Systems for your success

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YOUR LEVEL OF SUCCESS is directly related to the quality of your systems and your team's effective use of those systems. In other words, the better your systems and the better your team uses them, then the more successful you will be.

Systems are simply detailed processes of how every aspect of your office should be run. There are systems for how the phone should be answered. Systems for how a new patient should be processed. Systems for how financial arrangements should be made. Systems for how a treatment room should be set up and cleaned up. Systems for how we communicate with patients about the treatment they need. Systems for how patients are scheduled on the appointment book. Systems for how each clinical procedure is performed, etc.

Systems create efficiency. Systems keep things from falling through the cracks. Systems also keep your team accountable. Systems make you more profitable.

Have you ever had a patient in the chair waiting to have a crown seated, only to you discover that the case is still at the lab? It's stressful, embarrassing, and frustrating, right? This is the result of a poor system for checking on lab cases before the patient's appointment.

In this example, we could either blame the employee for the missing lab case, or we could blame the system. Most of the time, the problem is with the system and not the team member.

I do practice success seminars all across the nation, and in these seminars we have breakout sessions for all team members excluding the doctor. We ask the question, "How many of you have systems in your offices?" Rarely do we ever have anyone raise a hand to that question.

This situation frustrates the team members because they are not totally sure what their responsibilities are. Clearly defined systems make your team members much better employees because they know exactly what is expected of them. Their performance is better, and they feel more secure.

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Systems also help make you a better leader. They make it easier to hold your team accountable. Your team is empowered. They have a sense of accomplishment. An empowered team makes your life much easier and less stressful.

It is important for the team to understand that systems are not negotiable. How the team member did it in the last office they worked in is not important. The systems are tweaked and made better if need be, but every team member must follow the established systems.

Systems need to be in writing and on video. When you hire new team members, they can read and watch the systems in their areas of responsibility. This improves the training process and leaves no room for ambiguity or confusion.

Once you have systems, the next important step is training. This is an ongoing process: You train the team and hold them accountable.

In my offices, we never stop training and monitoring the adherence to our systems. Why? Because it is human nature to revert to what is easiest and most comfortable. If you are not continuously evaluating and holding team members accountable, then your systems grow weaker and weaker until they are a dim reflection of what they used to be.

Developing strong systems is not an easy task. It took me years to develop my systems and get them in writing and on video. It took energy and expense, but it was well worth the costs.

You are probably wondering when are you going to find the time to do this. I recommend getting help from a good practice management consultant who has a documented history of building successful practices. The consultant can provide you with systems and help you with training and accountability. Having systems that are proven will save you the trial and error of developing them on your own. This can save you thousands or even millions of dollars in lost revenue from trying to make weak or poor systems work.

With systems, the proof is in the pudding. You know the systems work if they are producing the results you want. If you want to build a multimillion dollar practice, you need systems that can deliver at a multimillion dollar level. **DE**

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