Managing small businesses with BIG requirements is not easy

Seema Sharma reflects on the skills sets required

A ll NHS and private dentists have to register with The Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2011, and will be expected to comply with 50 regulations which can be grouped into six sections:

1. Involvement and information
2. Personalised care, treatment and support
3. Safeguarding and safety
4. Suitability of staffing
5. Quality and management
6. Suitability of management.

This article explores how Dentabyte can assist your practice achieve the key outcomes and performance indicators expected by the CQC for section six: Suitability of Management.

Suitability of Management

A recent study associated with Investors in People showed that management has an important role to play in delivering company performance in terms of the improvements in quality, service and customer satisfaction. The good news is that it also showed that sound management structures lead to higher levels of profitability.

The more a dental practice embraces a management structure, the better its performance will be. This is because a good practice leader:

- Allows managers greater freedom and discretion to perform
- Supports the development of a learning culture for team members
- Enhances the effectiveness of the management processes being implemented
- Creates an environment where there is more focus on performance
- Ensures employees better understand their goals and their contribution to the practice.

Unfortunately, dental practices are often not big enough to accommodate a leader and a manager, so the practice owner/practice manager needs to have characteristics of both to have the ideal set of strengths for building a winning team.

So who's going to do it?

And so the challenge begins – getting the whole team on the same bus is a manager's biggest headache. You're right, it's not easy!

There are four basic styles of interaction:

- Authoritative
- Participative
- Dictatorial
- Participative

A good leader applies the right style to the right situation – there is no right or wrong style. Not sure what your style is? The good news is that leadership traits can be acquired with the right mentoring and coaching.

Management – yes we can!

A manager on the other hand implements the strategy outlined by the leader by building teams, setting up systems, organising workflow and solving problems.

A great practice manager will get to know the individual strengths and weaknesses of each team member then know how to harness their strengths and reduce the impact of their weaknesses with support, training and sometimes firm action.

Delegation (not abdication) is a key tool in a manager's armamentarium too. The manager's role is to translate vision into action by empowering individuals to take on roles and generate results, but to stay at a close enough distance to provide assistance or guidance when required.

Relevant CQC Regulations

The following regulations are relevant to this section:

Regulation 5: Fitness of service provider
- Do all your team members have the necessary qualifications, skills and experience to fulfil their roles?

Regulation 6: Registered person: general requirements and training
- Can you demonstrate that each team member carries out the service with appropriate training, competence and skill?

Regulation 26: Notice of absence
- Can patients and the CQC be confident that if the person in charge of the service is absent it will continue to be properly managed and able to meet their needs?

Regulation 27: Notice of Changes
- Can patients and the CQC be confident that if there are changes to the service, it's quality and safety will not be affected?