



Interview with a new department head - Sophie Perryck

- 1. What is your current position?*
I am the chief radiation therapist at the University Hospital of Zurich in Switzerland.
- 2. What was your previous position?*
I was the clinical education liaison at the University Hospital of Zurich in Switzerland.
- 3. How did you know that you were ready for such a step-up?*
In the first couple of years of my career, when I was working and developing my skills as a therapist. I discovered that I have a good sense and feeling for what the people around me needed. 3 years ago when my chief left, I thought about applying but I realized I wasn't ready yet and made the choice to improve myself further as a therapist. With the choice I made, I am still happy and luckily for me the opportunity arose again in the summer of 2019. This time I decided I was ready enough for a step-up. For me being ready means I know I can do most of the job very well and the other part I will learn on the way. I will also (probably already) make mistakes and I will work hard to correct them and prevent them from happening in the future.
- 4. Did your previous supervisor/boss encourage you to apply and/or help you prepare to apply?*
My boss encouraged me to apply, the preparation for the interview and assessments I did myself.
- 5. How does the recruitment process work for your current position? How long did it take from when you found out about the call to the first day in your new position?*
The position of chief radiation therapist opened up quite unexpectedly and decisions had to be made quickly. I took over on a temporary basis for 6 months. In these six months I went through the motions of interviews, presentations and HR assessments. So by the time I heard I got the job permanently I was already acting as chief radiation therapist for six months.
- 6. What was the biggest change with respect to your previous position?*
The biggest change for me was going from patient care towards a management position and having a to do list that is not finished at the end of a workday. The beautiful fulfilling part from patient care as a radiation therapist is being done at the end of a working day. Going home after the last patient. Now my work isn't finished at the end of a day. So I need to be at peace with leaving it at my work and going home to enjoy my freetime.
- 7. What are your new responsibilities?*
I am now responsible for creating a positive workplace in which radiation therapist can deliver the best patient care and develop themselves. I am part of the clinic management, as thus involved in future project for our clinic. In the 4th quarter of 2020 we will be opening a new satellite centre with a linac. The project management concerning the radiation therapists is my responsibility.
- 8. What was the biggest challenge in your new role?*
The biggest challenge was getting up to date with all the projects that are currently ongoing in our clinic. Refining your position and not being able to share everything anymore with my former colleagues for who I am now the boss.
- 9. If asked 5 years ago "where do you see yourself in 5 years", would your current role have been the answer?*
5 years ago I moved to Switzerland looking for a new challenge. I could have never dreamed that I would be in charge now. I was hoping and working hard for new opportunities. I believe I created these myself by staying true to who I am, working hard but also by not simply obeying to every wish. With skills like critical thinking and being part of a solution in a constructive way, I have helped myself getting ready for this position.
- 10. What about in 5 years? Where do you see yourself then?*
In 5 years I still want to be in this job, especially since I recently started. I hope to have developed myself within the ESTRO, maybe even being part of the board in 2025. In our department, I want to have lower fluctuation rate. One other wish is a better visibility of the RTTs, this can be expressed in publications, presentations and taking part in projects in our clinic,

from the beginning.

11. *What kind of department head are you?*

I'd like to think that I am a fair department head. I am someone who will not avoid hard topics and in the end I will make decisions that are best for the team, the employees and the hospital. Obviously in some cases these three parties are not always on the same side. In these cases I will have to find out what all the different parties want and if there is a solution possible that will satisfy most people. Making everyone happy is not possible and making that a goal is unrealistic.

12. *Which persons have played an important role in your career on the way of becoming a department head/team leader?*

About 10 years ago when I started out as a radiation therapist my team leader was a very open person. Giving everyone in the team a chance to speak out and be involved, whether you had 20 years of experience or 2 months. I still cherish my time working with him.

Moving to Switzerland and starting out in a new country, a new city and a new working place I am still thankful for the coworker who asked me to come with her for a drink in my second workweek in this new environment. We became great coworkers, friends and sparring partners, this shows to me that sometimes the small things in life and work can become big influences.

13. *Any advice for young professionals hoping to work in a role similar to yours in the future?*

If you want to be a leader, you can already be a leader, this does not depend on the position you have. Do not wait for opportunities but create them yourself. If you have ideas, go to your boss and express your opinion. Your boss cannot guess that you are interested in a project or a position and nobody is gonna fight for you, you have to fight for yourself. Last but not least: never underestimate what words can do when you mean it, saying thank you or apologizing, will earn you respect because you are a truthful person.



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