Complete the Jigsaw pt 2

Michael McCallion of FT&A Medical Recruitment offers practices and principals some useful advice to find that right member of staff...

You’ve bought the practice of your dreams. You have invested a considerable amount of time, effort and money into kitting it out to your exact specification. You almost have the team of your dreams to go with, but not quite. There is that one key position that still needs to be filled. Whether it be associate, hygienist, practice manager or nurse, it can be difficult to find that perfect person to be that final piece. What advice can we give to make the process run more smoothly?

• Sit down and plan exactly what and who you want. I wouldn’t be telling tales too much if I told you that a large number of principals come to us who haven’t really thought the role through or who the ideal applicant would be. Be honest and open about this – it will save a lot of time and trouble in the long-run.

Pay peanuts, get monkeys
• Salary. If you pay peanuts, you will get monkeys. Have a realistic expectation of what the role is worth. You cannot expect staff to buy into your practice vision and go the extra mile if you do not reward them accordingly.

Specification
• Prepare a full job specification. Leading on from the last point, you need to consider:
  - Duties and responsibilities of the role
  - Pay and Conditions
  - Temporary, Permanent or Locum?
  - Start Date
  - Staff Benefits
  - Contract and Terms
  - Probationary period
• What form will the interview process and procedure take? The days of an informal chat in the saloon bar of the Dog & Duck have gone! Do not be afraid to go to multiple interviews. If you are still not sure then don’t feel that you have to make a decision. Take a step back and ask yourself why you are unsure?

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Are you an expert in recruitment? Think very carefully about managing the process yourself. It is no longer just a case of putting an ad in the BDJ, seeing the responses flood in, and employing the candidate you struck up a rapport with in a brief meeting. Employment law has changed a lot over the years and there is now so much more to consider. Also, what hourly rate do you need to make to ensure that the practice can run at a profit? If you aren’t doing dentistry, you aren’t earning money.

• An agency can take away the headache of the process. When choosing an agency make sure that:
  - Their fees are open and transparent
  - They are experienced with a high profile in dentistry
  - They are experts within the sector
  - Their approach to candidate selection is rigorous
  - They are members of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation
  - Having chosen your agency, ensure that you talk to them.

A dental practice needs staff to buy into your practice vision and go the extra mile if you do not reward them accordingly. Staff who are paid what they are worth are more likely to stay and will increase the value of your practice.

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Nursing and reception staff are as valuable to the overall business as dentists and hygienists. They are the ‘face of the practice’ – many of your patients will have more interaction with them than they do with you. Consider carefully.

• Flexibility. For instance, if it is proving a struggle to fill a full-time role, what about a job share or a locum?

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• Consider the costs of getting it wrong. As well as having to start the whole process again, there could be costs to your practice’s reputation and patients do not relish the idea of seeing someone different every time – just ask Boots Dentalcare.

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