



Building a strong foundation for your practice starts with your team

Meghan Conger, Co-Founder & Chief Practice Management Officer, Dynamic Dental Advisors

The term “solo practice” is used commonly in dentistry, but as Steve Jobs said, “Great things in business are never done by one person, they’re done by a team.” Investing the time to building a strong, productive team is essential, because a great team is the foundation of your practice and ensures its success.

It is not enough to simply hire staff, because even the most skilled individuals will fail without strong leadership, clear direction and teamwork. When building your team remember that:

A successful team starts with you. Dental owners often wear many hats, and it can be a struggle to find a balance between providing patient care and guiding your team. While it may take time upfront, it is important to establish clear goals and operational protocols for the practice. Without them, your team will lack direction, causing confusion and stress. Over time, tension in the practice can negatively impact the patient experience, as well as the productivity and profitability of your practice.

Knowledge is power. Protocols are only effective if your

team understands them. To ensure everyone is on the same page, utilize a standardized process to train each member of your team. This includes detailed job descriptions and workflows—establishing responsibility and accountability amongst the team. It is also important to remember that effective, thorough training takes time and can’t be accomplished between appointments. Instead, schedule staff training outside of patient care hours, so you and your team can focus solely on the information being shared.

Shared goals unite the team. You know the goals and priorities of your practice – but does your team? To be successful, it is important that everyone at the practice is working toward the same goal. Identify specific goals for areas such as new patient growth, production and collections. Share the practice goals with your team and make sure each team member understands their role in achieving them. Shared goals not only boost your practice performance, they also give team members a stronger sense of purpose at work and promote feelings of ownership and commitment to the practice.

Compensation matters. Although you may be concerned about compensating your team too much (in dentistry, labor is typically the highest practice expense), ensuring you are compensating your team fairly and competitively is essential to attracting and retaining top talent. Outside of compensation, you may want to consider implementing a bonus structure, which can be an effective way to increase staff engagement and loyalty even more. When developing a bonus structure, make sure it is tied to your practice goals, including increases in practice revenue. This will ensure everyone is focusing their efforts on the success of the practice.

Your team can teach you a lot too. No one knows your practice or your patients better than your team. Their feedback can provide you with invaluable information on what is going right at the practice, and more importantly, uncover areas to improve. Set aside time to meet with your staff regularly. This is a great way to make sure your team feels heard and supported. It gives them the opportunity to ask questions, discuss any issues that may need to be addressed as a group and share ideas.

A dental practice is only as strong as its team. In order to achieve long-term success, it is essential to invest in developing and retaining a high-performing team.

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Visit www.wda.org/dental-professionals/practice-transitions.

If you would like support enhancing your practice performance, Dynamic Dental Advisors offers a wide range of practice management services, including developing operational protocols for your practice and staff training, to ensure your practice is operating as efficiently and profitability as possible. To get started, contact mconger@dynamic-da.com.