

Title:

Greg Winterregg DDS ~ Adding an Associate to your Practice

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Summary:

When discussing associates, thirteen years in private practice and close to as many as a trainee

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Article Body:

(Part I of II: Adding Dental Associates to Your Practice)

When discussing associates, thirteen years in private practice and close to as many as a trainee

Although there are a number of different factors to consider when adding a dental associate, here are five key questions to ask:

1. When should you get an associate?
2. How would you structure compensation?
3. What's the best way to find one?
4. What are the important points to cover when interviewing?
5. How will you integrate them into your practice?

Let's start at the top: When should you get an associate?

Although this is probably the most important question, it is also where I see the most errors.

In this scenario the office was in no position to justify adding an associate. As such, this is a bad example.

- a) Is your practice growing (or has it grown up to now and you just seem to have "maxxed out"?)
- b) Are you scheduled efficiently?
- c) Is your business profitable?
- d) Is your schedule relatively full?

If you answered "Yes" to all of the above, now is probably a good time to add an associate.

I'll give you this scenario: Your practice has rapidly (or steadily) expanded up to a point where you are:

- 1) To provide faster and more efficient service to your patients,
- 2) To lighten your schedule so you can focus on the type of work you want to do and
- 3) To increase practice productivity.

If my practice was in the above situation, I would look at adding an associate ~ perhaps one to help with the scheduling.

From a practical standpoint, I would also look at how many charts I had. In my experience 1,000 active charts is a good number.

Business survival is inexorably connected to expansion. If the office is well-run (which would be the case in this scenario), then expansion is a natural result.

At MGE (<http://www.mgeonline.com>) we suggest you get an associate when there is more work than you can handle.

One of the questions asked above when deciding whether or not you should add an associate, asks you to consider:

- a. Take your total number of active charts
- b. Multiply this by 20%
- c. Divide "b" by 12 (months in a year)
- d. The figure from "c" above gives you the minimum number of new patients you should be getting each month.

Example: Dr. Smith has 1200 active charts. 20% of this is 240. 240 divided by 12 is 20. To maintain a healthy practice, Dr. Smith should be getting 20 new patients each month.

Keep in mind this formula assumes a couple of conditions exist:

- a) The new patients are fee-for-service.
- b) The doctor has an acceptable skill level when it comes to treatment presentation and a

If you want an associate, I would recommend that you far exceed this 20% factor. This is where

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