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## Practice Management Articles



Dental Practice  
 Management Solutions

## Hire Education

- Lisa Philp, TGNA

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*Adding new staff is one of the most important things you'll ever do for your practice.*

Here's how to do it right.

A SUCCESSFUL DENTAL PRACTICE starts with the right team. The right team starts with good hiring. And good hiring — you knew this was coming, right? — starts with thorough preparation.

At my coaching company for dental professionals, the most frequent complaints I hear from practice owners center on staff issues of one kind or another: management difficulties, along with team and individual performance.

They gripe that many things around the office are being left undone and that morale is low. These ills then find expression in an underproductive practice that offers its patients inadequate treatment.

A high-performing, synergistic dental team requires, above all else, being sure that the right people are in the right positions. A hiring mistake can undermine the team dynamic, which will ultimately have a negative effect on patient relations.

The overarching goal when it comes to hiring is to get it right the first time, in the most cost-effective way, using a process that's predictable and proven to succeed. This five-tier process — which lasts well beyond the act of hiring itself — is effective for dental practices of any size.

1. Recruiting. Put together a human-resources team, even informally, to define the specific role that the open position entails; determine what sort of person is likely to make a good fit; and approve the written job description that will appear in the posted advertisement.
2. Screening. Review résumés and administer your initial assessment of each candidate using DISC theory ([discinsights.com](http://discinsights.com)) for behavioral and personality tendencies; Kolbe assessments ([kolbe.com](http://kolbe.com)) for instinctual talent and energy; and StrengthsFinder ([strengthsfinder.com](http://strengthsfinder.com)) to determine the key attributes that dominate a candidate's actions.

3. Interviewing. Prepare thorough questions based on both the position you need to fill and the candidate's personal and professional history. (If at all possible, be sure to have more than one person help you with recruiting, screening and interviewing. If you're the only one making all hiring decisions, you might overlook certain aspects that are important to the larger group.)
4. Hiring and beyond. Implement orientation and training programs for the benefit of all new hires. Already have such initiatives in place? Be sure you regularly update them to fit your current circumstances.
5. Performance reviews. Conduct annual reviews of all employees. This will give them a stake in their own career advancement, as well as help you identify what's working in your practice day to day — and, equally important, what isn't.

These five steps alone won't guarantee a friction-free workplace. But they'll help ensure that you're making the right decisions from the get-go about the people who populate your practice every day. That way lies terrific teamwork — and exemplary patient care.

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