

Practice Makes Perfect



What Makes a good Practice Administrator?

Every good business needs a strong leader, and your medical practice shouldn't be any difference. After all, it IS a business, and it shouldn't be treated any differently than any other for-profit entity. When it comes to the doctor, most of their time should be spent working IN the practice vs. working ON the practice.

If micro-managing is a part of your personality, then consider altering it even if just a tad in order to allow others in your organization to have the empowerment to make decisions you don't need to make. It's okay to have final approval, but don't negate your staff's suggestions just because it wasn't your idea.

In many practices, the office manager is not capable of truly administering a business. They make great supervisors, can manage the front desk staff or even the clinical staff, but may not possess the skill set to make higher level decisions that require higher levels of excellence.

So now the million dollar question: What makes a great practice administrator?

Let's review the top criteria when seeking the best candidate for the job. Are they truly the best candidate for the position? You may receive dozens of resumes, and sifting through them can get monotonous. Just like any resume, you are only reading what

the paper states without knowing the truth about the prospective candidate and their real qualifications.

Your next top candidate must **have the ability to not only forecast financial plans, but also have that superb ability to analyze the results, and make immediate adjustments during the year.** The key to this candidate's success rests in your hands as well, because many physicians do not allow the upper level management to really know the revenue and expenses associated with the practice. This places your administrator in immediate danger of improper forecast and analysis.

Does your candidate have true human resources experience? The inability to resolve issues from your staff will place your practice in danger. In a larger practice, you need a buffer to handle conflict resolution between staff members, and in a smaller practice, it can escalate rather quickly. The staff needs to trust the administrator and understand the role that s/he plays as the mediator.

Industry-related experience is always helpful but does not necessarily need to be mandatory. A well balanced candidate who is business savvy, financially astute and not an ego centered liability may be more effective than the candidate with industry-related experience at the onset.

You need to insist on excellent negotiation skills for an administrative leader in your practice. This is multi-fold, as the doctor should not be the primary negotiator. Allow your administrator to be the one who sets the bait, has the thicker skin, understands when it's time to hold 'em, and when it's time to fold 'em. Allow the administrator to bring the doctor into the mix after they have had the opportunity to understand the practice's needs for whatever they are negotiating, and bring the owner the final results to make the best informed decision. After all, it is their business.

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In conclusion, insist on honor and integrity, and check past references. Do not rely on verbal dialogue alone. Don't be afraid to seek outside assistance and guidance from practice management consulting firms who specialize in your industry. We have placed practice administrators in small and larger practices to fit the needs of the doctors and the business. Outside agencies will even interview the best candidates for you prior to actually placing them. Remember, this isn't something you need to take lightly, as a good administrator can make or break your business.



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