Are you managing your practice or just practising?, asks Seema Sharma

Stepping up from management to leadership

While leadership and management are key skills for dental practice owners and managers, the transition can be fraught with difficulty. Although affordable “real world” management training relevant to today’s genre of dental practices is hard to come by.

Management programmes for practice owners and managers are often based on writing reams of boring essays which do not feel relevant to today’s genre of dental practice owners and managers. The term “getting by” with in-house training, therefore, is common. The key to success in this area is best, an untrained manager can unwittingly create problems which become hard to unravel! DELEGATION, not ABdicatIon is the key to success in this area!

CQC Outcome 18 – Leadership
Outcome 18 requires the registered manager to have the necessary qualifications, skills and experience to manage the regulated activity. If you are a practice manager, are you ready for this? You are the person being delegated to, and that makes you the busiest person in the practice. The practice owner will expect you to help him or her to achieve all 28 CQC outcomes, as well as lead the team and manage the day to day machinations of the practice.

Here are 12 tips to keep you sane:

1. Keep sight of the big picture: Don’t let fire fighting eclipse the leader's vision.
2. Set clear objectives: Do not establish ambiguous or unrealistic goals for your team – go for bite sized chunks of learning.
3. Network with other managers: Don’t go it alone! Register at www.dentabyte.co.uk and build relationships with peers and colleagues at our affordable courses, so you can help each other.
4. Delegate: Under pressure to do the tasks, the last thing you should be doing is putting someone under pressure to do their work.
5. Network with other managers: Don’t go it alone! Register at www.dentabyte.co.uk and build relationships with peers and colleagues at our affordable courses, so you can help each other.
6. Keep your performance: Appraise good performance and avoid correcting inadequate performance – you need your team’s help so empower and train them.
7. Keep your boss informed: Share what you are learning about CQC with your team – don’t let them be ostriches and say they did not know when it comes to registration time.
8. Ask for help: Don’t view yourself as in servitude to the practice owner, act more like you are in partnership and work together.
9. Receive feedback: Gather feedback about your performance.
10. Project confidence: There’s plenty of time yet – you can make things happen!
11. Don’t neglect your personal life: Don’t become consumed by the demands of CQC – start planning now.
12. Know how to cope with stress: There is good stress and bad stress – know the difference!

Who is appraising YOU?
When you schedule your next round of appraisals for team members, take a moment to think about who is appraising YOU. Both the Care Quality Commission and the General Dental Council, through their Revalidation scheme, will be looking for evidence that practice owners and practice managers have the appropriate “competencies” to lead and manage the dental practice.

The 80/20 rule
Now is the time to start thinking about personal development plans for practice managers and practice owners. If all this sounds daunting, remember that change can bring about unexpected benefits.

By concentrating on leadership, and delegating 80 per cent of the day to day routine management of your practice to a skilled manager, you can free yourself up to concentrate on clinical work and lead your practice to uncharted success!

Dentabyte and Smile-On are launching an exciting Practice Management Programme “for” practice owners “by” practice owners, which promises to be fun and to provide real time solutions to make life easier.

About the author
Seema Sharma is the founder of Dentabyte.co.uk, which provides practice management and core CPD courses for all dentists and practice managers, in private or NHS practice.

If you would like to know more about her humanitarian efforts, email info@seemasharma.co.uk.