

How to Assemble a Winning Team:

"It should have worked out— she had 15 years of experience."

Sound familiar? The people you employ can be your greatest practice asset, but not without a system in place that takes the guesswork out of the hiring process.

Ask yourself the following questions to determine the effectiveness of your current hiring system.

1. Prior to interviewing, do you have a clear picture of the person you want to hire, including experience level, personality style, and complementary values?
2. Do you cast a wide net to identify the best candidates?
3. Do you employ a 3-step interview process (on 3 different occasions), which includes an interview with the doctor, a skills assessment, and lunch with the staff?
4. Do you have a detailed Job Description and a Training Plan for the new hire?

If you answered "no" to any of the above, your hiring process could use a boost. The following recommendations, if implemented and adhered to, will help you stop the hiring/firing 'revolving door' once and for all.

Desired Qualities	Applicant Name			
	Julie	Becky	Eric	Alice
	Experience Level			
Licensed				
Has used full scope of license				
Strong in patient education				
People-oriented	Personality Style			
Detail-oriented				
Empathetic				
Caring				
Confident	Complementary Values			
Positive outlook				
Integrity				
Patient-oriented				
Team player				
Punctual				
Self-motivated				
Appearance				
TOTAL SCORE				

1. Have a clear picture of the person you want to hire

Experience level

- Is dental experience necessary for the position to be filled? Unless a license is required, open your applicant pool to all who fit your criteria.
- What is your commitment to training time? If there is ability, willingness, and a good training plan, you will have a successful result. Be sure to block out training time in your schedule.
- Decide what is important: intellect, communication skills, a people person, someone who is task-oriented?

Personality style

What style best fits the position you want to fill? Pleasant? Caring? Assertive? Calm? Cheerful? Results-driven?

Complementary values

What do you stand for and value? The right person for the job will be someone who is respectful and supportive of the doctor's values. During the interview, ask questions to determine what the applicant values. For example, ask "Why did you choose dentistry as a profession?" Listen for answers that indicate congruency.

Once you have a clear picture of the person you want to hire, focus on that goal during the interview process.

2. Promote the position

You can attract applicants using conventional advertising methods such as newspaper ads as well as less mainstream approaches, such as considering someone from your patient base. Don't put all your promotional eggs in one basket. Interview as many people who fit your criteria as possible.

Other ways to spread the word might include:

- Your lab personnel and dental sales representatives
- Placement agency
- Networking
- Online job sites
- A posting on your website

Trojan Today provides a forum for industry professionals to offer a diversity of information and to provide ideas and suggestions in the area of practice management. These articles are meant to be informative and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Trojan Professional Services, Inc.

How Well Is Your Office Doing?

BY DEBBIE CASTAGNA & VIRGINIA MOORE

3. Conduct a 3-step interview

A 3-step interview process allows the doctor and staff the time to get to know the applicant in different settings and situations. By following this process, you greatly enhance the chance of making the best decision for your practice.

Interview #1: Get to know the applicant

The doctor conducts this interview:

- Be smart. Never be alone with the applicant in your office.
- Prepare your questions in advance. The questions should reflect your requirements for experience level, personality style, and complementary values. Write the answers down.
- Employ the 80/20 rule. The interviewer asks questions and the applicant does 80% of the talking.
- Spend approximately 30 minutes together.

Interview #2: Skills assessment

The skills assessment allows you to observe, evaluate, and listen to the applicant while in your office. It is a combination of direct patient contact and testing situations.

- A maximum of 3 hours.
- Prior to the skills assessment, determine which testing situations will be appropriate. If interviewing for an Appointment Administrator, test the applicant on verbal skills used when reactivating past-due patients.

Interview #3: Lunch with the staff

Involving the staff illustrates that a quality hire and staff input is valued. If the applicant did well during the skills assessment, invite her/him back for lunch.


- Involve the entire staff when possible.
- Focus on putting the applicant at ease and prepare questions in advance. Staff must be aware of questions they can legally ask and those they can't. The legalities that apply to the doctor also apply to the staff.
- After lunch, the staff debriefs the doctor.

4. Have a clearly defined job description, and a training plan in place

Job descriptions benefit everyone. Understanding each other's roles lessens confusion about who does what, helps in the hiring process, is necessary for performance appraisals, and aids time management. Provide the applicant with the customized job description at Interview #1.

Raise the bar in your practice by organizing a training plan prior to the new hire's start date. Using the job description as a guide:

- List all tasks and responsibilities, and identify which of those will require training.
- Prioritize the tasks in the sequence in which training will take place.
- Determine who will share training responsibilities, and schedule training sessions.
- Begin training when the new staff member reports to work. As tasks are mastered, celebrate!

Take the 'hit and miss' out of assembling your winning team by using this tried-and-true, step-by-step system to make the hiring process in your practice as stress free and predictable as possible. 

For more than 20 years, Virginia Moore and Debbie Castagna have helped bring greater productivity and profitability to hundreds of doctors and their teams. Their company, The Practice Source, provides practice management consulting as well as practical, results-oriented practice management training materials. They are also co-founders of The Consulting U, an intensive master's training program for dental management consultants. Visit their website at www.ThePracticeSource.com.




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consultant. These collaborative books are jam-packed with insights and tools for success, gleaned from years of combined consulting experience in dental practices. They provide a tasty example of each contributing consultant's best work, without the check! Our hope is that you will leave this table of knowledge with a deep, full sense of satisfaction combined with a hunger for more.

The members of the ADMC respect and admire the work you do for your patients and team members as well as the challenges you face every day in your endeavor to provide that service. ADMC members ask that you remember you do not walk the road alone, and if ever on your journey you need assistance, guidance,

or a new perspective, we hope you will consider the Academy a valuable resource for qualified and deeply committed professionals who have dedicated their professional lives to making dentistry a better place to work and live.

Powerful Practice Volumes I and II are available by calling Susan DiGiambattista, our executive director, at (800) 451-9723, ext. 6061. She can also talk with you about becoming a member and consultant referrals.

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