



# Implant Game Changers

***A Whitepaper Series By Roger P. Levin, DDS***

Implant Game Changers is a monthly whitepaper on an important implant practice management topic. It provides you with a quick and easy way to understand a specific business challenge and how to translate the solution into higher production and profit, greater efficiency, more implant patients, lower stress and greater personal satisfaction.

# How Important Is Your Team? – Part 2

In Part 1 of “How Important is Your team?” we examined the reasons why so many team members today are changing positions and why it is difficult to hire highly qualified team members during a staffing challenge. In Part 2, we’re going to look at strategies to increase the longevity of the team, which is critical regarding practice performance and production.

As a quick review, I pointed out in Part 1 that Levin Group has a 30-year ongoing study of the top 10% producing practices. We found 17 principles they typically had in common, and one was higher team longevity with an average tenure of approximately 11 years. Does this mean that team longevity is the only factor in high-level production for a dental practice? No. However, we do believe that team longevity creates an opportunity for the practice to reach a high level of performance leading to a higher level of production. Further, we did not see many practices in the top 10% that had high levels of turnover, although some turnover certainly did occur.

## Strategies to Increase Team Longevity

**Offer competitive compensation.** The first and most obvious strategy for helping to increase team longevity is to offer competitive compensation. There are many reasons why so many Americans have quit their jobs and are either leaving the workforce or seeking other employment. Money is not the sole factor, but it is a factor for many people who now recognize that compensation is generally increasing, and many practices will offer a higher salary level for new team members. We are even

seeing advertisements for signing bonuses, which was essentially unheard of in dentistry prior to the pandemic. This is a change based on desperation due to the staffing challenge.

The first step in offering fair compensation is to understand it. Dental Economics magazine publishes an annual salary report that will give you some indication of what dental salaries are for team members in your area or region. You can also talk to other dentists with whom you have relationships, study club members, or a local CPA that works with many dental practices in your area.

Practices that fall well below the average compensation for an area will most likely experience higher levels of turnover. Information about salary and compensation ranges is simply too public and available today for team members not to have easy access to this information. Even team members who aren’t looking or seeking new positions are often curious about what others are being paid as it often indicates to them a measure of how much they are valued.

### **Implement simple, easy-to-understand bonuses.**

Unfortunately, many bonuses are too complicated, rely on too many different measurements, and are so hard to understand that they have very little motivational psychology for the team. Another point is that team members don’t consider bonuses part of their compensation any more than retirement contributions. What a team member can’t have today is often not considered part of their compensation package.

We always recommend keeping everything as simple as possible. A simple bonus system based on production, or another single metric can go a long way toward creating outstanding motivation for the team if it is effectively managed. This includes being able to know the bonus progress every day. It should be announced in every morning meeting. Personally, I like bonuses that are equal for the entire team and promote teamwork. When team members are part of a growing practice and receive bonuses, it's easier to explain how well they are doing and how much they are making.

**Demonstrate caring and compassion.** Many specialists don't think about the caring and compassion they display to their teams as much as they do for their patients. This was fine for many years when team members worked for a paycheck, did their jobs, and seemed to stay with practices. Those days are now behind us. In a recent Gallup survey, 46% of individuals who quit their jobs stated that the main reason was that nobody took the time to communicate with them about their job satisfaction. To avoid this, we suggest that practice leaders check in regularly with team members, not just at an annual performance review. During these periodic check-ins, we recommend asking a series of key questions including the following:

- **How do you feel about your job in our practice?**
- **What don't you have that would allow you to do your best work?**
- **How would you suggest we improve our practice?**
- **Is there any specific area or skill set where you would like additional knowledge or training?**

Consider the team's answers carefully and be prepared to act on some of the feedback that you receive. This is a hallmark of an excellent dental practice, and it demonstrates that you respect the opinion and career of each team member.

**Hold regular meetings.** Some specialty practices get so busy that they start canceling their meetings. The two essential practice meetings are the 10-minute morning meeting, which we refer to as the daily business meeting, and the monthly staff meeting, which we refer to as the monthly business review. These meetings should have an agenda, be highly focused, start on time, and include team members' participation. If you have team members who don't participate, which often happens, simply start by asking them questions. Asking questions will encourage them to become more engaged and not just sit at the meeting waiting for it to be over. Ask open ended questions like, "So, Julie what do think we should do?"

**Create a fun and enjoyable culture.** At Levin Group we talk about practices having an easy, effortless, and enjoyable culture. Does that mean that you don't work hard? No, but it means that you find it satisfying and fulfilling enough that the work isn't frustrating or stressful. One way to accomplish this is to offer surprises. We suggest a cycle of a monthly surprise and a quarterly off-site activity that isn't focused on continuing education. Surprises can include bringing in lunches for the team, giving out gift cards, and placing a note under one chair at the staff meeting for someone to win \$100. Quarterly activities can be anything from dinners, local community events, or an evening at an escape room. Some of these activities have been held back due to the pandemic. However,

as things improve you can re-institute this systematic approach to building an enjoyable culture.

Do some online research for ideas on building a happy team. Search for concepts like “How to create happy employees.” When you do, you’ll find many creative ideas ranging from a permanent candy basket in the staff room to renting a house for five days at the beach for you and your staff.

## Summary

There are numerous ways to increase the longevity of a dental team. When these strategies are combined, they become a powerful outreach to the team that will encourage them to stay with the practice, enjoy their jobs, and support specialty practice growth. Never underestimate the power of a motivated team to increase practice production and offset the almost inevitable increases in labor costs that are happening in practices today.

### **ROGER P. LEVIN, DDS**

Roger P. Levin, DDS is the CEO and Founder of Levin Group, a leading practice management consulting firm that has worked with over 30,000 practices to increase production. A recognized expert on dental practice management and marketing, he has written 67 books and over 4,000 articles and regularly presents seminars in the U.S. and around the world.

To contact Dr. Levin or to join the 40,000 dental professionals who receive his *Practice Production Tip of the Day*, visit [www.levingroup.com](http://www.levingroup.com) or email [rlevin@levingroup.com](mailto:rlevin@levingroup.com).