Successful communication in your daily practice

Part IX: Boosting a new employee's performance

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This series covers the most common and challenging scenarios that might arise in your dental practice and presents successful ways to deal with them in order for you to gain peace of mind. Each article of this series teaches you a new, easy-to-use specialised protocol that can be adapted to your own dental clinic's requirements and needs right from the start. Today's challenging topic is how to address deterioration of a new employee's performance and, instead, find ways to boost it.

Imagine this scenario: You have chosen an excellent employee. You've tested him or her and he or she performed exceptionally well. However, what if after a month or so you notice that his or her performance is not as promising as it was when he or she started? You might start to wonder: Have I made the wrong choice? Where did his or her motivation go? Does he or she feel bored all of a sudden? Is something wrong in general?

5 revolutionary steps

A sudden decline in the performance of a new employee is quite unusual. Naturally, you still have faith in his or her capabilities and all you want is to get to the bottom of this unexpected, and thus scary, situation and solve it. Follow the five steps given here and you will be able to deal with this situation easily, effortlessly and effectively.



1. Always check yourself first before you even think about confronting him or her; reflect on your own behaviour first. Challenging your attitude and calling it into question is a difficult, but necessary thing to do. Try to find out whether your employee's performance is likely to continue to decline or if it was just a one-time thing. After all, every human being makes mistakes. Hence, stop making assumptions and save yourself a great deal of stress. After you have reflected thoroughly on your own behaviour, block off 45 minutes in your schedule and call him or her in for a meeting in order to address the problem. By the way, do not allow yourself to be disturbed during this meeting.

2. Keep the tone of the conversation natural and casual. It is very important to create an environment in which the employee feels comfortable enough to express himself or herself and share the true reasons for his or her reduced performance. Always remember: do not pressure your employee. Knowing the reasons for his or her poor performance will, of course, benefit you, as you will be more aware from that point on, and, thus, you will be able to anticipate similar future situations and solve them faster.

3. The sandwich technique can prove a very useful tool for solving those kinds of situations. You begin by saying: "Mary, I am so happy that you are part of our team". You continue by stating a fact: "You showed us right from the start how keen you are to be working in the company. However, over the course of the last week, I've noticed a deterioration in your performance, and ever since, I have been wondering what the reason might be for that." You can then conclude by saying: "I am confident that we can deal with this situation effectively and I am here to assist you. What do you need from us?"

4. Give the employee space to express himself or herself and do not interrupt him or her. Try to show empathy and put yourself in his or her shoes. Consider: What is the actual problem? Is he or she just anxious about failing in his or her new position, because of too much pressure? Does he or she only need some time to adjust to the new professional situation? Whatever the reason is, you should acknowledge and respect it. And make sure you have a mutually developed plan or protocol by the end of your conversation and act accordingly.

5. Set a date for a future meeting in order to re-evaluate the situation and the development after the initial conversation and see whether things have changed for the better by then. You can ask the employee to set a date for this next meeting himself or herself. This will help him or her to feel responsible, in charge of the whole situation and in control of his or her own behaviour.

Isn't that easy?

As you can see, applying the 5 steps is not so difficult, is it? Use these steps as a protocol and you will feel prepared and in control the next time such an undesirable situation occurs. You now know the exact steps to resolve situations like these quickly and efficiently. By applying this protocol, I believe that you will achieve greater peace of mind in the long run. In addition, you will have a great deal more time and energy on your hands. Just try it and let me know what you think!

I am certain that you are already looking forward to the next issue of laser magazine, in which I will present the tenth part of this unique series of communication concepts and touch on further useful and interesting topics. Are you curious about what's next? We will take an honest look at how to deal with your own procrastination, as well as how to transform someone who is constantly complaining into a loyal patient. This is a common and challenging situation that we as dentists face in our clinics. In this regard, I will provide five essential tips that will help you to cope with these situations more effectively.

Until then, remember that you are not only the dentist at your clinic, but also its manager and leader. For questions and further information and guidance, keep in touch by sending me an e-mail at dba@yiannikosdental.com or via our website, www.dbamastership.com. I am looking forward to our next step towards business growth and educational development!

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