

Asking for a Raise

When I Feel a Raise is Due

By Linda Miles

The seven most dreaded words a dentist hears during a workday are: "May I speak with you after work?" Does this mean the employee is quitting, needs maternity leave, or wants a raise? Whatever the situation, the doctor hopes they will handle it well.

For the employee who feels the need to ask for a raise, it often takes days or weeks to muster up the courage to ASK! With the slower economy of the past few years, raises have been few and far between. Some dental employees have not had a raise in two or three years yet they feel they are working harder than ever to maintain practice goals. They report going above and beyond the call of duty to keep the schedule full and to work in emergencies.

The best way to ask for a raise is to keep a record of the date of the last increase in pay along with the history of all you have personally done for the patients, practice, and coworkers since your last raise. What CE or online courses have you taken? What above-the-call-of-duty projects have you done recently? Examples might including: volunteering for community activity/service which promoted the practice; working on the marketing committee which met during lunch six times in the past six months; developing on one's own time the in-school program for elementary schools; and/or participating in the reactivation process of inactive patients. You might say, "I personally called forty-five patients and rescheduled seventeen of them as well as getting four new family members by asking about family members who might not be seeing a dentist."

Dentists are busy taking care of patients and running a business, so they are often NOT thinking about someone's last pay raise nor what each employee has done for the practice since that pay raise. Don't go to your doctor with the "I-need-a-raise-because-I-DESERVE-it" attitude. Go with an attitude of gratitude and show your personal value to the practice. Does this guarantee a raise? No, but it greatly increases your chance of its being considered. It also lets your employer know you are not only assertive but you value yourself.



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ASK THE CONSULTANT

Q: Should we bill a perio or a prophy each time a perio patient comes in? Insurance companies don't care if the treatment is for perio or not and pay the same as prophy D1110.

A: I recommend that you do not let insurance companies dictate what code you use or what treatment you provide your patients. Instead, bill the code according to the diagnosis. At the perio maintenance appointment, the RDH will re-evaluate previous areas of disease. The RDH will use antimicrobial and/or laser therapy if the re-evaluation dictates active disease. In some situations, the perio maintenance re-evaluation will dictate that the patient needs to repeat SRP. Repeating SRP is typical because periodontal disease is episodic.

BOTTOM LINE: The value to your periodontal patient is much greater when you provide the perio maintenance service versus a "just a prophy" appointment.

Response provided by Debra Seidel-Bittke, President of Dental Practice Solutions.

QUOTE-WORTHY

“The truth is that whenever two people love the same thing and work at it together, their union makes strength; combined, they can do more than if their separate energies were each striving in a different direction. By working together one becomes stronger and the whole is formed.”
– Vincent Van Gogh