



Good Leaders Coach Team Members

Doctors admit that they sometimes avoid approaching team members because of the level of discomfort and confrontation involved. Instead, they will try giving subtle “hints” about his/her dissatisfaction in hopes that the staff member will understand, thus improve his/her job performance. However, we all know this method is unsuccessful.

Good leaders help their employees be the best they can be, therefore, an important leadership tool that every doctor must develop is how to effectively coach an employee. Doctors should think of pediatric dentistry as a sport or game that their team plays and wants to win. The doctor is the coach, and the employees are the players. It is up to the coach to select the best players for the team, and then coach them to play to the best of their ability and win the game.

The way athletes achieve a high level of performance is by working with a knowledgeable coach who gives constant feedback of what needs to be done differently and also what they are doing well. Good coaches understand each player’s unique strengths and weaknesses, and encourage as well as motivate the player to do their best.

In this issue, we will discuss management styles, reasons for poor performance and solutions, and positive coaching verbal skills.

Employees Come From Different “Planets”

In the last issue of *PMM News*, we talked about the different “planets”; **Dominance** (control), **Extroversion** (people), **Pace** (patience) and **Conformity** (systems) that employees come from depending upon their natural strengths and behavior traits. We also learned that employees will accomplish a task with one of three different work-style approaches: **Thrust** (inner-directed, fast-paced), **Ste-Nacity** (inner-directed, steady pace) or **Allegiance** (outer-directed, steady pace).

In order to better manage your employees, you

must approach each “planet” differently in your management style and expectations to effectively coach the employee in achieving his/her top performance.

Below, is a list of effective management styles for each “planet”:

Dominance

- Communicate with fewer words and get directly to your point
- Give challenges; communicate the bottom line result you want achieved
- Do not micro-manage

Extroversion

- Be warm, friendly and personable in your communication
- Give praise when deserved
- Give them tasks that involve contact with people

Pace & Conformity (90+ percent of dental employees fall into these two “planets”)

- Be warm and friendly in your communication; avoid being directly confrontational
- When asking for a performance change, tell them first what they have done well, then communicate what you would like them to improve
- Offer details on how to perform the new behavior
- Explain the benefits of the new behavior
- Be patient; these individuals need time to think and process each change

When asking for a performance change with an employee who has a work-style approach of Thrust or Ste-Nacity, you can more likely expect that they will pick up the ball and run with it. When you are working with an employee who has the Allegiance work-work style approach, you must accept that you will have to direct and closely oversee this employee because he or she is deeply concerned about doing



exactly what the doctor wants and usually waits to be told what to do. Most Pace and Conformity have the Allegiance work-style.

Five Reasons for Poor Job Performance

The doctor must always ask him/herself; "Have I done my part in helping this employee perform at their best level? Have I given the employee the training, time to learn and tools to do their job well?" A good leader always prepares the employee for success. When an employee is not performing their job, it is for one of five reasons. After determining the reason, the doctor can determine a solution.

1. They don't know what it is they are supposed to do.

Problem: communication

Solution: clearly defined job descriptions and benchmarks of acceptable performance

2. They don't know how to do it.

Problem: training

Solution: train before asking for performance

3. They are not capable of doing it.

Problem: selection, ability

Solution: replace

4. They refuse to do it.

Problem: insubordination

Solution: replace

5. They don't have a reason why they should do it.

Problem: motivation

Solution: offer a reason that makes sense

Positive Coaching Verbal Skills

Most staff members that I consult with want to do their job well, and **want the doctor to tell them what to do differently to improve.** Without this feedback from the doctor, the employee is not given a chance to grow. Think of the performance feedback as "**positive coaching**" rather than "**constructive criticism.**" Remember the goal of coaching is to improve things, not just to enumerate the problems.

There is a right way and wrong way to communicate your "positive coaching" to the employee. Do not begin your sentences with the word "You" and then use superlatives in a negative context, for example; "You never...", or "You always...". This puts the employee on the defensive and shuts down communication.

A more effective way to communicate is to use the "sandwich" technique. First, you start with the word "I" and tell the employee what you appreciate or value about them. Secondly, you tell them what you want them to do differently and why. And thirdly, you end with a positive statement of encouragement.

Positive Coaching Script

1. Speak **directly** to the employee. Never complain about one employee to another. This is gossip and destructive to the team.

2. Tell the employee what they are **doing well**, or what you value in their performance. This helps the employee understand what is expected of him/her.

"I want you to know that I really appreciate how you are here everyday and hardly ever miss work."

