



What one bad apple might be costing you

By Jay Geier, DrBicuspid.com contributing writer

January 18, 2017 -- As parents, we try to steer our children away from the influence of the bad apple. We know that a relationship with the wrong person could spell trouble ahead. As employers, however, we tend to ignore the effect that one bad apple in the office has on the whole bunch. No matter what size practice you have, you need to recognize the influence just one member has on your entire team and the role your team has on the success -- or failure -- of your practice.

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Jay Geier is the president and founder of the Scheduling Institute.

Let's say you have a team member who has been with the practice for many years. You like this team member as a person, but whenever you suggest doing something differently -- more efficiently -- you meet resistance, to the point that you might feel that it's not worth trying to make a change and default to what you had been doing.

You ignore this person habitually coming in late, taking care of personal business during office hours, and even the occasional backtalk in front of others. And that's just what you see. What you don't see is the eye rolling in a staff meeting, gossiping and backstabbing of other team members who are competent or excelling at their positions, destructive whisper campaigns, the mishandling of patient calls, mistreatment of patients in the office, and so on.

I actually have a client who finally recognized he had issues with his staff when he asked them to answer the phone during the office lunch hour and they refused. What did he do initially? He, the one whose time is worth a few hundred dollars an hour, answered the phone during lunch, instead of a \$15-an-hour employee.

You may be thinking, "Well, my employees aren't that bad!" It sounds extreme, I know. But your employees may be doing similar damage at your practice -- right under your nose.

Do you know how they are answering the phones? Have you ever stood back and listened? Have you paid attention, unseen, to the way they treat your patients while in the office? Let's go back to the phones and talk numbers.

Do the math

Say your long-time employee misses an average of two phone calls a month due to a lack of engagement and disinterest in the practice's success (and if your team member is disengaged, I can guarantee you a whole lot more than two calls a month are being missed). So what's a missed call, you say, every now and again? I'm going to show you how much those two missed calls a month will cost you.

Let's say those calls are potential new patients. We know that each new patient is conservatively worth about \$2,000 over their lifetime (not to mention referrals that may be generated from them). So over a 20-year period, two additional patients a month would generate \$960,000 in revenue for your practice. Oh wait. These were missed calls. Missed opportunities. Missed revenue. Those two missed calls just cost your practice a minimum of \$960,000 over the 20 years.

Now think about it. Is that team member's comfort worth what your practice is losing on a regular basis? If you don't think that staff member is capable of change and committing to success for your practice, it's time to let the person go. Believe me, you will both be happier for it!

A few good men or women

So how do you find someone who will truly contribute to the greater good of the practice? They're out there, but not always easy to find. You should look for ambitious, results-oriented leaders who learn from their mistakes and past rather than be defined by them. These are the employees who will respond to challenges and incentives and, when asked, will go outside their comfort zone if it makes them or the practice better for it.

So in hiring someone to join your team, do you set expectations for their performance or results? Are they aware of what it is you're looking for? Listen, I'm not telling you anything you don't already know. I'm telling you to pay attention to those who are close. Take another look at your current team. Is it time to start pruning the apple tree?

Jay Geier is the founder and owner of the *Scheduling Institute*, a dental training and practice consulting company. Visit www.5starchallenge.com to find out how to transform your practice.

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Wells

As employees that work 8 hours we are allowed by law to have 60 minutes of down time (a break). This time is most usually not paid time. The Bad Apple in this scenario is the DDS and Jay Greier. Shame on you for devaluing the dental staff and expecting work to be performed without compensation.

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