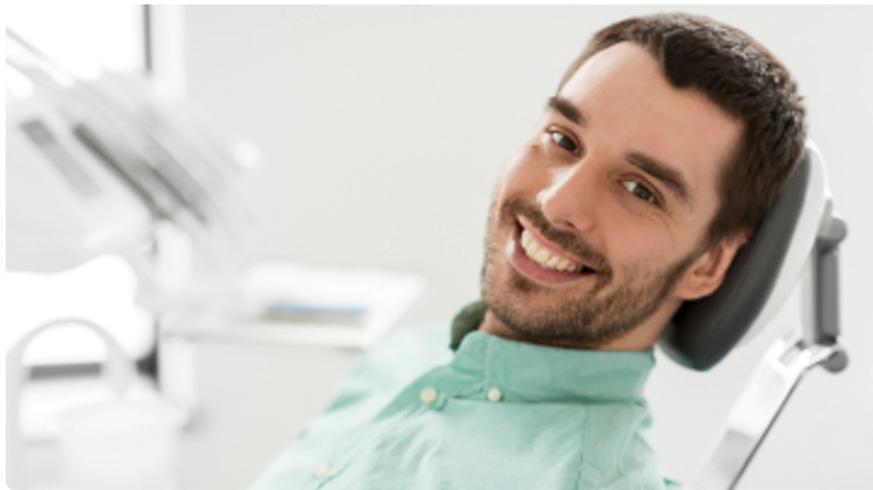


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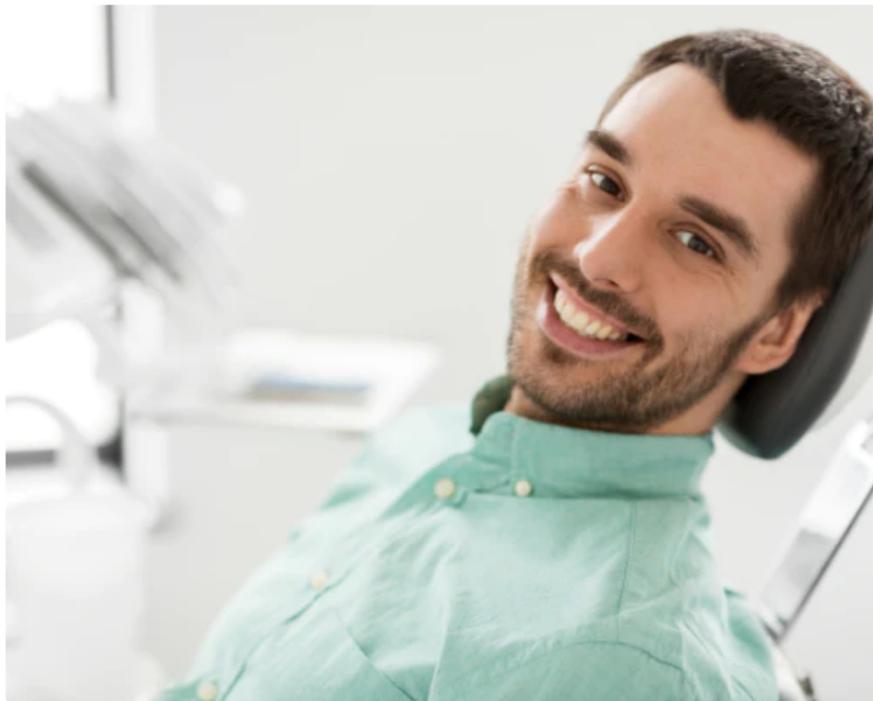
How creating a cooperative culture bettered our dental practice

A dental practice culture develops naturally, whether it's planned or not. It's important to make sure that the culture is properly developed through the effort of the entire team.

Jun 19th, 2019



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During my three and a half years as the chief operating officer of Smile Dental Clinics, I've learned that a work culture will develop in a practice regardless of whether or not you plan it. A dental practice's culture can alter the trajectory of your business for better or worse,

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which is why dentists and their employees should start molding and creating their practice culture today.

When I started working at Smile Dental Clinics, we had a team of 15 people and our company culture was one of survival. This cost us hours of productivity and left a lot of problems unsolved. In 2016 we hired a business coach and thought long and hard about the values we wanted our practice to live by. We settled on a list of eight values and defined what they meant to our practice specifically. Those values were accountability, commitment, communication, consistency, integrity, leadership, teamwork, and most important, being coachable.

