

## Leadership, Success, and YOU

The other day, my dear friend Robin talked to me about her new position as president of a large, nonprofit organization. She felt excited and challenged by this opportunity. As we discussed her leadership strengths, I realized that the qualities Robin possesses to lead this organization are the same characteristics you need to run your dental offices.

In talking with Robin, I drew upon the work I've done with The Pankey Institute, teaching leadership skills to dentists. The four principles of this "Leadership and Success" workshop can be useful to you as well.

These principles to follow so that others follow you can be thought of with the acronym "CAVE." As you lead in your "CAVE," remember to ...

- **Communicate** wisely.
- **Attract** a team and patient base that share your values.
- **enVision** the type of practice you want.
- **Empower** those around you.

### Communicate wisely

In the book *Get Everyone in Your Boat Rowing in the Same Direction*, Bob Boylan wrote about two stonecutters who were chipping square blocks out of granite. Boylan said, "A visitor to the quarry asked what they were doing. The first stonecutter, looking sour, grumbled, 'I'm cutting this damned stone into a block.' The second, who looked pleased with his work, replied proudly, 'I'm on this team that's building a cathedral.'"

On a macro level, as a leader you have to be able to "tell your story." Your team needs to know what your cathedral looks like, what it wants to accomplish, and how you are going to get there.

The best dental example is L.D. Pankey and his story (which I was fortunate enough to be able to hear firsthand many years ago) about the patient who became his first "missionary." Pankey's patients and his team understood his story.

On a micro level, what you communicate is of utmost importance. Some of your behaviors are positive. Some of your behaviors are negative. The trick is to become *aware* of how you contribute to a positive or negative communication climate.

In *Learning To Lead*, Warren Bennis and Joan Goldsmith write, "Leadership calls for clear communication about goals, performance, expectations, and feedback."

### Attract a team and patient base that share your values

For Robin to be an effective president, she must assemble an effective board and put the right people in the right positions. The same principle applies to you as the leader of your cathedral.

Boylan suggests these wise ideas about how to match your values with your prospective employee's values. He comments: "When entering into a relationship that you hope is long-term, it's appropriate to discuss both the candidate's and your organizational values. Show these values on paper. See where you overlap. Some 'value' examples include: personal integrity, personal growth, positive attitude, self-determination, financial security, and fun."

At the very least, follow the adage of Jack Foster, who writes in his book titled, *Ideaship — How To Get Ideas Flowing in Your Workplace*: "If you don't think you

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could drive across the country with them in a Volkswagen Beetle, don't hire them."

### **Envision the type of practice you want**

"The leader's job is to create a vision," according to James Kouzes and Barry Posner in *The Leadership Challenge*.

One way to formulate your vision is to ask yourself: What exciting and realistic picture do you see for your office in the next three years? As you write this letter to yourself, imagine that it's January 2009. Describe your office with these factors in mind: your gross income, net income, number of employees, amount of office space, location of your office(s), what your success is based on, what you will be known for, what position you will occupy in dentistry, and why people will want to work for you.

Share this message with your team. This exercise can help you formulate your story and manage your cathedral.

### **Empower those around you**

If you want your team to show up, pay them their salary. If you want your team to help build their cathedral, empower them. According to a survey in "Total Quality" newsletter, good pay is halfway down the list in what motivates your team. If you gain nothing else from this article, heed the following ways to empower and motivate your team:

- Provide interesting work.
- Appreciate what they do. Some of the greatest recognition and reward strategies cost nothing but your time and interest.
- Include your team so that they feel like they're "in" on things. People support what they help create.

### **Final thoughts on being an effective leader\***

- Trust and respect your team.
- Define what the benefits are to your team, the guys you want to follow you.
- Care about the people you work with.
- Have fun.
- Weed out the nonbelievers. They are not wrong or dumb if they don't agree with you. They are just going in a different direction.
- Praise their efforts.
- Communicate and listen.
- Attract the best people for the right positions. ■

### **Source**

\* Bob Boylan. Get Everyone in Your Boat Row-

ing in the Same Direction. Adams Media Corp, 1995.

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