

Taking Control Of The Team

Sheila Scott, an independent business consultant who has been working with dental practices for over 20 years, provides some tips on people management below:-



All practices have people issues from time to time, and an effective boss needs to be equipped to deal with these quickly, confidently and without disrupting good relationships.

Principals and managers need a basic understanding of the law regarding people management but, more importantly, they need to be able to deal with unacceptable behaviour positively and help their people to change willingly in order to achieve better results.

The law expects employers to be very good people managers. And if you are you'll always be safe from any disputes and run the most

amazingly successful practice. But if you need some help, here are a few hints on how to tackle an immediate problem – the team member whose performance needs to be improved.

1 Don't attack with a complaint about behaviour. Instead explain exactly what your team member does, very specifically, and what the effect is. Present the issue as a problem that needs solving – not proof that he or she is a bad person.

2 Do ask your team member for his or her ideas on how to solve the problem – even if you know what the answer is, everyone puts much more effort into following through his or her ideas as opposed to anyone else's.

3 Do be helpful at all times. 'What can we do to help you do this?'

4 Be curious. Find out why they do what they do – there might be other issues behind the behaviour that you need to help with. Or maybe no one ever made clear why something had to be done in a certain way.

5 Don't get sidetracked. Whatever the reasons given, you still need to achieve agreement to do things differ-

ently, or your practice won't work well. Keep asking questions and having discussions until you find an answer that will work for you both.

6 Don't get personal. The reason you're having the discussion is because of how behaviour affects work. That's all. Why someone has a particular personality trait is none of your business and shouldn't be commented on!

7 Do tackle issues quickly. Nip problems in the bud. Practice preventive people management.

8 Do keep abreast of the law regarding employment and people management.

Sheila regularly runs a highly practical course on Managing Difficult People (And Good Ones Too!) in Aberdeen, Glasgow and London with employment lawyer, Hayley Bloodworth.

To ensure you always feel in control of your own practice, and to find out more about the series of one day courses on Managing Difficult People (And Good Ones Too!) run by Sheila Scott with employment lawyer Hayley Bloodworth, see www.sheila-scott.co.uk or call 01343 862930. ■