Implementing these core values in our office was one of the best things we ever did. Here are a few reasons why creating this culture has positively affected not only our production numbers but our practice leadership, team, and patients.

A positive culture fosters team empowerment and accountability

Before outlining a company culture, it was difficult for us to consistently hold employees accountable and help them learn from their mistakes. This is because each person had a different definition of how they were supposed to work in the dental practice, and yet another definition of what the practice's core values were. Taking the time to write down and define our culture created clear and non-subjective ways to let team members know what was expected of them. Once they had this roadmap, everyone understood that accountability is accepting that everyone is truly responsible for their actions.

When we created our core values, we placed an emphasis on empowering employees to ask questions and hold their leaders accountable to the same clinical values. The team is now more willing to speak up and ask questions about their jobs or talk to leadership if they feel something is wrong or can be done better.

These established values give employees a better sense of trust going into their jobs, and a sense of relief knowing their performances are based on a comprehensible set of standards.

Creating a guide for leadership

Implementing a clearly defined practice culture has been a huge benefit to the leadership of the office, from the office managers to the dentists. I now manage nearly 40 people, and our core values have served as an excellent foundation for me and the other leaders in the practice.

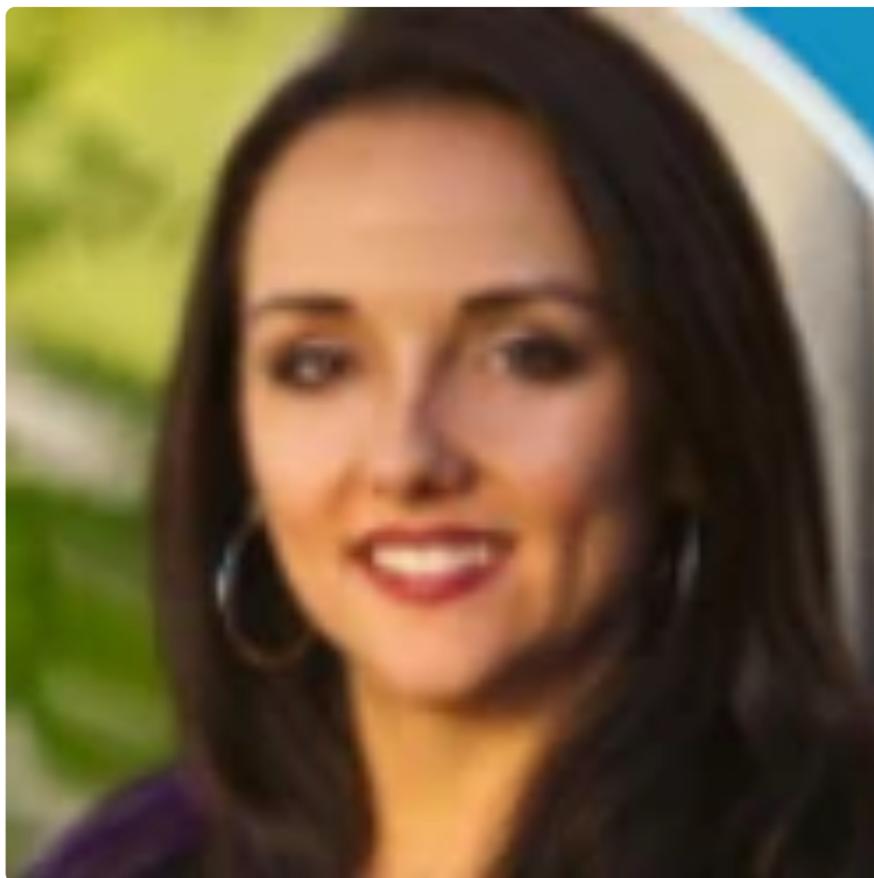
Leaders use the framework to coach employees, or to motivate employees to find solutions to problems. Also, having a culture helps prepare and train employees who move up to leadership positions.

Our practice prides itself on developing talented employees into successful leaders; however, that evolution can be hard if there is no clear direction on how to get to the next step. By establishing a strong corporate culture, we were able to integrate our employees into leadership roles because they understood the practice's values and goals.

