'" said Barbara Christe, PhD, associate professor and program director of healthcare engineering technology management at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, during the podcast. "Those are all probably very true, but in an environment like healthcare, where academic credentials for every other profession are evolving and increasing, we have done ourselves a terrible disservice, especially as people retire, by not training more people with more degrees."

'Softer' Skills

Although many managers in healthcare technology come from a biomedical or clinical engineering background, this shouldn't discourage technicians from pursuing managerial positions.

"It doesn't take an engineer to be the perfect manager; it takes someone with an interest in that area and a natural tendency to be a good manager," Painter said. "We find that there are quite a few technicians who are just inclined to be good managers; they deal with people well and naturally perform well in the role of manager. And they rise to the need when there are openings."

These professionals usually exhibit "softer skills," as well as a good technical understanding. So-called soft skills cover areas including customer service, communication, listening, presentation, and leadership.

According to Painter, the ability to interact with others in an effective and professional manner is nearly as important as the technical skills that you bring to the table.

To find complimentary HTM educational and career resources, please visit www.aami.org/career.

Professional Development Tips

- Find a mentor in your organization or through AAMI's Mentorship Program who can provide help and guidance on building your qualifications, skills, and experience.
- Seek out opportunities to lead teams and supervise others to acquire increasing levels of responsibility.
- Observe how senior leaders communicate. Note their skills and techniques, especially when delivering difficult messages or challenging information.
- Gather and evaluate customer feedback to make improvements in service.
- Read publications about business issues inside and outside the healthcare industry.
- Take a class in finance.