



## Change management and the human factor

**G**ood resources are rare, which is why it is important to do everything you can to keep your best employees and stay as attractive as possible in the job market. As manager of a dental office, it is therefore up to you to skilfully combine development with stability.

Since we have been facing this dilemma with regard to administrative data processing for quite some time, many specialists have examined the issue of change management. It is a key aspect of the success of any major improvement project, whether a new technology is involved or not.

As a rule, organizational change can be described like any other work setting change familiar to employees. When a change occurs, it takes your employees out of their "comfort zone." For that reason, in order to adequately manage change, you must lower the risks of losing a good resource who is more sensitive to it.

In other words, change management basically requires you to manage the psychological condition of the person concerned. To do so, dentist managers must work like surgeons unblocking an artery in order to allow change to incorporate itself positively and progressively within the office. But unlike an operation that is performed with the patient under general anaesthesia, the employee is aware and may put up some resistance to the operation, hence the expression "resistance to change."

This resistance usually comes from a fear of the unknown, which can intensify when employees see themselves as less significant because they feel deprived of their role and purpose in the office.

Since no one likes to feel useless and incompetent, an employee's reaction can range from simple questioning to volatile behaviour. Whatever the case may be, bear in mind that it is completely normal for employees to react to change, regardless of its intensity.

A wise dentist will quickly find familiar territory, a reference point for employees who are struggling with uncertainty. A good example is when a new technology is introduced to improve patient services and it changes the working environment of a person you like. Here are a few helpful tips on managing this touchy situation:

1. Emphasize to the employee that the main objective is to satisfy patient needs and that the change will improve the duration and quality of the services.
2. Stress the fact that acquiring technical knowledge is always beneficial because it increases the employee's expertise and employability.

Encouraging an employee to make an effort and improve him or herself is effective here. Encouragement drives home the feeling of recognition and usefulness of the employee within the office. This positive message helps alleviate uncertainty felt by the employee about his or her role and skills and ultimately curbs his or her resistance to new tools or ideas.

3. Very important point. It is well known that motivation alone does not guarantee that a person will adopt a new tool or process. In other words, you have to make sure that employees act on their thoughts and intentions. They must feel compelled by the project.

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### Thank you!

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when the combined efforts of a team result in success? I am one of those people who believe that collaboration and mutual assistance should be appreciated by those who benefit from it. Also, I would like to remind you here that a simple ‘thank you’ is as much a gift from the person who says it as for the person who receives it. It improves any relationship. ■

### The risks of assignment of benefits

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cancel the transaction and start over, so that the cheque is sent to him or her. Some companies do not accept cancellations, which naturally complicates the situation because you then also have to explain to the patient why this time he or she has to pay the full amount and receive the cheque in the mail.

The final decision on how to manage your office is yours. However, as you can see, accepting payment assignment makes life easier for the patient, but can really complicate yours. ■

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To create this state of mind, you must absolutely develop a work setting that allows employees to gradually become acquainted with the tool and test it, so to speak. To do so, employees should be given a flexible schedule and proper professional supervision (specialized training).

Once this objective has been achieved, you will notice that not only does this restore the employees’ pride, but also their feeling of being competent, useful and belonging in the office. They will then become your invaluable ally in training and converting the other members of the team.

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