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## Staff Report

# Orthodontics: A Career of Constant Learning

In my 42 years in the dental industry (four in general dentistry, and 38 in orthodontics), I have witnessed numerous changes in mechanics, technology, practice systems, business management, and hiring and training of team members.

With the fast pace and ongoing changes in our field, it is imperative that practices make a commitment to continuing education, updates, and training in order to avoid complacency, burnout, or a reputation of being outdated.

Take advantage of affordable venues for these training opportunities:

- ❑ Schedule in-office training (University 101) led by the doctor, manager, or team players on a regular basis. These bi-monthly or monthly programs can be scheduled during non-peak clinical hours to cover pertinent topics on clinical procedures, computer shortcuts, scheduling guidelines, patient instructions, taking records, customer service, and internal marketing (requesting Yelp or Google reviews and asking for referrals). Meet as a team and make a list of 12 or more key topics to focus on over the next year.
- ❑ Attend local dental and business meetings that are conveniently scheduled in your hometown; this is also a great way to network with other local professionals. Expand meeting topics to include enhanced communications, learning to deal with negative people, insurance shortcuts and tips, etc.
- ❑ Attend annual software meetings, not only for software updates and shortcuts, but also to be exposed to a variety of industry speakers and consultants.
- ❑ Search for seminars and courses nearby that are facilitated by vendors, dental/orthodontic companies, and consultants. Find a minimum of one program per year for your administrative team, and one for your clinical team, to keep them motivated.

- ❑ Check in with your local Doctor Study Clubs to see if there is an interest in creating a study club for your team members.
- ❑ Take advantage of your AAO, PCSO, and component memberships by participating in their offered programs; check their websites for online, audio, or webinar training programs.
- ❑ Find a nearby consultant to periodically come to your office for a review and to provide recommendations for improvements and enhancements; there is always room for improvement.
- ❑ Set a goal to attend a national meeting every other year, or whenever it is held closest to your home practice; keep the team motivated to work towards this goal of shared learning and camaraderie.
- ❑ Attend and support your regional meetings, where you can network with vendors, learn about new materials and products, and hear top speakers and consultants in the industry as they share their experience and pearls with you.

Invest in your team by providing the following:

- ❑ A positive work environment
- ❑ Ongoing education opportunities for growth and improved skills
- ❑ Fun and enhanced communications with co-workers; understand the differences between individuals, respect those differences, and find common ground in serving patients and parents
- ❑ Yearly reviews to communicate areas of appreciation and areas where improvement is needed
- ❑ Work retreats to identify needs of the practice, future goals, and aligned ideas

**Clip, copy, or print the next page so you and your team can get the most out of attending the PCSO Annual Session in October.**



## Getting the Most Out of the PCSO Annual Session October 13–15, 2017, Reno, NV

1. Plan ahead and review the meeting program; highlight key lectures and decide which team member(s) would benefit the most from attending.
2. Create an outline template for team members to use during lectures, including specific questions:
  - What were the top five ideas or suggestions they received from the lecture?
  - How do they see these being implemented into the practice?
  - What can they do to support these new ideas?
3. Have team members sign up for the staff roundtable lunch program. This is an excellent way to network on specific topics of interest, and learn tried-and-true ideas from others in similar roles and environments.
4. Schedule a daily recap meeting with the entire team to share highlights of the day.
5. If hotel rooms are needed, partner different team members to room together vs. rooming buddies together. Mix clinical with administrative team members, long-term team members with new team members, etc. We each carry a lot of great knowledge and experience that can be shared.
6. Prior to attending, discuss written rules and expectations—the doctor’s expectations for team members, as well as what team members should expect of each other—including attendance requirements, shared meals, provisions for meals, downtime, professional behavior, team member inclusion, and mutual respect.
7. Lastly, and most importantly, schedule a half or full day within one to two weeks after the meeting to share lecture outlines, ideas and recommendations presented, and updates on vendor products and services. Create an action plan of the combined top 10 things you want to implement, and the specific steps to make them happen.

*“Those people who develop the ability to continuously acquire new and better forms of knowledge that they can apply to their work and to their lives will be the movers and shakers in our society for the indefinite future.”*

—Brian Tracy



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