

Savvy Secrets of the Successful CA

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Are you a successful CA? Would you even know if you were? How would you compare yourself in the rank and file with other successful CAs? You probably would score extremely high on the *Savvy Successful CA Test* if you could say, with absolute confidence, you possess the characteristics required to be an indispensable first mate to the captain (doctor) in your practice.

Are you prepared to depart from port on the excursion of a lifetime? Do you have the skills, common sense and know-how to guide your ship into sometimes uncharted waters, maintaining your professionalism at all times, while serving as a competent and confident assistant? Can you exhibit leadership qualities on a daily basis in both your professional and personal life that will truly make you a valuable asset to the captain, crew (your fellow teammates) and passengers (patients)? Are you ready to set sail and become a truly dynamic chiropractic assistant? Ask yourself the following questions:

Are You a Reliable First Mate?

Do you know what it takes to be a successful leader? Can you take control of a situation when needed or do you hide in the background, hoping someone else will? As a reliable first mate, you are a leader who sees challenges as opportunities to show what you can do. You are acutely aware of the importance of thinking on your feet and showing your decisiveness, with the ability to set and meet future goals, ensuring all crew members take the necessary action to make sure the goals are met.

You are perceptive, open-minded, patient, persistent and totally professional. You have exceptional time-management skills and never let rough seas (unforeseen circumstances) ruin your day. You come to work early and prepare for the day ahead. You leave knowing what needs to be done tomorrow. You have mentors from whom you have learned a great deal and you serve as mentors for other crew members.

So, are you a reliable first mate? Can you come up with at least five leadership qualities you possess? How about five you need to work on?

Do You Have a Service-Oriented Personality?

Nothing is more important to your patients than knowing someone cares. Dealing with a CA who has personality is a definite plus! Are you a happy-go-lucky, genuine smile on the face CA? Does this come through on the phone as well?

Do your fellow teammates see you as upbeat, positive, flexible, creative, knowledgeable and easily approachable, or do they avoid you like the plague? Are you an active listener, allowing others to speak without interrupting? Are you polite, well-mannered, agreeable, energetic and friendly? Or are you stand-offish, defensive, sour, combative and disagreeable with fellow crew members, as well as patients?

Bottom line - can the captain, your fellow crew members and passengers count on you to be

present, vibrant, helpful, warm and inviting? Which of these personality traits do you embody? Which ones might you need to work on? Be honest, and then do it!

Are You a Contributing Crew Member?

"One for all, and all for one!" This famous chant has lots to offer as a common team goal in a chiropractic office. Do you watch out for your teammates or are you too busy trying to show them up so you look better? Do you work on goals together or are you too focused on your own "personal best" to care about the "team?"

Brainstorming sessions and weekly team meetings provide fertile soil to plan goals, discuss better procedures, strategize, communicate concerns, share ideas and maximize the team's potential to achieve practice goals. Since education is key in chiropractic, attending seminars, CA conventions and lectures is extremely important. If all can't go, then those who do go can take notes and bring back materials to discuss with the others in one of those weekly staff meetings.

What makes you a good crew member? Where are your skills lacking? Is it still "all about you?" Take a look! Closer! Set goals for improvement and work on them daily. The whole can certainly be a whole lot better than the sum of its parts.

Are You Perceptive? What's Your CSQ (Common Sense Quotient)?

If common sense were all that common, wouldn't everyone have it? Do you? What do you do when there's a crisis in the office? Cower and whimper in the corner? Or are you perceptive enough to help find a solution?

Common sense dictates how you respond to many situations. For example, do you find it easy to respond when there's a problem in the office? Do you look for a workable solution rather than just getting frustrated and giving up? Do you come from confidence, self-assuredness, and feelings of empowerment when presented with a situation, or do you react because of fear, perfectionism, and fixed habits and ideas?

Can you make a mistake and admit to it, or are you too good for mistakes and try to cover them up or blame them on someone else? Are you in tune with your instincts, can you tolerate differences in others, and are you open to new ways to deal with challenges? If you're unsure of an answer, can you take the time to find out, investigate, explore and get back to whomever on it, or do you stay with the "I don't know," response and leave someone hanging?

Can you think of any recent situations where you displayed keen perception or uncommonly good common sense? How about one where you didn't, but maybe after reading this, you'd do something different in the future?

Are You the Example Setter? Can You Help Steer the Ship?

It's very easy to talk the talk, but can you *walk* the talk? That's what separates the best from the merely mediocre. You certainly can't expect someone to "swab the decks" when you're not even willing to do it.

Do you take responsibility for your actions? Do you work on your own self-improvement action plans? Do you even have any? Self-improvement goals help you to get healthier in every way, and others will see a difference in you. Are you even aware of the power you possess as a CA to influence others? Do you want to do this in a positive or a negative way? What you say and how you act or react has the potential to influence others. What kind of example are you setting?

How do you look when you're feeling and acting your best? Think about it, and then look that way all the time. It takes a lot of willingness and effort to keep the ship afloat every day. So raise your sails and set your sights on the shore of success. The only thing holding you back is you.

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