



6 Improvements for Effective Meetings

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Meetings often get a bad reputation as time-wasters. That doesn't have to be the case. In fact, effective meetings can be a powerful tool for sharing information... anticipating problems... improving morale... and, ultimately, building a powerful team. Levin Group recommends that client practices hold two types of recurring meetings: morning meetings and monthly staff meetings.

Morning meetings, which Levin Group calls Daily Business Meetings, should be 10–15 minutes long, focused on the day's upcoming events and occur prior to the first patient appointment. Monthly staff meetings should be 60–90 minutes in length and serve as a forum for working on larger issues, such as documenting and implementing systems.

To improve practice meetings, follow these six steps:

1. Set Up a Meeting Schedule

Morning meetings should occur at the beginning of every day. Staff meetings should occur every 4–6 weeks. For staff meetings, block out the time for the entire year. This demonstrates to the team that you consider this meeting a priority and will help prevent it from being forgotten or overlooked.

2. Create a Meeting Agenda

People like to know what they're walking into. If they have received an agenda in advance, they can come prepared to participate. For staff meetings, send out the agenda a week ahead of time, so team members can do any homework prior to the meeting. Also, agendas keep the team from straying off topic.

3. Mind the Time

Start and end on time. This sends a message that you value everyone's time. You don't want to have your team standing around waiting for the meeting to begin or rushing to their posts because the meeting ran over.

4. Keep Notes

Assign a staff member to keep a record of what's discussed. At the end of the meeting, this staff member should read aloud any assignments. This lets staff members know what they're supposed to accomplish before the next meeting.

5. Assign Responsibilities

How can your practice fix problems and tackle challenges if no one is accountable? Meetings provide an excellent opportunity to delegate tasks to appropriate task members. For instance, if there's a problem with scheduling hygiene patients, designate a hygienist and a front desk coordinator to come up with solutions before the next meeting.

6. Track Progress

At every meeting, review the deliverables from past meetings. Ask for progress reports on assigned tasks. If items are complete, they can be crossed off. If incomplete, the team can brainstorm ways to accelerate completion. Reviewing progress at each meeting creates a sense of urgency that compels team members to get things done in a timely manner.

Conclusion

Meetings are a critical tool for creating greater practice success. They give everyone a chance to step away from the daily grind, even for a few minutes, to see the big picture. These six steps will help you hold more effective meetings in your practice.