



New Roles For Today's Dental Team

By Linda Miles

IT'S ALL ABOUT ENERGY! When asked to describe the ideal dental auxiliary, we think about their ability to perform the duties they were hired to do. We also remind ourselves of the importance of their professional appearance, attitude, and passion for being outstanding caregivers to the patients they serve.

In addition to the above-mentioned attributes, what stands out in my mind is the staff's ability to communicate in an energetic manner. Employers can't put a dollar value on outstanding communication skills, especially if they are a natural trait. Dental professionals can go to classes or seminars that teach behavioral styles or communication skills, read books on the subject, and memorize scripts, but inborn enthusiasm is a true gift.

With the first greeting on the telephone, patients and potential patients can tell whether the scheduling coordinator is happy, tired, bored, rude, or enthused about the practice in which she works. Callers can detect the energy level of those within the entire practice. On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest, how does your office rate? This does not mean every person answering the telephone must sound like a shaken soda pop ready to explode. Quite the contrary! What it does mean is the tone of voice must be sincere, energetic, friendly, and knowledgeable. This person must sound happy to be there and welcoming to those who make that call.

IT'S ALL ABOUT ENERGY! When patients walk into the reception area of your practice, do they know you are in the dental business? Does your reception area resemble an art museum, an insurance agent's office, or your local law firm? Energize your reception area by displaying beautiful artwork

of the smiles you hope to create or have already created. There should be no question in the minds of the people who enter your front door (even the mail or delivery person) that you are not JUST another dentist, but THE dentist! This energy walks out of your office and back to work or home with every visitor each day. Make no bones about it, you and your team are proud of what you can do and have done to improve your community, one smile at a time!

IT'S ALL ABOUT ENERGY! When the dental assistant or hygienist seats patients daily, do they lumber into the reception area to greet them like snails on tranquilizers, or do they have a spring in their walk and talk? Is this just another day in the life of a burned out professional, or is this the golden opportunity that presents itself one to two dozen times per day to make a difference in the lives of patients? Are the clinical staff members excited about modern dentistry and what it can do to change the lives of patients? Have they been trained and are they trusted to get really involved with chairside communications, which are a major part of case acceptance? Patients accept treatment plans when the person communicating is more excited about the end results than they are! Why? Because dental professionals have seen these results many times. The patient rarely has.

IT'S ALL ABOUT ENERGY! During the procedures when staff members are alone with the patients, are they encouraged to "talk dentistry" or do they spend 75% of this opportunity chitchatting socially? In the new roles for the dental team, offices that excel in communication skills spend 75% of their time "talking dentistry" and only 25% talking socially. Case acceptance increases tremendously!

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This “down time” when the dentist is out of the treatment room is a wonderful time for staff members to educate patients on dental procedures and exciting products such as cosmetic whitening. (So many dental professionals have a tremendous hang-up about the word “selling.” They need to get over it and believe that connecting patients with wonderful products and services is what the visit is all about. In fact, in one of my seminars entitled The Art of Selling Dentistry, I reiterate “selling is serving!”)

IT’S ALL ABOUT ENERGY! Dentists can’t expect their staff to be more excited about dentistry than they are. As the leader, on a scale of 1-10, how energetic are you each morning when you arrive at the office? Are you enthused or setting an example of total boredom? Pick out the most successful dentists in your community and they all have something in common, a passion for what they do and how they do it. They exude confidence to their patients and staff. They see their work as an art form that brings joy and value to those who receive it. The staff gets energy just by being in the same facility with them each day. They continuously upgrade their skills and knowledge by going to seminars and realize school is never out for the pro. They take their staff to annual conferences to celebrate their successes and meet and mingle with others who strive to have high impact practices. They realize giving back to the well they drink from is what dentistry and life are all about. These forever students usually share their knowledge with new dentists who have a thirst for becoming the best of the best.

Do your patients and practice a favor and make 2014 the year you put ENERGY into your lives and daily existence.



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