



MARKETING / OFFICE / STAFF

Build a Staff-Driven Practice

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What would happen if you allowed your staff to drive your practice? What are the benefits of a staff-driven chiropractic practice and how can a broader approach to office management help grow your business? Let's discuss why the staff-driven practice is the key to unlocking a brighter personal and practice future for you and your team.

The Big Benefits

Allowing your staff to take active and integrated roles in your chiropractic office leads to a stronger, more productive and more loyal work force. Employees who have a sense of ownership or feel they're able to contribute to their workplace help create a more cohesive and focused organization.

Relying on employees who thoroughly understand the mission of your practice, and who can use their skills and talents purposefully, puts your practice on virtual cruise control - in the fast lane.

The chiropractor of a staff-driven practice serving as a sort of ship's captain provides general direction and utilizes the skills of talented staff members to do day-to-day work.

The "captain" points the way forward through clear company policies and thorough training, and relies on the staff to take the ship to sea. Informed and motivated employees produce effective results with little supervision. The chiropractor as company executive doesn't need to micromanage well-trained and knowledgeable employees, but merely sets the course.



The higher morale and sense of ownership in a staff-driven office produce a greater desire for more company opportunities and employees naturally seek ways to grow the business. The result leads to greater outcomes and more robust productivity.

A staff-driven practice also generates some pleasant side effects. The biggest one: more fun. At least a little more fun. Remember, grouchy bosses can be a big drag. Think [Capt. Bligh](#). Sprinkle the workplace with some light banter, some friendly kidding around and regular times of employee recognition, and what do you get? Happy workers who are willing to go the extra mile. That translates into more production, assuming more responsibility and more teamwork.

Recognizing good work doesn't have to be complicated or elaborate, but it should be a mandatory part of at least your workweek. It may be as simple as discussing the extra or extraordinary efforts of an employee or group of employees at a weekly staff meeting.

The Power of Teamwork

Teamwork: that's the big deal. It has to do with *synergy*: "the interaction of elements (staff members) that when combined, produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements and contributions."

Imagine the interplay of team members on sports teams. Each player relies on the others to perform their part to support the final goal, which is winning. The best team strategies are coordinated endeavors involving input from all players working to their fullest in their individual roles.

When you have a staff-driven practice, everyone works together as a team. On the other side, offices where the chiropractor flies solo are hamstrung, leaving no room for expansion or even breathing room, but plenty of room for stress and frustration.

The First Step: Embrace Your Role as the Chief Executive

The first step toward creating a more staff-driven atmosphere is a role change. You must transition from the sometimes personality-based solo flier of the practice to chief executive. Although personality-driven practices – those solo-driven ventures – may be great ego boosters, they get wearisome after a while.

As executive, the chiropractor-owner must paint the picture of how the office will work, incorporating its individual parts and organizing the varying processes into smooth and efficient systems. Each function must then be organized, set in place in the form of a job description, and assigned to qualified staff members who are given a full understanding of their duties. That involves adopting the concise and effective communication style of an executive, rather than the clinical, patient-centered style of a chiropractor.

The executive must establish a monitoring system that statistically measures performance and production and regularly conveys the information for regular review. This gives the chiropractor-owner the ability to track work progression without micromanagement, which is key to allowing your practice to blossom from the contributions of a multitude of different personalities.

Serving as the practice's chief executive also allows you to monitor trends and keep ahead of office logistics and organizational needs.

Staff Empowerment

If you're going to employ office managers, bookkeepers, receptionists and even associate chiropractors, let them serve in those roles to their full capacity. You put your trust in their abilities when you chose to hire them. Give them the training that is needed to do the job. Then demonstrate that trust – both in your ability to hire competent people and in them for their unique skill set – by deliberately stepping back and expecting them to deliver. Then monitor their productivity with statistics. That's the role of the chief executive.

A properly built staff-driven practice creates a lasting benefit of tangible assets that can pay big dividends later, say for retirement income, transferring to another occupation or selling the business for a significant price. Staff-driven offices reduce stress levels, increase productivity and allow for more creative innovations to blossom and take hold.

Most chiropractors – even those who own large offices – generally cannot sell their practices for much more than a few hundred thousand dollars. That's because when a chiropractic office is run by a one-size-does-everything owner, the practice doesn't generate much demand on the market when the top dog decides to leave. Potential buyers aren't interested in a one-man show when the one man is no longer in the show.

Keys to Effective Staff Development

Here are some tips for hiring, training and retaining an excellent staff:

As executive, the chiropractor has more time and resources to tap into potential labor pools to find the best and most qualified staff members. Great employees aren't necessarily found during interviews, but created under sound and thoughtful management. Good executives are able to recognize, direct and nurture employees' skills and abilities.

Training top staff members to assume executive positions is vital for the long-term success of your practice. Having an unqualified or unprepared staff member step into a suddenly vacated executive position can spell disaster. In addition, all the staff should undergo regular and thorough job training and learn general office procedures.

Staff members, especially those in top posts, should be given pay incentives that match those of the owner as the company grows. Value for value is good advice for both a good chiropractor and a good employee. More money also helps to motivate employees and gives them a greater sense of pride.

You don't necessarily get into chiropractic to make big money. It's a life of purpose; it's a calling. You want to help people. That's the chiropractic philosophy. So, when your staff displays exemplary performance, reward them. Give them production bonuses. Show them you value their hard work. Employees gain a sense of ownership when they're able to experience how their hard work and innovation benefits them directly.

As with any organization or group, yours needs a leader. If your staff-driven team members are excited and ready to roll up their sleeves, they need to have a strong leader who paints the vision of success. Success emanates from a visionary. And it's your responsibility to become that. If you're not willing to step into those shoes, get out of the way and assign a leader, and then let your leader lead.

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