

# Managing the Dental Team

## ADA's Guidelines for Practice Success™ (GPS™)

### Tips for Managing Performance – All Employees

- Performance reviews are an opportunity to discuss what you've observed and to collaborate on how things can be improved in the future.
- Performance reviews should not be limited to reviewing what someone's done wrong.
- Review each employee's performance regularly and on an ongoing basis.
  - ✓ Some dentists conduct performance evaluations on the anniversary of each employees' original date of hire; others conduct them quarterly.
  - ✓ Always schedule these discussions in advance so employees have sufficient time to prepare for the meeting.
    - If you don't already have a policy and schedule for conducting these discussions, let staff know you are developing one.
    - Consider inviting them to participate in the process by getting their feedback on select ideas, such as how they feel about comprehensive reviews that involve the entire team.
    - You may want to limit the opportunity for input to topics where you're genuinely willing to consider implementing their ideas.
  - ✓ Both you and the employee should consider the quarterly review as an open and two-way conversation.
    - This should reduce the amount of dread or pre-meeting concern employees sometimes experience before them. It may also reduce any discomfort you might experience before having to lead this type of meeting.
- The structure of the meeting can impact the outcome.
  - ✓ It can be very effective to ask the employee to speak first and tell you how they think they're performing. You can prompt the discussion by asking what he/she thinks is going well or what they enjoy about the job and what they wish they could change (within reason).
    - Follow-up by asking the employee to tell you where he/she can do better.
    - It's possible that both of you will share some concerns.
    - Invite the employee to offer suggestions for improving his/her performance. Allowing them some ownership in decisions may make them more motivated to commit to change.
    - Ask specific questions to solicit their ideas on how he/she can help the practice operate more efficiently, what might improve patient satisfaction, and his/her goals for the coming year.
  - ✓ Each staff member should leave the meeting feeling valued for his/her contributions and motivated to follow-up on any corrective action or new suggestions agreed to during the discussion.
  - ✓ Be sure to follow up with each employee to ensure that any new actions or processes agreed to are in place. This reinforces your position as the leader of the team and maintains your credibility. It also reminds employees that they are responsible and accountable for managing their performance.
  - ✓ Document successes and challenges throughout the year and refer to that information at the next session. It's a good way to open the discussion and set the tone for collaborating.

Always maintain the performance evaluation in each employee's personnel file.

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