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Practice Management Articles



Good Hiring Starts With Preparation

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Here's a plan to help you select the right dental team

At our coaching company for dental professionals, we frequently hear a common complaint from dentist/owners about their major stresses: staff relations, management problems and team and individual-member performance. They complain that many things are not getting done, morale is low, etc. The results for the dental practice can be inadequate treatment of patients and a practice that is under-productive.

In order to have a high-performing, synergistic dental team, there must be the right people in the right position. It's important that jobs match each individual's talents and that staff members perform with maximum efficiency and work well with others. A hiring mistake can undermine team dynamics, which will ultimately have a negative effect on patient relations.

The goal with hiring is to get it right the first time, in the most timely and cost-effective manner, using process that is predictable and proven to succeed.

This simple process, which helps with hiring and other human resource issues, can be duplicated in any size dental practice. If you, as a dentist/owner, aren't able to devote time and energy to implementing a plan, there are many outside advisors who can help you have a successful team — and ultimately a successful practice.

Five Key Elements to Hiring and Maintaining a Successful Team

1. Recruiting. Put together a team to define the job role, determine what type of person is needed for a good fit, and approve the written job description that will be used in the job advertisement.
2. Screening. Review resumés and administer candidate assessments using DiSC (<https://discpersonalitytesting.com/>), for behavioural and personality tendencies; Kolbe (<http://kolbe.com/assessments/>) to assess natural instinctual talents and energy; and Strengths Finder (<https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com>) to assess the top five strengths that dominate a candidate's actions.
3. Interviewing. Prepare interview questions and conduct interviews.

4. Hiring and training. Have orientation and training programs in place.
5. Performance Reviews. Perform annual reviews.

Recruiting Step 1.

Create a human resources (HR) team to define the job you are advertising and the candidate characteristics that match.

If possible, have more than one person to help with recruiting, screening and interviewing. If only one person makes all the hiring decisions, the result may not serve or fit the entire group.

- Select current team members to help identify team needs, what the position entails and what type of person will match the requirements. When current staff members contribute to defining and understanding a position, they feel more involved and are more apt to support the new person's success.
- In a large dental team, select a core group of five or six members — one from each department such as hygiene, restorative, administrative or financial. The goal is to gain input from all departments, not to hire based on the opinions of one or two individuals.

Team and Practice

When the selected team members are gathered, ask the following questions.

- Why are we hiring for this position?
- What is the greatest value this role provides to team synergy and efficiency?
- What effect does this role have on patients?
- Who does the new person report to?
- What training and processes will be required in the first 90 days? For example: training time required, people who will help train, weekly feedback etc. What instruments, computers or other equipment will candidate be using?
- What metrics or measurements will indicate the success of the new position? For instance, successfully leading and managing the new patient experience.
- What are the hours of the position?
- What tasks and systems are needed in order to perform this role? For example: restorative scheduling, outstanding dentistry, new patient experience, financial arrangements, consults.
- What degrees, licenses and skills are required?

Tip: If you are filling a position that is being vacated, if possible, ask the departing employee to help you review the job description to determine if it is accurate and up-to-date. Perform an Exit interview with the departing employee to discover why they might be leaving.

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