



# Build a Dream Team

Improving employee retention and morale.

A good team will make or break a business. When you hire the right people, and motivate and train them well, the machine functions smoothly. Your practice then becomes defined by its positive culture, productivity and compassionate care.

The million-dollar question is: How do managers find the right employees, train them to uphold the practice's culture and protocols, and retain those valuable team members? The answer to this question is multifaceted and requires strong recruiting techniques, ongoing training and policies that motivate rather than discourage a team-based approach to care—every touch point in your practice is crucial to the overall success of the business.

## PRACTICES THAT ENSURE A GOOD FIT

What is the culture and mission of your practice? Taking a few moments to consider the story of “you”—what makes your practice unique and the best choice for your target patient base—is a good exercise in branding your practice not only to patients but also potential employees. Schedule a time to document your story and create a mission statement, then use that information both internally and externally to guide your decision making.

If resources are available, create a web page just for prospective employees. You'll need to provide a link to prospective applicants—this page should not be visible on your site map. It should tell potential applicants what working at the practice is really like and what is expected

of all successful employees. This page might include:

- “A Day in the Life” description of the day-to-day flow of the practice
- Expectations of staff members in how they relate to patients and fellow staff members
- Brief job descriptions for various positions
- An overview of your compensation package
- Any “unwritten” rules and expectations that shape and form the practice

This list will not only serve to attract the right kind of people, but will also eliminate applicants who realize that they may not be a good fit. If you are not able to create a web-based version of this information, consider writing it up and keeping it in a PDF file to send to prospective employees.

Your practice is a reflection of your standards, your personality and your expectations. Make this clear before potential applicants get their foot in the door.

## PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING

In addition to reviewing resumes and applications, create a questionnaire to help identify those who have a positive attitude and attributes that will support practice success and allow them to mesh with their fellow employees. You can find several examples of pre-employment questionnaires online. Use these as a template to help you create your own, or you can work with a business consultant to create one specifically

for your practice. These types of questionnaires are widely used in corporate recruiting and are completed online as part of the pre-application process.

Skill tests are also valuable in weeding out applicants who do not have the minimum skills required for the open position. Develop a series of simple skill tests for each position in your practice, and keep in mind which skills are most important for each position. For example, not all applicants for technical or back-office positions will have—or need—innate customer service skills.

### EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Once you've hired your new employee, focus on training and retaining them. This will include providing the employee with a job description and practice protocols, and having them work with another team member for at least the first week to learn their specific duties and the overall flow of the practice. In addition to learning their specific roles, all employees should receive customer service and sales training.

Customer service is the sum total of everything your practice does to meet your patients' expectations and ensure satisfaction. It includes making sure patients are happy with how they were treated, the outcomes of the services they received, and the price and the "feel" of their experience with your practice.

Creating a strong focus on customer service not only improves patient satisfaction and increases referrals, it also supports staff loyalty. Employees work harder when they are part of a responsible, compassionate medical team. You can achieve this by leading from the front, reiterating your commitment to the patient experience and answering all employee questions.

Cosmetic practices must be able to convert inquiries to bookings and often depend on retail sales to support both patient outcomes and profitability. Therefore, all employees need training in honest, high-integrity sales techniques to help patients find the right procedures and products for their aesthetic concerns. Regular weekly, bi-weekly or monthly lunchtime training sessions are beneficial, as are individual coaching and self-training exercises. There are several resources available to help you create a sales training program, including:

- Local university business department
- Manufacturer-supplied training
- Department store cosmetic manager
- Aesthetic consulting business

These professionals will have the background to work with your staff to help them identify the patient's goals, educate the patient on new and exciting products and treatments, and differentiate your practice as their best option.

You can get staff members more involved in improving your practice's customer service by periodically asking each member of your team to read a book on sales, marketing or customer relations, such as *How to Swim With The Sharks Without Getting Eaten* or *Nordstrom's Way*. Then ask them to share information they found helpful or interesting at your next team training lunch.

### EMPLOYEE RETENTION

If you want to create a team environment that encourages best practices and supports each member's role in practice success, hold regular team meetings once or twice a month. At the meeting, invite team members to offer recommendations, provide feedback and discuss levels of patient satisfaction or dissatisfaction they have noted. These meetings give each employee a stake in the team's overall success, as well as the success of the practice.

These meetings should be informal affairs, such as catered lunches or after-hours wine and cheese get-togethers. And, like all team-building activities, these should be "on the clock."

Hiring an outside team to mediate an annual staff retreat is another way to bring employees together and increase their job satisfaction.

All employees, even those who love their jobs, want to grow in their careers. One way to increase employee retention is to identify growth paths for each position. Depending upon the position, this may include covering the cost of training for certifications to provide additional services, continuing education units, new software skills or regulatory training. You can highlight your commitment to career advancement by including advancement opportunities in each job description.

Compensation is a significant concern for employees. In addition to developing a competitive compensation package for each position, consider rewarding those who excel in their positions with production bonuses.

Employees also appreciate managers who recognize their hard work. Positive recognition can come in the form of a bonus or a raise, but it can also come in form of a plaque commemorating the employee's success, a gift certificate to the employee's favorite restaurant or store, or even regular thank-yous and public recognition at staff meetings.

By selecting the right employees, providing them with the tools and training they need to do their jobs well and consistently recognizing their contributions to your practice's success, you can build a dream team of motivated, engaged staff members who will make it their mission to grow your practice and provide first-rate patient care. **ME**

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