Taking technology forward – technicians and technical skills

Another article from the Dental Laboratories Association: this month on keeping technical skills up to date and CPD

Competition is a relatively new phenomenon in dentistry. Twenty or thirty years ago most patients who needed a dentist approached the local surgery with no thought of seeking a second opinion, took what was on offer and went contentedly on their way.

Not any more. Today’s patients are well informed, treatments, are prepared to travel for the best deal, and thanks to the media’s new found interest in dentistry they have a far greater knowledge of different procedures and awareness of what is possible in terms of improving their appearance. And the tentacles of competition reach beyond the dental practice, to the practice manager too have a responsibility to constantly hone their skills to ensure the practice stays competitive and their competitive edge and keep up to date with the latest developments in materials and methods.

All dentists seek to offer a wide spectrum of treatment options, each reflecting the highest standards of professional care. Technicians have the same ambition, to create prosthesis and appliances of the highest quality which satisfy patient expectations and complement the talents of their clinician partners. However, compatible ambitions need compatible knowledge. To ensure the mid-field and the striker are playing the same tactical game, both must pay attention to the team talk.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) keeps the different elements of the dental team not only up to date but communicating in the same language.

Learning new skills is personally challenging and commercially productive. For practices which engage with and exploit the latest developments as they occur, unlimited progress becomes possible. Staff are highly motivated, the patients benefit, and profitability soars. In many respects, technicians man the engine room driving the practice forward; advanced clinical technical protocols within the surgery cannot succeed without the support and certified, proven expertise of the technician behind the scenes.

Undertaking CPD, with its emphasis on promoting understanding of key aspects such as new materials and handling facilities, broadens the technician’s knowledge and practical abilities. Another area rapidly increasing in importance for all technicians is public relations. While technicians themselves rarely have face to face contact with the patients, their specialist knowledge, which is not shared by the ’front line’ members of the dental team, has led to a recommendation that they pursue the same CPD syllabus in legal and ethical issues and complaints handling as other members of the team. In the 21st Century, communication skills have a more prominent role than ever before in every professional act.

The BDPMA means business

Has your career hit a plateau and you’re wondering how on earth you’ll learn all there is to know – as quickly as possible? Has your career hit a plateau and you’re wondering how on earth you’ll learn all there is to know – as quickly as possible? Has your career hit a plateau and you’re wondering how on earth you’ll learn all there is to know – as quickly as possible?

It’s aimed at everyone associated with management including practice managers, principals, senior nurses and receptionists and to encourage team development, BDPMA members can extend their privileged role to other members of their teams.

That’s why the BDPMA, in association with Henry Schein, offers all members the opportunity to further their management capabilities with funding of up to £2500 towards a recognised management qualification.

To enter, just appraise your practice; what are its strengths and weaknesses? How do you develop an action plan for your practice and is a useful tool even if you don’t get it! – you’ve got to be in to win!

What is a manager worth?

As a manager of a dental practice, how do you know if you are paid a package adequately reflects your skills and worth? As a principal, and certainly not least in the delivery of healthcare in all its forms.

The General Dental Council is asking all unregistered technicians to register immediately. The new requirement, due to come into effect shortly, for all dental care professionals to complete 150 hours of recorded CPD every 5 years, is indicative of the importance now being attached to ongoing training and education. Dentists need to ensure that every member of their team is prepared to meet these new professional standards.

The BDPMA encourages CPD and wants every member to market branded materials that have been widely popular and that’s got to be good for both the principal and the manager. The pay scale is part of any new member pack and is available to non-members for a fee of £20.

Dental Management

In February the BDPMA launches its latest vehicle to support managers of practice: Dental Management. The 28-page, members-only publication is crammed full of tips, advice and articles to help managers, manage more effectively. No other publication is dedicated to the development of management skills in this way!

Each issue provides one hours of verifiable CPD so for BDMPA members that’s four hours of verifiable CPD per year just from reading Dental Management. To receive your copy each quarter, join the BDPMA.

The British Dental Practice Managers’ Association is growing quickly because it fulfils the needs of managers striving to climb that ladder of success. Take your first step towards management success by joining now.