Patient peace of mind

We started to notice an increase in happy patients very quickly after implementing our dental practice's cultural push. Patients felt like we were running a tighter ship. Staff were friendlier, and patients were accompanied at all times from one person to the next. We were receiving more positive reviews for implementing those extra steps. Two of our values are commitment and communication, and having those written values really gives the staff something to fall back on to help them engage with patients. Patients understand that we are doing everything possible to accommodate them.

It is an exciting and wonderful thing to experience when you see happy patients as the result of a commitment to a happy and positive culture in a dental practice.



Toni Allen is the chief operating officer of Smile Dental Clinics in Phoenix, Arizona.

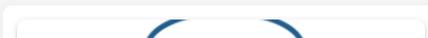
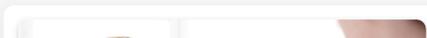
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Tactics to encourage change in your dental office

Change is often not easy. But it doesn't have to be a battle with the team every time you suggest changes in your dental practice. As front office manager, you can lead the positive attitudes by adopting these tactics suggested by Heather Colicchio.

Heather Colicchio

Mar 11th, 2020



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The effective dental practice huddle

This 10- to 15-minute gathering for all team members should be productive and get everyone prepared for the day ahead. This isn't always as easy as it sounds. Kevin Tighe provides some guidelines and a form that will keep your huddles on track.

Kevin Tighe

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Thursday Troubleshooter: How many people are needed to run the front office smoothly?

The front office is feeling a bit crowded to this dental office manager, who believes she can handle this small practice's front office single-handedly. But, can she really?

Team Troubleshooter

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I'm a new dental manager! Now what do I do?

Becoming a new dental office manager is a daunting task. North Carolina manager Christi Bintliff has found success and shares with her peers what works for her and her team.

Christi Bintliff, FAADOM

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Leadership tips every dental office manager should know

Leadership skills are very important for successful dental office managers. These ideas from Heather Colicchio will help you become the best leader that you can be.

Heather Colicchio

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Effective dental practice huddles

The morning dental team huddle sets the tone for the workday. It's important that it be planned well and implemented professionally, and that everyone play a role.

Kevin Tighe

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September is Office Manager Appreciation Month

Office managers deserve to be recognized for all the contributions they make to their dental practices. This is their month!

DentistryIQ Editors

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Career Enhancement

How your dental office can avoid the summertime slump

It's hard to believe this summer is already half over. But summer can be a great time to get things accomplished, and there's still time. Here are some ideas from the AADOM president.

Heather Colicchio

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My wife, who's a dentist, hasn't fired me yet, so I must be doing something right

This dental office manager had no idea how much he would enjoy working in his wife's dental practice. He began by using his marketing experience, which contributed to the huge success of the practice.

Michael Cruz

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How to make every day a good day in your dental office

It's up to the dental team whether they have a good or bad day when things go wrong. This dental office manager says it's all in the attitude, and she and her team keep their outlooks bright.

Aubrey Gralapp

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Successfully making changes in your dental office

Change is an important and necessary part of life. But sometimes change in your dental practice can lead to chaos. Here's how to make change more peacefully.

David McCarthy, MA

Jun 12th, 2019



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Effective dental staff meetings

An organized agenda and a leader to keep the meeting on track will lead to successful staff meetings.

Kevin Tighe

May 14th, 2019



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Great things happen with a little, or a lot, of dental team cooperation

When the dental team works together, great things happen. This practice administrator works closely with all team members, and recommends that her peers do the same.

Apr 10th, 2019

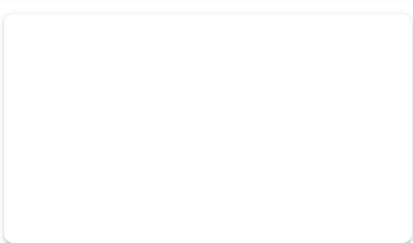


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6 dental patient retention strategies

Retaining your dental patients may be more important than acquiring new patients. There must be solid systems in place for encouraging patients to stay with the practice.

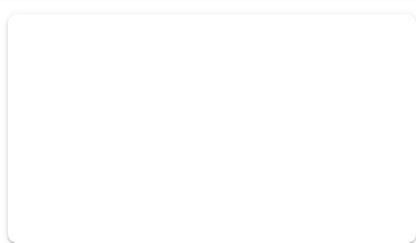
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Dental assistants and front office staff: How to work well together (video)

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