

# THE AESTHETIC GUIDE



## Building Your Dream Team

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Cindy J. Papp | Feb 08, 2021

Aesthetic practices thrive when patients become loyal customers who refer their friends and family. And while an appealing office with the best technology can help draw patients in, it will be your dream team of professional, competent and compassionate employees that will keep them coming back. So, how do you find the right people to build your dream team?

Building a dream team of employees involves a combination of strategies that will help your employees feel engaged and part of a team that works together. According to analytics company Gallup, research shows that high employee engagement leads to a happier work environment and higher productivity. In today's highly competitive aesthetic industry, this idea holds even more importance as employees are a reflection of your business and can sway clientele to return and refer others.

## Recruiting for Success



Mara Shorr  
Partner and  
Business  
Manager Shorr  
Solutions  
Orlando, FL

To begin the recruiting process, the fundamentals of hiring require attention. According to Mara Shorr, partner and business manager at Shorr Solutions in Orlando, Fla., a leading management consulting company that specializes in helping doctors build and strengthen their aesthetic practices, when hiring for her clients, experience in the position is an important starting point. After that, their follow up, response time and ability to follow instructions indicates they will be prompt employees that can follow instructions once hired. But red flags are also a concern, she told us, "Stay away from candidates who jump from one practice to another, since yours will probably be next on the list."



Led by Shino Bay Aguilera, DO, Shino Bay Cosmetic Dermatology (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.) enjoys an established reputation in the industry as preferred employers. As such, they consistently receive applications, which are kept on file as a convenient starting point when beginning the search for new employees. "Word- of-mouth through others in the industry like reps and training personnel results in yielding suitable candidates with relevant experience," Dr. Aguilera stated. "It is always good to use your local network first when you are seeking staff with experience in the field."

Shino Bay  
Aguilera, DO  
Dermatologist  
Shino Bay  
Cosmetic  
Dermatology Fort  
Lauderdale, FL



Emily Scalise  
Director of  
Business  
Development and  
Operations  
NicholsMD of  
Greenwich  
Greenwich, CT

Emily Scalise, director of business development and operations for NicholsMD of Greenwich (Greenwich, Conn.), oversees hiring, training and team building for the business. “Hiring is very personal, based on the business and culture,” she explained. “I am always looking for someone with creativity and who can understand all procedures. For example, they should understand that the way we answer the phones has an impact on the way we make appointments, and the checkout experience must be exceptional, so patients want to come back again, possibly interested in more treatments or referrals. To me, having this deep understanding along with an entrepreneurial spirit is key.”

## Skill Vs. Personality



One employee can impact the satisfaction, efficiency and overall quality of the work environment for others, so it is important to hire with a holistic view. Kaeli Lindholm, founder and president of KLC Consulting (Marlborough, Mass.), a business development company bringing fortune 500 leadership systems to high-growth aesthetic practices said her recruiting style considers certain internal characteristics when assessing candidates. “I always recommend starting with passion. Look for the things you can’t teach. If you hire someone who is the right fit culturally and is passionate about the vision of the company, they will align with the bigger goal and be willing to learn the skills it will take to be successful in their role, as well as bring solutions to the business overall,” she explained.



Since 2015, Suneel Chilukuri, MD, has been overseeing his team at Refresh Dermatology in Houston, Texas and has a similar approach. “I always go for attitude over skill because I cannot train attitude, but I can train people on technology,” he told us. “While we can give the skills to succeed, I think personality traits are the most important because each person is so different, and you cannot change internal characteristics.”

Kaeli Lindholm  
Founder and  
President KLC

Ms. Lindholm agreed. “Hire for the things you can’t teach, someone who wants to be an ‘intrapreneur’ in their role and is looking for upward mobility. I cannot emphasize enough how important this is. They will deliver 5x more revenue for your business than a tactical hire.”

Consulting Marlborough, MA	Nasir Mohammedi, MD, founder of Bloom Medical Aesthetics Clinic (Whittier, Calif.) begins with a phone interview to determine basics like personality and office skills. He also considers experience, “The sweet spot is two prior jobs in the field. The first job is where they become trained, the second gets them more experience.”
	Nevertheless, the final determination is led by personality considerations, “I ask myself if I want to spend 10 hours a day with this person, and will they get along with my staff. This can help determine if they are a good fit,” Dr. Mohammedi explained.
Suneel Chilukuri, MD Dermatologist Refresh Dermatology Houston, TX	Dr. Aguilera incorporates a very personal approach when hiring for his team as well. “Kindness, empathy, authenticity and a genuine desire to care for people are the traits we look for when bringing someone into our Shino Bay family.” He added that while experience and skills are important, hiring in an aesthetic practice requires a certain sophistication to deal with psychological and artistic aspects of cosmetic, anti-aging and rejuvenating treatments.
	<b>Time to Hire</b>
Nasir Mohammedi, MD Founder Bloom Medical Aesthetics Clinic Whittier, CA	Defining goals for the position you are hiring can help refine your decision. Each position will require specific training while some positions require a certain set of personality traits. Ms. Shorr said this is an important aspect that practices should consider when hiring to ensure a smooth transition. She elaborated on these ideas: “Hiring depends on which position the practice is hiring for. For example, we hire from the hospitality industry for reception positions, since the target market is the same. However, we urge practices to hire providers with at least one year of experience under their belt, so they know how to provide beautiful results and what to do when there are complications.”

