

Team Tips



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This year's IAO annual conference in Clearwater, Florida was the best ever. On my list of favorite topics was the team building workshops. Why?

Because leadership skills are the multipliers of performance. You can have the best technically trained practitioner and staff in a practice, but when "people skills" are lacking, there is bound to be disharmony in amongst staff or patients, and profits are negatively affected. Here are some team tips.

Perception Is Important

The way we perceive our patients and each other will set the standard for the way our patients perceive us. Doctors, you must perceive your staff as top notch, knowledgeable and professional. If you don't already, or if you are aware of necessary improvements that the member(s) require to be their best, then invest in the training to bring them up to your standards.

Staff, always speak highly of your doctor, and have a positive attitude. If you have an issue with your doctor, talk to him or her about it. Ask yourself these questions. "Am I a great investment?" "Am I making money for the practice?" If the answer is not "yes" to both questions, ask your manager or clinician for ideas on creating great dental health for your patients and making money for the practice.

When there is mutual respect and admiration for each other on the team, your perception of your own practice is highly productive, positive and profitable. You are setting the intention and you'll be amazed at how much you can create starting with your own thoughts and feelings.

Invest In Your Staff

Take care of your team. At the same level that staff feel taken care of, they will take care of your patients. Be very clear with your expectations from your staff, and help them get an "A." I recently heard of a college professor who handed out a copy of the exam on the first day of the program, and then spent the rest of the semester teaching the students how to get an "A" on the exam. Sound reasonable? Absolutely! Why not

teach them exactly what they need to know, and how to implement their knowledge for perfection in their skills and treatment.

Invest in them, get them trained in order that they can get an "A" and they will feel taken care of, resulting in the best care to your patients. When I am asked the question, "Why should I invest in my staff when they might quit and go work for my competition?" I reply that it's better to train them and have them leave than to not train them and have them stay.

Treat your team to specific and timely feedback, alternating between positive and constructive advice, and they probably won't leave. Staff need to know that their service is of value, and their pay check doesn't speak the same language that fuels their emotion and passion for their job. Docs say "Well I pay them and that should be enough." Well, it's not. The greatest staff motivator is appreciation. Money is about fifth on the list of job benefits from an employee's perspective. Tell them of their value, thank them often, speak in praise, recognize their efforts and acknowledge what they are doing well. You will see that their performance will improve. Keep the balance between compliments and constructive feedback.

If you didn't get a chance to bring your staff to this year's IAO meeting, an in-office session or series could benefit. The points above create harmony, productivity, professionalism and profitability, but only when implemented.

Penny is a consultant committed to helping dental offices achieve their goals with training and motivation strategies for the entire dental team. For a list of customized Practice Building & Professional Development Seminars visit www.PennyTremblay.com and link to our seminars page, or contact us via 705-498-1818 or info@PennyTremblay.com.