



## Office Leaders Dictate Office Attitude

*By David Garrett, MHA*

Attention physicians and practice leaders - have you ever wondered to yourself, "What happened today that made the office run so well?" or "Today was such a light day, why did everything seem to go wrong?"

Often times, you need look no further than the mirror!

Every day, staff takes their cue from practice leaders. When leadership is consistently absent, emotionally unavailable, or in a poor frame of mind, the office environment suffers. The culture is negative, which manifests in poor staff morale and most importantly, lousy patient service. Conversely, an engaged, positive, visionary leader will usually produce a hopeful, consistent environment. Such an environment creates a feeling of wellbeing among your staff, resulting in positive experiences for your patients.

This concept seems simple, but is most challenging to put into action on a regular basis. It takes a concerted effort to remember that it is often your behavior that keeps your staff happy, motivated and on task! Keep that in mind as you implement these useful tips— and watch your office culture transform to one in which your staff is truly happy and your office is the employer of choice:

- **Encourage Constant, Constructive and Meaningful Communication:** Effective weekly meetings keep everyone engaged and focused. In addition; regular, personal, one-on-one meetings with office staff will indicate your interest in your staff as individuals, rather than just workers. It's also important to create an environment that allows your staff the freedom to make suggestions or give feedback about how they fit into the operation of the practice. For more on effective meetings, see <http://www.transformed.com/workingPapers/EffectiveMeetings.pdf>
- **Provide Opportunities for Staff to Work at their Highest Capability:** More than likely, your staff have previous work experience, and may have worked at a higher level than their current job requires. Work with the employee early and often, to evaluate how they see their performance in their job. If indicated, let them take on more meaningful additional projects. The quickest way to lose a

good worker is by suppressing their talents! Instead, let your staff show off their talent and provide opportunities for them to shine. ...

- **Work on Projects Together – “Get in the Trenches”:** Staff really value leaders who will pitch in when needed, go the extra mile and get their hands dirty to get the job done! If leadership gives the impression that they are “better” than other office staff because of title, education, social-economic attainment, etc., staff may feel resentful. Choose projects that require individuals from differing areas and levels of management to work together as a team. If they see you working hard for and with them, they will be willing to work a little harder for you when asked!
- **Share Patient Feedback:** If you win awards or get compliments from patients, other physicians or outside organizations accept it for the office TEAM and share it with your staff! More than likely, that compliment was not for you alone, but recognition of the quality team you are leading.
- **Share Your Vision – Often:** Let your staff know that you have a grand vision for the office! Encourage them to discover exactly how they see themselves fitting into that vision. By doing so, staff feel that they are more than a set of job duties, that they are contributing to a bigger concept, one that is focused around excellent patient centeredness and total quality.
- **Positive Affirmations: Saying “Thank You” or “Good Work” and Meaning It...** I think this one speaks for itself!

*A happy staff can make the good days great and the most horrible of days bearable!*

#### **Additional resources:**

Find out more about TransforMED's National Demonstration Project (NDP)  
<http://www.transformed.com/ndp.cfm>

Learn about the TransforMED Medical Home model  
<http://www.transformed.com/transformed.cfm>

#### **Read relevant TransforMED workingpapers:**

8 Tips for Successful Change Management  
<http://www.transformed.com/workingPapers/8Tips-changeManagement.pdf>

"Effective Meetings"  
<http://www.transformed.com/workingPapers/EffectiveMeetings.pdf>

Huddles: Increased Efficiency in Mere Minutes a Day  
<http://www.transformed.com/workingPapers/Huddles.pdf>