

6 ways to get staff buy-in for your practice transition



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Your staff can make or break your practice transition. Change can be scary. Your longtime staff may be apprehensive about the future of the practice – after all, the practice provides their livelihoods, too. However, you can take steps to reassure staff and gain their buy-in. When staff is on board, they can be your biggest advocates and streamline the transition.

1. Be open about your intentions

If you have worked with the same team for several years, you have likely shared plenty of life's milestones: marriages, children, illnesses, grief. You may feel like family.

Talk openly about plans for your eventual retirement, such as travel or time with your family. The key is to avoid shocking your team members when you make an announcement. They may be sad to see you go, but happy that you can enjoy the next phase.

When you begin to make steps toward retirement – such as joining ADA Practice Transitions – hold a staff meeting. Share your plans and timeline and reassure staff that your goal is to continue providing top-quality care as you search for someone to continue that mission.

You might pull aside longer-term employees before this meeting to ask for their support. These long-term employees are already the face of your practice and can provide some continuity long after you leave.

2. Ask for staff input

Your staff knows the ins and outs of the practice – the patients, the equipment, the processes, etc. Whether you are planning to sell 100% of your practice and walk away or navigate a longer-term buyout, your staff can help.

Think of your retirement as an opportunity to improve the practice. Ask your staff what patients want, such as extended hours or new treatments. Use that information when thinking about the ideal dentist to continue your legacy.

Consider involving staff in the interview process, too. They can provide a valuable second opinion about how a candidate might “fit” in the office.

3. Sell your staff's abilities

Make sure the new dentist knows your long-term staff members' strengths. With an ownership transition, staff will need to be officially rehired by the incoming dentist.

Update (or create) official job descriptions for each role

and review them with employees. Are there skills they would like to expand? Maybe the practice's growth merits shifting responsibilities to make things more efficient and fair. Consider reviewing salaries and benefits to align with your local market. While this can take some work, your team will feel essential to the practice and be more likely to stay and advocate for success.

The new owner will have their own ideas about how to run a practice, so avoid making promises. If you plan to remain as an associate of the practice for a period of time, be sure to discuss how you will manage staff.

4. Find a dentist who shares your philosophy of care

Patients return to your practice and refer others because they like your approach – also known as your philosophy of care.

How hands-on are you? Do you prefer to do procedures yourself or delegate? How “patient-centric” is your practice? Do you accept third-party payers or are you entirely fee for service?

Whether or not you have discussed your philosophy of care with your staff, they have internalized it. A major change in the practice's philosophy of care can drive away patients and staff.

Reassure staff that your goal is to find a dentist with a similar approach. ADA Practice Transitions is designed to help identify dentists who share your unique philosophy of care.

5. Build relationships

Incorporating the new dentist with your team can help everyone feel dedicated to the practice's success.

You might encourage the new owner to continue office traditions – bringing in treats, celebrating birthdays or planning team outings. Before the new owner starts, consider closing the practice for a few hours so everyone can get to know each other.

6. Get expert help

ADA Practice Transitions can help make your retirement or sale easier and less stressful with a dedicated ADA Advisor. Join the platform to be matched with a dentist who shares your philosophy of care.

Find out how ADA Practice Transitions can help by starting your profile today at adapracicetransitions.com.