



## Building the Unstoppable Team

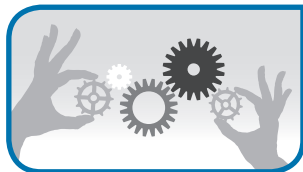
By Bernie Stoltz

There is nothing more important—or more difficult—for a practice than putting together a dynamic team. In today's competitive environment, it is impossible to truly serve the community without a great team. Hire the right people and something magical happens; recruit the wrong people and both productivity and morale suffer. What are the keys to building an "unstoppable" team?

### Drive your Business Engines

The following five business "engines" are essential to the overall success of your dental practice and will drive you to the next level:

- Finance
- Marketing
- Clinical/Technological
- Business Systems
- **People**



If just one of these engines is not working properly, the entire system falls flat. The "people" element is what every practice strives to build—a team "culture" where everyone wants to play full out. So, how do we get there?

### Create a Practice Vision

Ask yourself, "If I had the 'perfect practice,' what would it be like?" By focusing on the "destination" upfront, you are creating a journey the entire team will want to see through to the end.

- **Vision is what drives you.**
- **A sense of mission pulls you forward.**

In order for your practice to have a context in which the team can thrive, a clearly stated vision is imperative.

### Maximize Human Capital

Decide today how everyone in your office is going to show up for work every day. This is crucial because if your team's core beliefs and practice vision are not congruent, there will be no sustained production or longevity.

### Select the Right Team

When creating the dream team in your office, bring members to the team based on their beliefs, values, attitudes, and trainability. This is the most important foundation in your staff-driven practice. Once on board, a strong training system is vital to elasticity. Make sure you do not allow the "enthusiastic beginner" to become a "disillusioned learner" or "reluctant contributor." Provide training so they can move through these stages to become a "peak performer."

### Motivate and Inspire

Create a vision that inspires your team to strive toward goals. Do not let the vision get lost in the shuffle. Ensure that every team member is reminded of the vision on a daily basis, whether it be posted in the office or reiterated during the daily morning huddle.

- **Monitor and Measure.** Each team member needs a clear job description, duties, responsibilities, and accountability. In addition, they need to know how to "win the game."
- **Offer Rewards.** Each team member needs to know they can win the game and that, by doing so, they will be well rewarded.

*continued on page 2*



## Create the Right Culture

To craft the unstoppable team, the right culture must be in place. Creating an office where your staff is inspired, motivated, and rewarded means thrilled fans will follow.

## Show Leadership

Leadership is key. According to Rudolph Giuliani in his book, *Leadership*, the six essential qualities of a leader are as follows:

- **Beliefs.** Develop strong core beliefs and “To thine own self be true!”
- **Optimism.** Be a problem solver, not a problem maker; believe there are solutions.
- **Courage.** Take action in the face of fear.
- **Preparation.** Do your homework; “luck” is where opportunity and preparedness intersect.
- **Teamwork.** Be humble and know you can get others to help with success.
- **Communication.** People who can influence others can move the world.

## Ensure Accountability

It is crucial that each team member feel ownership is a part of the practice. This means job responsibilities should be clearly stated. Remember, if everyone owns it, no one owns it, and if no one owns it, nothing will get done. You must see yourself as the head coach in your practice. It is about empowering others. When you micromanage your team, you lose energy, time, focus, and the ability to serve your patients fully.

**The doctor should help each department leader do the following:**

- Evaluate the need and create a game plan
- Make declarations and requests
- Monitor results
- Coach

## Create Practice Agreements

Agreements are the cornerstones of teamwork. Creating mutual agreements builds a bond between team members that supports the behaviors needed to reach goals and outcomes and ultimately the practice vision. Keep in mind agreements are not office policies or office procedures and should be organized by agreements not personalities:

- **Meetings** (morning huddles, afternoon debriefs, weekly staff meetings)
- **Goal setting** (daily, monthly, and yearly goals)
- **Scheduling** (schedule to goal)
- **Collections** (collect to goal and manage accounts receivable/payable)
- **Financial** (written financial policies and signed financial arrangements)
- **Recare** (standard of care, chart audit, and reactivation)
- **Team** (personnel policy manual, job descriptions, quality of service)

## Master Communication

Once in place, a practice must be able to master communication and relationships in order to create this successful environment where agreements are kept. This starts with mastering your own emotions. As the leader in your office, you must show the entire team there is “safety” and open, honest, and clear communication is essential to the successful flow of the practice. Once you achieve this, you will be able to enjoy your staff and become highly efficient and effective.

## Summary

By implementing these strategies, you will discover it is possible to create the “unstoppable dream team” in your practice. In addition, mastering these tips will allow you to build a thriving practice in which you are able to provide high quality dentistry that gives your patients a “Wow!” experience that will keep them coming to you for years.



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