

Sandy Roth's

Communique!

Unique and Challenging Concepts from ProSynergy Dental Communications

#38: *The Importance of Training*

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The Importance of Training

*Never time to do it right...
Always time to do it again.*

At the time of this writing, the US, Canada, Australia and the UK are experiencing low unemployment figures and good employees are becoming scarcer than hen's teeth. If you're lucky enough to have long-term team members, you may not be able to relate to the problems others are experiencing in attracting the best and the brightest to dentistry. There are so many good positions open and so few really talented people available that we're having to compete on a more realistic level with businesses and industries which often have full time recruitment and human relations departments. If we're to successfully attract talented candidates to our work places, we will have to match or exceed the recruitment strategies, training methods and compensation packages offered elsewhere.

Sometime in the future, I'll write more about recruiting and compensation. (If you need some help in these areas now, give us a call and we'll talk about how we might be helpful.) On the following pages, however, I'd like to offer a few thoughts about the importance of training in the small practice environment which often has little, if any, formal training as part of new employee orientation. The benefits we gain from a proper training program are major and the prices we pay for cutting corners are enormous.

When dentists and teams are able to find good candidates, they don't always do everything necessary to insure the success of these prized people. Indeed, often, the new team member is leaving a situation where she (or he) wasn't well supported, was poorly trained and integrated or was not provided the tools of success. In most cases, dental team employees are simply recycled from one practice to

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another like aluminum cans. It isn't unusual that good employees have worked in several practices, and we often find that they leave for reasons which are truly unnecessary and which might have been avoided with a little planning and training.

Training programs are essential for the following reasons:

1. Training provides a context for everything which follows. One of the most important predictors of employee success is a full understanding of and agreement on the practice's philosophical foundation. In the absence of a training program to lay this foundation, the new employee has to infer, assume or guess.
2. It is essential to clarify expectations between employee, employer and team mates right from the beginning of the working relationship. A training program offers a formal way to begin that process. It also provides a way to learn the roles of other employees as resources for information and coaching.
3. New members of the team must establish healthy working relationships with those who

are already part of the practice. Each must learn about the other's working and personality style and the existing team must make room for the new employee in the corporate culture.

4. The training period is an important time for the new employee to get on the same wavelength and learn common terminology and concepts. It also provides an opportunity to learn how to get questions answered, when individual judgment is appropriate and when group decision-making is required.
5. Training also insures that new team members know how important they are to the group and how the team counts on them for high standards of performance. It also sanctions the process of mutual accountability which encourages new team members to work hard and do their very best.

The prices to be paid for not establishing a comprehensive training program are high, the most significant of which is ultimate loss of the new team member. Here are some other factors which might be at stake:

‰ Competence isn't fully utilized and potential is diminished.

% You don't get your money's worth; good employees are worth every penny or pence.

% Success is virtually impossible and the whole practice pays the price for that.

% Floundering and frustration are contagious to other team members.

% Service to clients is diminished and your reserve of good will can be quickly drained.

% Other team members will have to compensate and may be stretched beyond their limits.

% You will have to start over again if the new employee leaves or is terminated.

Your team members are too important to leave their success to chance, so be certain that you make the proper investments in their training so they can help you in the best possible way. Your patients deserve nothing less, and neither do you.