



What makes for a successful dentist CEO?

In today's competitive dental industry, delivering high-quality care isn't enough to sustain a successful practice. For a practice to thrive, the dentist must become a CEO in addition to being a dental provider. In this four-part series, we will examine the fundamental tasks of the modern dentist CEO.

Part 1 of 4: Building the right team

Employing the right people can have a huge positive impact on any business. Dental practices are no different—if anything, practice employees have a disproportionate positive or negative impact compared to employees in other businesses (consider the importance of patient interactions and the trepidation with which many patients view a visit to the dentist).

As the dentist CEO, it is important to ask yourself two questions:

1. Are your team members happy and engaged?
2. If you were starting over tomorrow, would you hire them all again?

If you realize that you don't have the right people in the right places, you need to deal with it head-on. Otherwise, people management will monopolize your time, leaving little left to focus on other fundamental tasks.

Identifying staffing needs

It all begins with identifying your staffing needs and recruiting the right people. More easily said than done. Still, there are a few simple questions to ask yourself along the way:

1. What are your *functional* needs? Think of these as the functions associated with the C-level officers of a large corporation: Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operations Officer, Chief Marketing Officer, Chief Technology Officer and HR (in small practices, key employees often fill multiple roles).

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About Planet DDS

Founded over a decade ago, Planet DDS was the first dental practice management solution built as a true cloud solution from the ground up. Since then, we've remained true to our initial vision: to help dentists run their practices so they can focus on what matters most—patient care. We now deliver our innovative cloud platform and virtual business services to thousands of dental professionals across the country.

2. What are your *process* needs? This will be a much longer list. It should identify all of the processes that are necessary to run your business. Here are some examples:

- Onboarding new patients and retaining them
- Assessing patient satisfaction
- Maximizing the appointment schedule
- Maximizing \$/patient visit
- Minimizing no-shows and cancellations
- Employee recruitment and onboarding
- Many others

Hiring the right people

When hiring, keep in mind that there's a war on for top talent. And for good reason—according to the hiring consultancy Topgrading, the cost of a bad hire is fifteen times his or her annual salary! Given the math, it might make sense to consider professional recruiting firms to help fill key positions. Personal recommendations for trusted team members are another good source of talent.

Retaining the “A” players

That war for talent is never won, especially with “A” talent, as top performers are always vulnerable to poaching. Once the right team is in place, the dentist CEO must keep them there. There's no secret sauce to retention and good “culture,” which is a nebulous term to begin with, but there are a few good rules of thumb to follow:

1. Help people play to their strengths
2. Keep people engaged
3. Set clear expectations and provide feedback on performance
4. Give recognition; show appreciation when warranted

Building the right team is the first fundamental task for the successful dentist CEO. In many ways, it frees up the dentist to play to his or her own strengths: quality patient care.