

## Having a Better Team



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I talk about “stars” to most dentists for whom we are doing a valuation. A “star” is an employee who is worth their weight in gold because they handle their job with an expertise and speed that others cannot do. I have talked to dentists who feel that their receptionists are stars BUT in one case there are two receptionists to do the job and the practice was only billing \$600,000. The staff said they cannot keep up with the work and they need another person in reception. There was only one doctor and one part time hygienist. These receptionists were not “stars”.

I have seen practices with “stars”. In one of these practices there were two hygienists, four days per week each, (8 days of hygiene per week); one doctor also four days per week, one chairside assistant and one receptionist four days per week. Billings were over \$900,000 and accounts receivable were low. This practice thrived because of the team that the dentist created around himself.

Things to consider:

1. Too many dentists have learned to live with mediocre staff. The excuse is that they have been with him too long to do anything about it. He probably feels too much loyalty to take dramatic steps to improve his staff.
2. Let me say at this time that before taking any direct or indirect action you should work with a labour lawyer who will steer you through the minefield of potential legal suits.
3. Good staff are not easy to find and if you have one try not to lose that individual. I would rather pay one star \$28.00 per hour than have two average employees at \$14.00 per hour.
4. It's more important to have a star on your front desk than at your chairside. Your front desk is the least supervised staff member of your team. Your chairside is the most supervised team member.

5. The easiest way to develop stars is to hire a star rather than try to convert someone to become a star. If the employee does not have the basic innate make-up to be a star, I think it is hard to make them a star. Stars are bright, cheerful, self motivated individuals that can handle their job with ease.
6. Always check references. This step is often missed but for the time it takes it can avoid big problems later.
7. Remember to utilize the three month trial period when an employee starts, if the new employee is not excelling, you might be better to find a new candidate.
8. Never hire someone that you cannot let go if they are not performing well. Personal friends may be considered in this category.
9. Often referrals from your good employees make good candidates. Expect it to cost you time and energy to find great employees and to train them.
10. If an employee leaves your practice this is an opportunity to find a new employee who is a star. The trick is to be focused to find a star to replace the leaving employee. Finding stars is not easy! I have a three and a half minute test that I have used for 30 years to select the potential star candidates from the mediocre candidates. It does not rate personality or other personal traits but if a candidate scores well they, in my experience, would have the inherent background to be able to be trained to do the job and to be a star and if they have a low score it would not be possible to be a star.

If you would like to get a copy of the three and a half minute test that I use, contact me and I will send it out to you (with the answers) at no charge.

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