3. Avoid using the word "BUT" after you express what you like about the employee's performance. Replace the word "BUT" with the word "NOW" and tell them **specifically what** you want done differently.

"Susan, I really like the way you ... NOW, to take your job performance to its next level, I would like you to ..." or "This is the next level I would like to see you take your performance to..." or "Where I would like to see you concentrate for the next few months is...."

4. Tell the employee **specifically how** you want it done differently. Employees are not mind readers, and they can perform better when things are spelled out and **expectations are clear.**

5. When performance changes are requested of an employee there are three questions that the doctor should ask to help get insight into whether or not the employee will aim to improve.

"Is this something you think you can do?"

"What kind of help do you need to make this change?"

"Is this something you want to do?"

(If the employee responds "No" to this question, the doctor has to determine if insubordination may be a problem here and that an attitude adjustment is needed.)

6. End with an encouraging statement.

"I'm confident that you have the ability to do an outstanding job. Please let me know how I can help you achieve this goal."



7. **Set up another meeting time** to give the employee feedback on the requested change in their performance.

8. If the behavior/job performance is strongly lacking, tell the employee; ***“You need to know your job is in jeopardy and you are on probation until your job performance improves.”***

9. **Document** all conversations if they may be connected to terminating the employee should his/her behavior not improve.

Praise/Strength Comments or Compliments

If a doctor constantly criticizes an employee’s performance, then this action is counter productive and suggests that the employee will never reach the doctor’s expectations. The employee may eventually give up trying to make the changes. As the employee is working on the requested changes, use the powerful leadership tool of praise! It is best to give the compliment **immediately or soon after** the improved behavior is noticed. One’s tone of voice and enthusiasm are all tools to make your compliment effective, strong and meaningful.

Examples of praise/strength comments:

“Sally, you calmed down that scared child so nicely, I really appreciate having an assistant like you that has such a kind and gentle personality”.

“Thank you Nancy for working through such a heavy schedule today. Your commitment to

the office is an outstanding quality that I value in you and makes me glad to have you in my office.”

“Molly, I saw how much extra you had to hustle to help us stay on schedule today. I really appreciate your willingness to go the extra mile when it is needed.”

“Eva, I want you to know how much I appreciate all the detailed paperwork that you do behind the scenes. I know how hard you push yourself when you are in here. I appreciate and value your commitment to this office to get things done right.”

“Michele, you did a great job today managing the patients in the reception area this morning. I know we were backed up with emergencies and I heard you explaining this situation to the patients. I saw how your caring personality really come through and I am glad to have someone like you up front to help take care of those situations.”

When doctors focus on “positive coaching” and uniquely approach their employees who may come from different “planets,” the message will be more positively received, understood and delivered. Good leaders help others through motivation and encouragement. In turn, each employee feels appreciated for his/her talents and efforts. An employee who is recognized for making a positive difference will go the extra mile for his/her doctor and offer a sense of loyalty that is hard to find.

Make Your Team “People Smart” in 2007!

- Get employees to work more effectively as a team
- Decrease conflict and learn better conflict resolution skills
- Learn leadership skills that will increase employee performance and retention
- Effectively communicate with patients to increase treatment acceptance

“Your PDP Team Dynamics program was phenomenal! Our team communicates so much better, and it has helped me manage my staff and discuss treatment needs with parents.”

—Dr. Jeffrey Jaynes, Pediatric Dentist, Plano, TX

To help your team better understand each other and improve their teamwork, visit www.julieweir.com/staff.htm. Or, call Julie at 719-495-8735.

JULIE WEIR
TAKE *the* LEAD

Management Consulting • Success Products • Speaker • 719-495-8735 • JulieWeir.com



American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
211 E. Chicago Avenue-Suite 1700
Chicago, IL 60611-2663

 **PMM** News



Published six times per year as a direct membership benefit by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), 211 East Chicago Avenue, Suite 1700, Chicago, IL 60611-2663, (312) 337-2169. Copyright©2007 by the AAPD. All rights reserved. ISSN 1064-1203. aapdinfo@aapd.org, www.aapd.org. Writer: Ms. Julie Weir has built an outstanding reputation as a consultant, international speaker and author in the business of dentistry. Opinions and recommendations are those of the author and should not be considered AAPD policy.

Executive Director
Dr. John S. Rutkauskas

Publications Coordinator
Cindy Hansen

Publications Associate
Adriana Loaiza

Public Affairs Coordinator
Marianthi Bumbaris