



How Office Culture Affects Patient Experience

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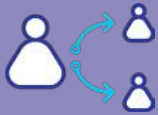
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Understanding the Connection

It is no understatement to say that running a dental practice is a lot of work. This is true for every member of staff, no matter what their contribution is. First and foremost, your practice's mission should be to deliver great oral healthcare.


But, equally important, you are also trying to deliver a great patient experience and build a healthy workplace, with a positive office culture.

These two things are big undertakings. But, what if we told you that office culture and patient experience are intertwined? And that you can apply one strategy to improve them both?

Let's see how.



How Office Culture Starts



Let's be honest - a dental practice can be a stressful workplace! Patients often come to the practice incredibly anxious. The stakes can be high for staff as well, since the health of these patients are dependent on the outcome of their appointment.

With this in mind, one of the biggest questions you will face as a dental practice is: how can we make sure this is a great place to work?

This is where office culture comes in.

HOW OFFICE CULTURE STARTS

Creating a positive office culture begins with values. As a practice, it is important to decide what values every member of staff should embody. These should be set as expectations. And, clear expectations are a great way to foster the culture that you are trying to create.

Finding those core values isn't as hard as you might think!¹

Many dental practices settle on some variation of:



As you build your core values, your staff must know what they are!

This can mean:



¹ What Are The Core Values Of Your Dental Practice And Are You Living Up Them? | LinkedIn

ACCOMPLISHABLE TASKS, SMOOTH PROCESSES

In many ways, what we want from our jobs is simple: we want to enjoy our work as much as possible. We don't want to be frustrated or manage other people's frustrations. We want a good work-life balance. And, above all, we want to know how to do our jobs well.

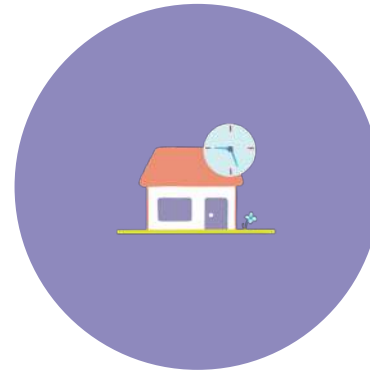
This is where your practice can contribute to workplace culture through day-to-day workplace processes. **For example, ask yourself some of these questions:**



HOW CHALLENGING IS IT FOR STAFF TO COMPLETE THEIR TASKS? ARE THERE SUPPORTS THAT COULD BE IN PLACE FOR THESE TASKS TO BE MORE ACCOMPLISHABLE?



ARE STAFF - DENTISTS, OFFICE MANAGERS, AND FRONT OF OFFICE STAFF ALIKE - CONSTANTLY DEALING WITH FRUSTRATED PATIENTS? WHY ARE THE PATIENTS FRUSTRATED?



ARE YOUR STAFF BECOMING BURNT OUT? ARE THEY OBLIGED TO PUT IN EXTRA HOURS?



IF THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL, HOW ARE THESE THINGS BEING COMMUNICATED TO LEADERSHIP?

Consider these questions to evaluate where your practice is at. If you all, as a team, are stumbling when trying to carry out the day-to-day tasks of your job, then it's hard to create a positive office culture.

What Makes a Great Patient Experience



Creating a great patient experience is crucial for dental practices. Patients are more likely to return to dental practices where they feel comfortable and valued². In fact, a positive patient experience can not only increase patient satisfaction but also improve patient retention and referrals.

Creating a positive patient experience includes:

- Creating an empathetic experience in which the patient feels heard and understood³.
- Setting the patient up for success for each appointment. This includes any pre-appointment instructions that they need to follow, as well as access to forms they need to fill out before their appointment can be completed.
- Utilizing appointment time efficiently.
- Making payment and insurance options easy.
- Giving patients an opportunity to offer feedback at the end of the patient journey.

² Experiences of dental care: what do patients value? | BMC Health Services Research | (biomedcentral.com)

³ DSN x Intiveo - Humanizing Dental Communication: Balancing Technology and Empathy in Patient Care - YouTube

What Makes a Great Patient Experience



Have a look back at this list. Creating an experience where all of these steps happen successfully is hard to do when you are not operating in a positive office culture. How are staff supposed to find the time and the morale to give patients a great experience, if they are not having one themselves?

Finding the Right Strategy

A positive office culture is a main ingredient in a positive patient experience. Both involve carrying out your practice's core values - which will likely involve some kind of commitment to providing a great patient experience.

To find the right strategy start by:

- Elevate and improve workplace processes. For example, if your staff is working overtime because there are simply too many patients to call about appointment reminders, consider a way to automate reminders, freeing your staff up to do other tasks.
- Incorporate feedback from patients. For example, if they're tired of coming 15 minutes early to fill out forms, incorporate sending forms early by text, email, or hard copy so that they are filled out before the appointment.



