

Creating a Culture of Teamwork and Accountability in Your Practice



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By Michelle Sullentrup

Creating a thriving team of dermatology professionals requires a proactive practice manager willing to develop a strong culture that is well defined and communicated to the team regularly. Defining a positive, supportive and accountable culture can make all the difference in keeping top talent engaged and happy, while driving the patient experience above expectations.

Encouraging everyone on your team to understand company goals and take action to reach those goals is what creates a team-oriented organization backed by employees that are fully invested in your practice's success.

Why Teamwork and Accountability Matter

Infusing teamwork and accountability into every aspect of office culture encourages a practice to grow much more quickly and robustly. An environment that supports collaboration and teamwork also supports career satisfaction. If the dermatology professionals employed by your practice are thriving in their roles, then you, as the practice manager, will spend less time and money on interviewing, hiring and training new professionals.

Additionally, dermatology practitioners that feel supported in the workplace find it easier to take responsibility for mistakes. Having a team of professionals more concerned with

finding solutions to problems rather than pointing fingers or passing blame is a sure sign that you've created a positive and efficient culture with individuals committed to achieving success as a group.

Encouraging Teamwork and Accountability in Your Practice

Teamwork and accountability sound great in theory, but how do you develop these traits during the fast pace of taking care of patients? First, it is essential to know that changing your group's culture will take time. Don't expect significant improvements to happen overnight. However, following these suggestions will help your practice naturally adopt a culture of engaged and committed individuals.

- **Start with Leadership.** Creating accountability and a team-oriented group of dermatology professionals must start at the top with your practice's leaders. Work closely with the physician leaders within your practice to assist in defining culture priorities and then setting an example to all other non-physician members of the team.
- **Setting Clear, Measurable Goals.** When your team works together to reach a collective goal, everyone can take pride in that accomplishment — strengthening your team's bond and group loyalty. However, setting lofty, abstract goals makes it difficult for your team to stay motivated and committed to working together.

Set clear, measurable goals that are easy to track. Without a clear direction, it will

be easy for your team to lose interest in how their work as individuals contributes to the team's success.

Track and Review Performance Goals Often

Performance goals are an integral tool you should be using to hold your team accountable. However, performance goals aren't helpful if you set them and then file them away until it's time for a yearly review. Instead, create performance goals with the team and then review them together on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Doing so helps to ensure each member of your team has a clear idea of what you expect. For example, brainstorm on specific goals as a team that enhance every patient's experience from the time he/she walks in the door to the time he/she leaves. You will find by engaging the team in the goal planning from the beginning that their buy-in is much greater.

Culture Drives Success

Nothing guarantees the success of your practice like having a robust team culture grounded in trust and transparency. When you take time as a practice manager to create a culture that supports positive interactions and personal responsibility, you are setting your practice up to be a place where patients feel genuinely cared for and highly skilled professionals love to work. An amazing culture makes attracting and retaining top talent in dermatology much easier! ■

