



Starting Out in Dentistry Part II: Managing Your Practice

Tips for Managing your Practice

Are you thinking about setting up a new website, automating appointment reminders, integrating online scheduling, or using digital forms to streamline operations? Are you worried about how to hire/fire an employee properly? Do you wonder if you really need an employee manual or written and signed employee benefit and office policies? There is a wide range of practice management resources out there to help streamline your business, and it can be difficult to determine what will have the biggest impact on your practice. Don't be overwhelmed. We are here to help!

BELOW ARE A FEW TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- ▶ **Own Your Digital Presence** Whether you are starting a practice from scratch or buying an existing practice, if you are going to attract new patients AND make sure current patients know they can trust you to handle their dental needs, you need to have a great online presence. This starts with your website and expands into your Google business profile, your Facebook business page, and online reviews. Having a strong digital footprint lets the neighborhood know you are ready and able. Further, if you are going to specialize in a certain type of patient or procedure, it is imperative that you highlight this online. Dental patients rely on referrals from others, but now more than ever, they are looking at your website to learn who you are and what you have to offer.
- ▶ **Automate Your Patient Engagement to Reduce Costs** New practices can improve efficiency by automating time-consuming tasks, like sending appointment reminders, patient recalls, and onboarding/off boarding patients. You'll be able to see more patients each day, all while reducing staff (and patient) frustration through patient communication solutions. With patient reminder systems, you can automatically send appointment notifications by text and email, use chat to communicate schedule changes, incorporate online patient forms to ensure you have patient health information BEFORE the patient comes into the office, and use online bill pay to increase your collections. When it's time for a patient's next appointment, automated recall systems can be set up in minutes to re-engage patients with unscheduled treatment. That way, you and your team can focus more on providing care, and less on paperwork and chasing patients.
- ▶ **Make It Easy for Patients to Get an Appointment** A common way to lose patients is to make it difficult for them to learn about your hours and make an appointment. Dental patients want to be able to book an appointment, learn about insurance coverage, and find answers to their questions without being put on hold. Providing the option to book an appointment directly from your website increases your patient count and satisfaction and decreases staff time on the phone. Selecting the right technological solutions empowers you to easily control what times show as available, which provider can be scheduled, and gives the option to accept or reschedule appointments, all from a computer.
- ▶ **Have a Human Resources Policy** Solid human resources policies and an employee manual help avoid lawsuits and create operational simplicity. This means less clinical time answering employee questions and coming up with answers on the spot. Prevention is the best defense.
- ▶ **Set the Right Foundation** The three main parts to a solid human resources foundation are: 1) a customized employee handbook following federal, state and city regulatory laws; 2) consistent hiring and firing processes; 3) forms and documentation of these processes.



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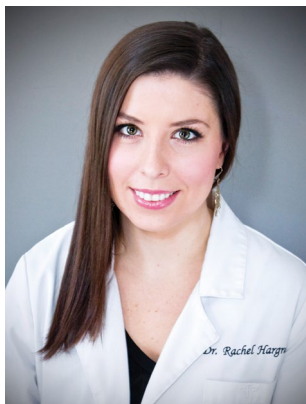
A FEW TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED (CONTINUED)

- ▶ **A Good Employee Manual is Critical** A good employee manual must be customized for your city and state laws, continually updated to reflect legislative changes, and acknowledged in writing that all employees have received it.
- ▶ **Employment Practices Liability Insurance Gives You Peace of Mind** Adding employment practices liability insurance can give you added peace of mind and protection in case of an employment-related lawsuit. It will help cover the costs of defense and settlement if necessary.

QUICK LINK RESOURCES



Endorsed partner, ProSites, is super passionate about helping dental practices save time and attract new patients through innovative, easy-to-use website design and marketing solutions. Bonus—NYSDA members save 25% off the initial website set-up. Learn more at prosites.com/NYSDA.



DR. RACHEL HARGRAVES

Dr. Rachel Hargraves grew up in Guilderland, NY. Early on, she recognized her passion for dentistry and majored in biology at the University at Albany. She graduated summa cum laude from the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine. Following graduation, she relocated to Miami, FL, to complete her AEGD at the Miami Veterans Hospital. She spent several years practicing dentistry in private practice in Pompano Beach, FL. She is an active member of the American Dental Association, New York State Dental Association, Fourth District Dental Society and Omicron Kappa Upsilon National Dental Honor Society. She is Fourth District Treasurer, coeditor of the district Newsletter, and chair of the New Dentist Committee, and she is adjunct professor at HVCC Dental Hygiene School. Dr. Hargraves owns her practice in Ballston Lake, NY.

HAVE A FOLLOW-UP QUESTION?

Reach out to Dr. Hargraves at info@drhargravesdds.com.