

VIEW FROM THE PRACTICE

COMMUNICATION BENEFITS

Rahul Doshi considers the positive effects of strong internal communication

Development and growth in the last decade has resulted in dentists seeking a further understanding of business. And for a while, this was sufficient to keep practices afloat. However, in light of the downturn in economy, we are entering an era that demands a greater level of astuteness.

Strong 'business-to-customer' relationships are quickly developing into the core foundation of any growing premier dental practice. Great dental practices understand the importance of developing relationships and are improving these connections not only with new patients but also with existing patients and with their team members. In fact, in order to develop long-lasting relationships with your customers you first need to develop strong communication within your team.

TEAM PRINCIPLES

The definition of a team is 'a group of individuals working cohesively towards a common set of goals'. This can only be achieved where relationships between the team members are strong and stress free. Clear and efficient communication forms the basis of a productive practice. This means

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that considerable emphasis needs to be placed upon team meetings and their content.

When an informed team with the right attitude and commitment is working in harmony, better relationships can be created with patients. A well informed and efficiently operating team can alter the way a practice is perceived by a patient contemplating treatment advice. Patients often interpret this in their minds as: 'this must be a good practice as they all seem to know what they are doing, they are working well together and hence they will also take care of me efficiently'.

MEETINGS

There are several types of meetings that establish efficiency and productivity:

- **The morning preparatory meeting.** These allow the entire team to focus on the activities of the day ahead. It also enables patients to have a better experience at your practice since the team understands how the day will unfold and will be prepared for productivity.
- **An evening summary meeting.** A simple summary of the day allows the team to leave the practice on a good note. It is useful for ironing out any aspects of the practice that need to be altered in order to improve and it also doesn't allow bad experiences to fester.
- **A weekly senior management meeting.** This is a directive meeting that allows the team to prepare for the following weeks. It also provides sufficient time for changes, planning and preparation. Here, the leader of the business can make immediate



changes in the system for better productivity and an improved patient experience.

- **A monthly training meeting.** These allow the team to communicate and train on an ongoing process. Deficiencies in skills and operational systems can also be easily rectified before they cause any future problems.

Great communication leads to a great team, which ultimately results in an efficient and productive practice that patients want to be a part of and do business with.

OPERATIONAL PRACTICE

Those practices that neglect to establish meeting protocols for enhanced communication (often out of fear of increased time consumption) sooner or later create a patient perception of inadequacy and chaos.

Patients do not like to do business with establishments that portray inefficiency and lack of cohesion within the team. Structured meetings disperse any uncertainties and create an operational practice that is productive and less stressful for both the team and patients.

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