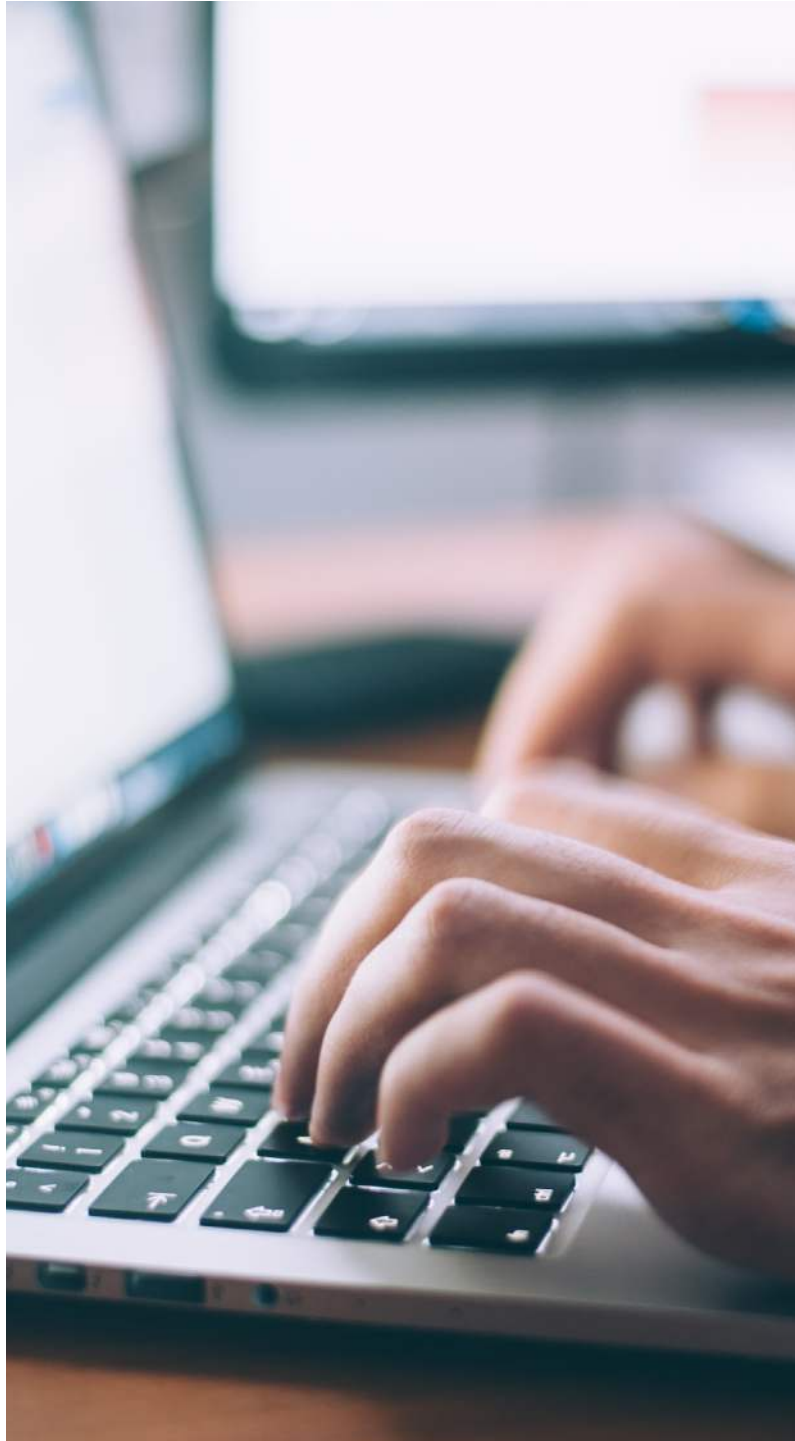
Finding the Right Strategy



- Consider if these workplace processes could be improved by additional training. For example, you have invested in patient engagement software - but it's no good if your staff doesn't know how to use it.
- Ensure that expectations are clear and consider flexible scheduling. This can foster a situation in which staff burnout is less likely to occur, leaving staff more emotionally resourced to work with patients.
- Set respectful communication norms in your practice. Staff should know what channels they can use to communicate issues to leadership. Additionally, regular check-ins and team meetings can help to keep everyone on the same page and foster a sense of collaboration.

From here, you will be able to build a strategy that is specific to your practice. Your patient experience will start to flourish once you create that positive office culture.

How Intiveo Helps



Intiveo is a powerful patient engagement technology that is designed to revolutionize the way dental practices interact with their patients. We are proud to offer a number of [resources](#), offering insights into the dental industry, guides like this one, and more.

If you think patient engagement technology would serve the kind of practice you are trying to create, you can check out our [self-guided tour](#) to see features like:

- Customizable messaging templates are tailored according to appointment type
- The ability to automate message flows
- Our 2-way chat feature that fosters seamless communication between dental professionals and patients
- And more

Want to connect about how Intiveo could work for you? [Book a meeting today!](#)