

Be An Awesome Office Manager Not a Super Hero!

By Judy Kay Mausolf (Observer)



Dental office managers are often left up to their own devices to figure things out. They are in essence the MacGyver of the dental practice! For those of you too young to know who I am talking about...MacGyver was a top agent devoted to righting the wrongs of the world. MacGyver never carried a gun and was always able to stop the enemy with his vast scientific knowledge - sometimes with little more than a paper clip and the duct tape in his pocket. His character reminds me of many of the dental office managers I have met. They are devoted to righting the wrongs in the practice with very little resources other than their innate knowledge and a potential paper clip or two! They are the super hero expected to swoop in and save the team and practice from the dangers and stresses of the day-to-day challenges!

New challenges are constantly developing. Which means they have to figure things out on the fly and make up the rules as they go along. I have yet to find a manual for office managers that addresses their daily challenges. They try something once and if it succeeds and there isn't too much fallout they do it again. **They become the end all do all person!** Over time everyone on the team including themselves starts to expect that it is their responsibility to do x, y and z! Very soon they are responsible for the entire alphabet!

It can actually weaken the team and the practice when the office manager takes the role of super hero or MacGyver! Team members and doctors become dependent on the manager to fix things or do things so they stop trying. This results in the office manager carrying the success of the team and

practice on their shoulders. Over time the super hero office manager loses their passion, positivity and perseverance and becomes fatigued, stressed and burned out!

It's time to stop being the super hero and start being an awesome office manager! Here are some examples of how to be an awesome office manager instead of a super hero!

Making sure everyone is happy!

As super hero believes they are responsible for making sure everyone is happy.

An awesome office manager knows their role is to lead, inspire and empower their team to succeed. Not to make everyone happy! They understand that no one can make someone else happy. Happiness is always a personal choice from within!

Make sure everything always works perfectly even if it means they do it themselves!

A super hero believes they are responsible for making sure everything always works or is done perfectly. They will take over any task that is not being done to their level of perfection.

An awesome office manager knows there is a learning curve when a team member is learning a new role or task. They understand that mistakes sometimes happen. It is their responsibility to train the team member on how to do the task as well as how to resolve the mistake. It is also their responsibility to delegate clearly and effectively and include an accountability process with follow up. The accountability process follow up is a check in update at a specific designated time from the team member to the office manager confirming the how and when the work/task has been completed.

Sacrifice balance for work!

A super hero will **always** sacrifice their personal life for the life of the practice.

An awesome office manager is invested and passionate about the practice and the team. However, they keep balance in their work and personal life. There is a difference helping the practice succeed versus becoming the martyr or slave to the practice.

Love the practice more than the doctor!

A super hero loves the practice more than the doctor does. What I mean by this is that the office manager tries to force the doctor(s) to align with their vision of what they believe the practice can achieve. I have met many office managers who are extremely frustrated and angry with their doctor(s) because the doctor(s) refuses to implement their suggestions even when it would benefit the patients and the practice greatly.

An awesome office manager understands that there will be times the doctor is happy with how things are currently being done and is unwilling to make the change even when it may benefit the patients and the practice. It is important for them to support the doctor(s) wishes in words, actions and attitude. If however, they are in constant disagreement with the doctor's philosophy and vision it is time to find a different office where their philosophy and vision do align. It will become toxic for the entire team if the office manager stays and constantly battles the doctor over different beliefs

I was working with a practice where the office manager believed she was responsible for making sure everything always worked perfectly. If a team member couldn't perform the task at her level and speed she would just take it on herself. She was so stressed, uptight and over committed she could hardly breathe let alone have time to go to the bathroom. (If this sounds familiar you may want to take a moment to reflect.) Needless to say her stress level affected the entire team's performance. I suggested a leadership meeting between the manager and her doctors. What I refer to as a *We Team Meeting*, to discuss and eliminate any false expectations. Together they discussed and clarified expectations that were realistic for her role as office manager. They created a written job description defining her primary areas of responsibility. The job description specified tasks to be *completed or delegated* based on her work load along with timelines. The leadership team now meets on a weekly basis for their *We Team Meeting* to discuss any questions, suggestions or concerns regarding the patients, team and practice.

I am happy to say that the office manager is now an awesome office manager instead of a super hero. The stress level has been greatly reduced and entire team has been empowered to accomplish tasks enthusiastically, efficiently and effectively! The entire team is much happier, more relaxed and more productive!

TA-DAH!

Bio:

Judy Kay Mausolf is a dental practice management coach, speaker and author with expertise in helping others get happier and more successful! She coaches dentists and their teams how to become better leaders, work together better and deliver service with more passion and fun which ultimately result in growing their practice. She is author of two books; "Ta-Dah! And "Rise & Shine!" a contributing author for many dental magazines. She also publishes a monthly newsletter entitled "Show Your Shine". If you would like to learn more about how Judy Kay can help you, please visit her website at www.PracticeSolutionsInc.net .