Pulling together to reach your goals

Lil Niddrie discusses how improving your coaching skills can help to increase both business performance and team motivation at your practice

Life coaching and business coaching have increased steadily in popularity over the last decade, but for many smaller businesses, such as dental practices, professional business coaching is simply too costly. However, by understanding the basic principles you can not only help your business, but also help yourself and other members of your team achieve their goals.

Step to success

A useful place to start is by looking at how happy you are with the different areas of your life, such as work, finance, career, relationships and so on. This can help you assess whether practice decisions are based on a fair balance of the two.

Once you have identified your values, the next step is to set goals. If you are helping one of your team to set their goals, ask simple, open, purposeful questions such as: ‘What do you want to achieve?’ and ‘How do you plan to achieve this?’ It is also important to make sure that their values are well matched with your team to set their goals.

The next step is to identify your values. These can be values such as honesty and caring or can be work specific, for example, teamwork and attention to detail. Once you are aware of people's values, you have the key to their motivation. Recognising different values within your practice can also give you an insight into any potential conflict. For example, one person’s strongest value might be patient care while another’s is the financial stability of the practice. Knowing life, such as work, finance, career, relationships and so on.

Don't give up, Edison took 10,000 attempts before inventing the light bulb! Whether your practice is heading in the right direction, or is the financial stability of the practice. Knowing this can help you assess whether practice decisions are based on a fair balance of the two.

Once you have identified values, the next step is to set goals. If you are helping one of your team to set their goals, ask simple, open, purposeful questions such as: ‘What do you want to achieve?’ and ‘How do you plan to achieve this?’ It is also important to make sure that their values are well matched with their goals. For example, if someone has put “socialising with friends” as a value in their personal life, but they spend so much time working that they never see their friends, then they are going to struggle to achieve their goal.

Skills and limitations

The main obstacles to achieving goals are the limits of our skills and resources and the limitations of our minds. The issue of skills and resources can often be addressed by appropriate training or by asking for advice and support.

Some companies offer tailor-made training days, which are specific to your practice’s needs and can even incorporate a module focused on the Principles of Coaching. Some of these courses can also count towards verifiable Continuing Professional Development (CPD) when undertaken in accordance with GDC requirements. This type of event provides an ideal opportunity for staff in similar roles to meet and learn together, and will benefit both your employees and your practice.

Limitations of the mind can be a little bit trickier! The challenge is to break out of unhelpful habits and negative thinking and believe that change is possible. Instead of righting things off because they are too much effort or you think they will be too difficult to achieve, why not give things a try before you make your mind up. You might just surprise yourself and the sense of fulfilment when you reach your goals is worth the time and effort.

Never give up

All goals should be accompanied by a practical and realistic timeframe, and progress needs to be monitored. Set backs are inevitable, but it is important to see these as temporary. Take inspiration from inventor Thomas Edison who, when asked if he was discouraged after failing 10,000 times in his attempt to create the light bulb, replied: ‘Failed 10,000 times? I didn’t fail 10,000 times, I simply learned 10,000 ways not to make a light bulb.’

So why not give coaching a go? Learning how to identify your own and your team’s values and goals will not only improve communication and productivity at your practice, but will also give you a clear idea of where your practice is heading and the best ways of achieving your ambitions.

About the author

Lil Niddrie joined Douglas in 1985 and has worked in many areas of the company to support dental practices, and now her knowledge and experience is combined to deliver a wide range of training resources. Lil is a qualified practitioner of hypnotherapy, Emotional Freedom Technique and Neuro Linguistic Programming. She also has a special interest in advanced communication skills and personal development.

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