



Whitepaper:

5 Steps to Creating an Effective Team

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Whether you have an existing practice or you are purchasing a new practice, the choice to implement Complete Dentistry principles is life-changing. In Functional Occlusion – From TMJ to Smile Design, Dr. Dawson talks about the formula for a successful practice:

- Know how to solve your patients' problems
- Develop an effective, happy team (doctor and staff)
- Structure your office so it can be monitored and controlled
- Have slow but steady improvement for each part of the office

One of the biggest obstacles to implementation is the time it takes to get our team on board, helping them to understand the masticatory system "culture," and why we do what we do. This time of transition can be sprinkled with confusion and frustration, often leading to an unhappy team.

There are 5 key elements necessary to creating and maintaining an effective, happy team:

1. Clarity of Vision –The vision of the practice is determined by the doctor, communicated clearly to the team, so they can share and support the vision. Every system in the office should then reinforce the vision.

For example, if the vision is to have patients experience flawless service, where every expectation is exceeded, then a system to support this could be to obtain portrait photos so patients may be recognized and greeted by name upon check-in. All team members need to be trained to have consistency in creating this 'wow factor.'

2. Personality Profiling – Understanding personality types within the team sheds light on why people do what they do. The DiSC profile is one of the most common tests and describes four main personality styles. It can help us to understand behavior in stressful situations and it can facilitate communication with others who have opposite styles than ourselves.

3. The Value of Core Values – Core values are those values which are not compromised under any circumstances. Unlike the vision, which is determined by the doctor, the core values are determined and agreed upon by the entire team. The core values form the backbone of the culture and help team members to hold themselves and each other accountable for their actions. Examples of core values are Respect, Integrity, Education, Service, Relationships.

4. Office Policy Manual -- Creating a clear, concise policy manual lets the team know what is expected of them, from both performance and behavioral perspectives. It should consist of three main parts:

- A culture or mission statement written by the doctor to the team, describing the environment or “feel” of the practice. It can address “fit” issues - are they a team player, do they have a good attitude, is their conduct appropriate?
- Detailed job descriptions for each position allow team members to be reviewed based on their job performance and can help to identify areas in need of training.
- Policies of the practice compliant with HR Laws, such as attendance and tardiness policies, paid benefits, sexual harassment, what to do in the event of a hurricane, dress code, policy on progressive discipline etc.

Note: Compensation reviews need to take compliance with all three parts of the manual into consideration.

“I have never met a team member that complained of being appreciated too much.”

5. Always give honest and sincere appreciation – I have never met a team member that complained of being appreciated too much. Finding meaningful ways to appreciate our team doesn’t always come so easy. Here are some simple, cost effective ways to show them our appreciation:

- Barter with a massage therapist for bleaching trays and surprise them with a massage when you are out of the office taking a Dawson course.
- Thank them in front of a patient for a job well done.
- Place a random sticky note on their computer before you leave at the end of the day, so they start the next day with a positive message.
- Purchase blank puzzles and write a thank you note on it, have them assemble the puzzle to get your message.
- Celebrate anniversary milestones- thanking them for their hard work, loyalty and friendship.

Having an effective, happy team is key to having a successful practice. Learning how to solve our patients’ problems takes time, but with an empowered team by our side, this journey is exciting and fun, as we change our patients’ lives one day at a time.