



Increasing Production by Delegating Tasks

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You generate most of your practice's production (your hygiene department accounts for the rest), so how you spend your time during the course of the day has a profound impact on productivity. When chairside providing direct patient care, you're bringing in revenue. Conversely, when you're handling administrative tasks, no dentistry is being produced. This, in a nutshell, explains why you should delegate as many non-clinical duties as possible to staff members.

Here are some guidelines for effective delegation:

- **Review and upgrade management systems with staff in mind.** With well-designed systems and step-by-step scripts for team members to follow, you can define protocols and ensure they are followed correctly and consistently *without feeling a need to "do it yourself."*
- **Delegate everything you're not legally required to do yourself.** If it isn't clinical care that only a dentist can provide by law, you should let go of it. For a surprising number of doctors, the first and biggest step is delegating hygiene to a hygienist. Also, if you have an office manager, optimize the value of this team member with extensive delegation.
- **Provide all necessary staff training.** As team members take on new responsibilities, they'll need new skills. If you've been a micromanager, you'll probably get impatient if you don't see the right results right away. Proper training will make it possible.
- **Accept the possibility that some tasks will not be done *quite* as well as you could do them yourself.** If you're like the many dentists who are perfectionists, this may be the hardest part of delegation. "Perfect" may be out of reach, but you can reasonably expect well-trained staff using well-designed systems to excel and attain high levels of efficiency.

- **Think of delegation as an excellent team-building tool.** Delegation empowers team members. By delegating, you'll encourage your staff to take initiative, make decisions, look for ways to improve personal and overall practice performance, and develop other valuable characteristics.

For doctors who have full schedules yet experience flat or even decreasing production, delegation is the solution. Become a good delegator and you'll discover that, as you assign tasks to staff, your personal schedule opens up, revealing opportunities for more clinical time. Seeing that potential will motivate you to have the practice's referral marketing activities ramped up, upgrade case presentation skills and perhaps broaden your range of elective services. These strategies will *refill* your schedule—with production rather than tasks that properly trained team members can easily handle.