

Video Technology Revolutionizes Staff Training

BY CAROL PAIGE

How are new employees trained when they join your office?

The reply many dentists give to this question is: "By the dental offices they worked in before mine."

In other words, your practice faces quite a dilemma when a team member submits resignation. The probability of finding a replacement with proficiency in your software, who utilizes the software in the same manner as others on your team, and with patient management knowledge identical to your philosophy is that of "the needle in the haystack."

The wise dentist/manager searches for the right person knowing they will have to train that person in office protocol. So begins the efforts of staff meetings, continuing education, and months of coaching to supply your new team member with the knowledge to satisfactorily perform in the position. Production or collection loss becomes a likely outcome during these training months. Inevitably, after a period of time, the employee will submit resignation, leaving with your skillfully crafted knowledge, time, and money invested in their training. And, typically, they leave before their replacement starts.

What if there were a solution so you could place the majority of your hiring priorities towards finding the right person regardless of the extent of their dental knowledge? A person who possessed the intelligence, personal values, team-playing attitude, maturity, and stability that are most compatible with your office? And what if you could have this person "trained" to your highest standards within 3-6 weeks?

There is a solution to this predicament. Say "good-bye" to the 1,000-page manuscript of Standard Operating Procedures, (the project you were going to do at the beach). Say "hello" to homemade DVDs demonstrating your office protocol and procedures.

Revolutionized by the efficiency of a tripod, home video camera, and user-friendly editing software, dental practices can



now document their detailed management systems and readily burn them to DVDs. The creation of each video is typically a team effort, with two team members participating. No script is needed! Editing capability has eliminated the need for a perfect performance, and what is discussed and explained on the video follows the same format as if the resigning staff member were teaching the new recruit.

Follow these six steps to revolutionize your in-office training procedures:

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Step 1: List your training priorities by topic.

Follow this rule: One topic per video.

For example, in the Clinical Department, you may list the following topics that would each be burned to a separate DVD: Instrument Identification, Dental Materials: Identification and Application, Sterilization Procedures, Clinical Orientation of Treatment Rooms and Supply Storage, Room/Procedure Set-Up, Treatment Room Post-Procedure Break-Down, How to Take Digital X-rays, Making Temps, Greeting, Seating, Post-op Instructions, and Dismissing Patients. By gaining the permission of easy-going patients, you can devote a film to demonstrating the manner in which the assistant supports the doctor during a procedure. Imagine the elevated knowledge and confidence of your new dental assistant once she has been allowed to watch a clinical procedure and observe the style, order of instruments, and materials passed during a procedure—prior to sitting next to the doctor at the chair.

Hygiene orientation and training would include review of some of the videos mentioned below. Additionally, a video describing the Steps of the Hygiene Appointment can orientate

new hygienists to many important practice areas ranging from your equipment and periodontal protocol to clinical notations during the hygiene and doctor examinations.

In the Administrative Department, topics often include: Greeting and Checking-in Patients, Check-out, Appointment Scheduling, The Administrative Role During Consultation, New Patient Telephone Protocol, Confirmation with Emphasis on Management of Broken Appointments with Prevention and Saving of Late Cancellations, General Front Office Orientation and Phone Management, Accounts Receivable Including Billing and Collection, and Insurance Procedures.



Step 2: For your first video, pick a topic that you and your partner discuss with ease.

On a tablet, with your video partner, take five minutes to brainstorm a list of key points to cover during the film. Then, dedicate five more minutes and list them in order of logical presentation. The order saves editing time. However, that's the beauty of editing software, you can change the order without revising the original film.

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Step 3: "Roll 'em."

On camera, introduce the subject, yourself, and your video partner. Welcome the training team member to your office and thank them for watching the film. Explain to the person watching the video that the film is not, in any fashion, discounting their knowledge or assuming they don't know "the basics." Instead, it's a supportive effort to assure they are successful in their position.

Now, you are ready to begin the training aspects of your topic. Explain the goals of your system, the importance of consistent implementation of the system, how the new team member impacts the role of other team members, and how each step is managed. Film the video in a Question-and-Answer format with demonstrations and role playing, as if one team member were training the other.



Step 4: Utilize editing software with your camera and film.

Create title pages, fades, and let the imperfect sections of the tape land, figuratively speaking, on the cutting room floor.



Step 5: Burn several copies of the DVD and place one copy in your office or home safe.

If ever your training copies are missing from your office, you can burn another DVD from the one in storage.



Step 6: Create an accompanying training manual by watching the DVD and typing a summary following the steps outlined on the film.

What are the top 10 benefits of DVD training?

New staff members:

1. Benefit from the ability to hear an explanation, see it on video, and read it in the simplified "user friendly" manual. New employees appreciate the thoroughness of how the material is given to them.
2. Prevent fatigue and impatience from current staff members whose best skills may not include that of "trainer."
3. Understand the process is designed to give them specific details, of exacting nature, in how to perform their roles.
4. Learn at "their speed." If they learn best by hearing the information several times, they have the option to re-watch videos.
5. Are accountable to learn and know the information... because it's on tape and in writing.
6. Reach financial goals for raises more quickly because they were given the support needed to reach high performance standards.
7. Contribute quickly to the support and growth of the business as opposed to feeling as if their lack of knowledge has created a business liability.
8. Gain confidence quickly while performing their tasks and save the embarrassment of performing tasks incorrectly.
9. Accelerate training so they feel part of the office and part of the team quickly.
10. Gain the support of trained staff members, as all are aware of the training timeline and materials covered to date.

Once you have completed a series of in-office training DVDs, you can design a training program for your new team members. It's advisable to let them watch and study a video topic first, before actually performing those tasks in your office. A training timeline is established that introduces a new topic about every other day. Training time is paid time and should be conducted in a room where concentration will not be interrupted. Employees should be encouraged to take videos home for review if helpful.

Supervision is important when any skill is being learned, but you will find the time needed for supervision and training is drastically reduced through video orientation. If the material is dispensed methodically over a period of weeks, while the employees are allowed to focus on mastery of a topic before proceeding to the next, the high performance standard will be reached quickly and impressively.



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