Finding the right coach for your practice

Chris Barrow discusses the benefits of the right business coach

There’s no doubt that dental business coaching has achieved a much higher profile in recent years. Most people are aware of the profession, but they may be less certain of exactly what it entails, how long it lasts and what the benefits are. Broadly, there are two types of business coaching: quantitative and qualitative, and the length of the contract very much depends on the relationship with the client.

An example of a quantitative relationship could be a dentist wishing to increase their profits by 50 per cent. Once they reach that point, the target has been achieved and the contract fulfilled. Other targets could include a conversion from NHS to private, or to get some key team members, or to increase the number of implants being placed. The dentist gives a number target and a date target, and when the job’s done, it’s done!

A qualitative relationship is where the client needs a shoulder to cry on, another 'happier people' above all should mean a happier dentist. Dentists have got to handle the most difficult and stressful situations of their career in the most difficult and stressful situations of their career. They understand how to conduct procedures of how to conduct procedures of how to conduct procedures of how to conduct procedures of how to conduct procedures.

When appointing a business coach, it’s imperative to check their qualifications, to ensure that the coach has got the second highest rate of suicide of any of the other professions, and the highest rate of alcoholism. The reason being that a lot of dentists are unhappy people; part of the business coach’s role is to try and get them as happy as they can be.

A business coach becomes part of the team, and importantly, a team member with the experience that the dentist does not yet possess. Whatever the business venture, whether it’s a dental practice, florist or pub, it’s going to be a good idea to have someone around who’s got a 10 to 15 years’ head start.

There are two types of business coaching. A qualitative relationship can go on for quite a long time, whereas quantitative relationships tend to last in the region of two or three years.

The benefits of business coaching can be the difference between success and failure, or a ‘tournanrount’ out of a difficult situation or problem. Ultimately, the ideal business coaching strata is ‘more profit, less time at work and happier people (team, patients, suppliers and family)’.

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As for fees, it’s a cliché but you really do get what you pay for. There are coaches who will work for £500 a day, £2,000 a day or £5,000 a day. You’ve got to ask yourself, what is it that you want and what are you paying the extra for? Let’s face it, if you want to be a dentist who is grossing £4,500 a day doing implants, do you really want a consultant who is grossing £500 a day? Surely, you want to hire a coach that charges £4,500 a day because they know what that feels like. They understand that conversation and know how to look someone in the face without blinking and say ‘that’ll be £4,500 please’.

In the mid-1990’s, there were probably three UK dental business coaches. Nowadays, there are probably three UK dental business coaches. Nowadays, there are probably three UK dental business coaches. Nowdays, there are probably three UK dental business coaches. Nowdays, there are probably three UK dental business coaches.

As with any business, a dental practice is at its most productive when principals surround themselves with the right people in the right roles and delegate accordingly. How can you move to the next level if you can’t see the bigger picture? Having a skilled team in place – including a business coach – is the difference between being down in the trenches and sitting in a hot air balloon with a clear view all around you.

About the author

Chris Barrow has been a consultant in the dental profession for seventeen years. He is the co-founder and Managing Director of the BKH Group of Companies and runs Chris Barrow (Dental) Ltd, a high-end dental and coaching expertise to take advanced dentistry to the next level. He is also a co-founder of the Barrows Kwong Hing Group. Connect with us here Facebook: www.facebook.com/khgroup; YouTube: www.youtube.com/BarrowKwongHing; LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/barrow-kwong-hing-group; Twitter: Chris Barrow (Dental) Ltd, Al Kwong Hing @KwongHing