Identifying the right person to hire can be tricky. In Ms. Lindholm’s experience, starting with your inner circle of contacts can bring credible, warm leads, but asking the right questions can help reveal character. A good interview can reveal the candidate’s resourcefulness and can reveal if their

motivation is in alignment with your company mission, which will help you pare down a group of candidates.

To narrow things down even more, Ms. Lindholm incorporates a team strategy. “Implement the team test. Make sure the candidate connects with your team. Perhaps invite them into a group interview so you are able to get feedback from the team,” she suggested.

Layoffs due to COVID-19 have changed the landscape of hiring and according to Ms. Shorr, now is a good time to find strong talent for your practice. Let current staff know that you are planning to grow the team, because the right hire will benefit everyone.

## Training Your Dream Team

Now that you have hired your new recruits, it is time to help them become fully participating and productive team members. Bringing new employees up to speed will take various forms, depending upon the position and the type of training required. One thing that both practice owners and business development companies have in common is that using both internal and external training is a winning combination.

“Internal and external training are equally important,” Dr. Aguilera shared. “Internal training establishes the standards and philosophy of our own family business culture, and external training opens our employees and external training opens our employees minds to other perspectives and keeps them informed of what is happening in the industry at large.”

Ms. Shorr agreed, saying that while internal training can help new employees understand the culture and routines of the practice, external training opens the door for employees to bring new ideas and inspiration into the practice. “We recommend combining both internal and external training for maximum success,” she added.

Dr. Chilukuri has a method for getting the best out of both types of training. “We always start by training internally. I want to make sure the person understands our culture and each step of our office procedures,” he reported. “But then I will get external companies, like laser or microneedling companies, to send in their clinical trainer with their specific technologies or products, and I bring the protocol on new technologies.”

## Employee Engagement with a Training Tradition

Often considered a time-honored tradition of teaching in the medical circle, Grand Rounds are finding their way into aesthetic practices as an effective way to teach not only providers, but to help all employees understand what takes place behind the scenes. Ms. Scalise begins with a training checklist and assigns her new employees to an office mentor with similar responsibilities and experience in the role. But the core of her training lies in the Grand Rounds method.

“I feel that everybody on the team benefits from seeing a live treatment so they know how to speak to it, and they see the visual so they can better communicate about it,” Ms. Scalise explained. She added that since everyone has to learn their professional and public speaking skills, she requires each member of the team to present in the Grand Round. She clarified, “This is our opportunity to teach everyone on our staff what is unique about our treatment and what it looks like, which is especially important for our front office because they are the ones that typically answer questions about treatments over the phone.”

Training is an opportunity to help your new team members understand the business and culture of your practice. In Ms. Scalise’ experience, training can be used as a team building tool, which improves overall employee engagement. “We do weekly education spotlights where we may bring in a representative from a company and we make it fun,” Ms. Scalise shared. “We might do a breakfast or a lunch and learn, and here I rely on the pharmaceutical reps to kick start the training.”

## Maintaining Team Morale

According to Ms. Shorr, keeping your staff happy is never easy, especially in the world’s current environment, but she did have some tips to offer. “We like to recommend a few different incentives, such as fair pay and staff bonuses based on production, especially for skincare sales,” she said. “Of course, a positive attitude from leadership down is the first and most important item on this list! You’d be surprised how many times attitude problems, tardiness and frustration within the team as a whole stems from the top.”

Dr. Mohammedi believes offering incentives such as profit sharing is another way to keep up morale. “If the employees don’t see the benefit of their labors, they won’t aggressively work to grow the business,” he said. And, while maintaining harmony in the workplace is easier if you choose

people you get along with personally and professionally, sometimes change is good. As he told us, “Low turnover isn’t always a good thing as people evolve in personality, ability and motivation. Sometimes to keep a good culture you cannot be afraid to let go of the bad apple to keep the bunch from spoiling.”

Dr. Aguilera applies his personal touch and enjoys creating an environment where everyone counts. “We have created an environment where everyone, regardless of their position, is considered an equal in importance to the whole team. We recognize that mental health is critical for productivity and so we encourage honest, judgement-free discussion to facilitate a happy and secure environment. We also like to have fun and laughter is our favorite sound at work!”

Ms. Lindholm has some final words of advice. “Remember, employment with a passionate, self-motivated staff member is about a partnership. How will you beneficially help each other achieve goals? It is not one sided. When employees feel appreciated, respected and challenged they don’t leave.”

Building your dream team and maintaining engagement are key to your practice success. And, it can be the key to happiness and peace of mind for all team members, including your patients and yourself.

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