



6 reasons why you should offer incentives to your team

By Jay Geier, DrBicuspid.com contributing writer

May 10, 2017 -- I believe in the power of incentives. I incentivize my team at the Scheduling Institute, and we advise our clients to do the same. I believe, when administered appropriately, incentives motivate people to expand their current capacity and do more for their jobs.



A story from the Foundation for Economic Education of British prisoners being shipped to Australia in the 1800s is a great example of the influence and motivation of incentives. Captains were paid per prisoner to transport them, but when they arrived in Australia, only 40% were surviving the trip. Many humanitarian groups got involved to ensure proper treatment of the prisoners, but their efforts had no effect on the survival rate.

A British economist suggested that instead of paying the captains for each prisoner who boarded the ship in England, they pay them for each prisoner who arrived alive in Australia. With the payout at the end -- the result of the trip -- the captains took better care of their prisoners and the survival rate rose to 98%.

6 reasons

That is a pretty strong argument for incentives, don't you think? Here are six more reasons why you should consider harnessing the power of incentives in your practice.

1. Incentives create a results-oriented practice culture

The problem with many practices today is the flawed idea that "showing up" is good enough. By paying your team members high base salaries, you are essentially saying, "Great job! You showed up!"

Incentives encourage your staff members to actively seek results. By paying a lower base salary but giving them the chance to earn more money through incentives, you are creating a practice culture that is driven by results. People who resist incentives tend to be people who think they should be paid highly for "showing up." And they will naturally weed themselves out.

2. Incentives create a sense of ownership

Give team members more control over their areas with the responsibility of owning the tracking of results. Do you know what happens when each team member starts to fully own their areas and that area's results? Everything increases. Front desk staff who own the phones schedule more new patients. Hygienists who own oral healthcare become better advocates for their patients, and their production increases. Marketing directors who own marketing results test, track, and tweak more effectively to boost return on investment. Ownership increases engagement, and engagement increases productivity and results.

3. Incentives create a win-win

The incentive system operates on a simple principle: When the practice does well, the staff does well. And when the practice does well, the dentist does well. This creates a synergy between your efforts and the efforts of your team -- it gives everyone a single, unified direction and increases office morale. Wouldn't you enjoy having a team that loved coming to work every morning? Incentives show them that hard work and improved results equal rewards!

4. The value of each team member

Incentives connect value to your team members. This is an opportunity to understand the value each team member brings to your office. If you are writing checks based on individual's results, you'll be much more likely to notice which team members are consistently under- or overdelivering (as will they).

5. Team members who are holding your office back

Certain team members are going to fight the incentives system. Why? They are usually the ones who don't want to go above and beyond. They just want to get paid to show up. To them, incentives threaten their financial security. And they're right.

Incentives are bad for those who underdeliver. On the flip side, incentives are very beneficial for team members who work hard and overdeliver. Which type of employee would you rather have?

6. A physical check

I can't emphasize enough the importance of this concept -- physically handing team members a reward for their work will increase their desire to succeed and maximize performance. And they connect you with that reward when it is physically handed to them with a "Thanks for your great work!" or even "Let's hit your goal next month!"

They recognize the amount is a direct reflection of their efforts. If they aren't happy with the amount, they will work harder to increase their results the next month and so on.

Perhaps if you incentivized your team, they, like the British captains mentioned earlier, would take better care of your practice.

Jay Geier is the founder and owner of the Scheduling Institute, a dental training and practice consulting company. To learn more new patient strategies that yield long-term results, register for the two-day Ultimate New Patient Attraction Event.

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