n all of the years we’ve been working with our clients, we
have yet to find one office that, at one point or another,
doesn’t run into the issue of a loss in employee morale.
Whether there’s something going on in their personal
lives leaving them a bit less motivated, or, in many cases,
something going on in the office, employee morale affects
your practice in more ways than you may think.
While it’s necessary to get to the root of the problem,
we’re offering tips to boost your staff’s drive.

HAVE A CLEAR VISION FOR YOUR PRACTICE. Each
and every business, including your medical practice, should
have a mission statement. This is what will guide you
through your daily operations, outlining your overall goals.
(Of course, this doesn’t take the place of a well-detailed
business plan.) Once you have a clear mission statement,
keep it posted where everyone from your staff to your

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patients can see it on a daily basis. Inspire your staff to help you reach that mission statement each and every day.
Without knowing where you’re going, it’s hard to ask your team to help you get there.

MAKE YOUR TEAM FEELS APPRECIATED. We have a
favorite saying, “When you pay peanuts, you get monkeys.”
It’s true; offices are often willing to pay a new employee
more, losing 20 percent of the new hire’s annual salary on
training in the process. Keeping staff fairly paid, engaged,
and motivated is key.
Set up sales goals for your staff, and offer a bonus when those goals are reached. The bonus may be monetary or
something else, like an office tablet, an extra day of paid
vacation, a gift certificate to a new restaurant in the area,
covering their cell phone bill for one month, or reserving a
prime parking spot in an otherwise hard-to-park neighbor-
hood. Think about what your employees are looking for
or may find valuable. In addition, certain vendors offer free
product samples, something that your employees would welcome as a reward for good behavior.

We always recommend providing your staff with free in-office procedures, up to a certain price point. (Depending on your specialty, you may want to offer employees certain procedures at your cost.) Show your staff exactly how great your work really is, and let them brag to all of your customers about you while they feel appreciated. This not only serves double duty as a marketing opportunity and a token of your appreciation. It is also the best form of credentialing.

If you are looking for cost-free ways to show your staff you value them, give verbal praise at your next staff meeting. (We recommend having meetings anywhere between one per week to one per month, making sure employees feel that these meetings are a safe place for them to voice their honest constructive criticism, as well as ideas for improvements.) Implement an Employee of the Month program, complete with a sign-in at your reception area, and praise in your e-newsletter. Develop a certificate of appreciation for that employee, and present it to them at your next staff meeting. Recognition in front of peers goes a long way.

That said, if you feel your employee would appreciate it more, praise that team member in private, calling him or her into your office to offer a sincere moment of praise, and nothing more.

Simple gestures such as passing along articles that one of your employees would find relevant, inspiring, or simply enjoy is also a nice way to let employees know you are thinking about them.

**TREAT YOUR STAFF MEMBERS AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED.** Often a lack of respect, both toward you as the physicians, and toward your patients or clients, stems from a lack of a proper example. Making the workplace a positive environment is critical. Be sure to give your employees the respect they deserve.

Ask and listen to their opinions on office operations. While every idea may not be completely feasible, you’ll see your practice from a different point of view than you did before. You are guaranteed to hear fresh new ideas that could lead to the next big thing.

**CHALLENGE YOUR TEAM AND GIVE THEM A PLACE TO EXCEL.** Another great incentive includes additional staff training. Consider bringing in your vendor representatives to offer this at no cost to you; they’re often willing to bring in lunch for the staff (as guidelines and laws allow). Of course, you should give the vendor face time as well, but know they’re able to assist in the development of the staff. In addition, meeting time amongst your team builds camaraderie.

If your budget allows, and if your staff shows you they’re meeting sales goals and striving to better your practice, consider taking them to an industry meeting or conference. This serves not only as a motivator and reward, but as a training tool, as well. We guarantee your staff will come back more enthused and energized with their new knowledge. The investment in them will positively affect your bottom line.

**MAKE SURE THE JOB DESCRIPTION IS A GOOD FIT FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE’S PERSONALITY AND SKILL SET.** If you find the above tactics simply don’t work, or suspect none of the aforementioned issues are the cause of low morale, then schedule a meeting with the troubled employee. Address the issues openly, honestly, and in a calm, objective fashion. Make sure each employee you hire has a set job description; this is the time to take a look at how this employee is (or isn’t) meeting the standards and goals you have set. After you’ve done so, give the employee a set agreed upon period of time to improve, and schedule another meeting in advance to discuss his/her progress.

If you see a positive change in your employee’s motivation... fantastic! However, look at whether that job is truly the perfect fit for the employee, or simply beyond his/her skill set. Do you have a shy mumbler answering your phones and checking out your patients? Can your patient hear a smile when your phone is answered? Do you have someone who’s not passionate about skincare products selling your newest line to your patients, or someone that’s computer illiterate in charge of keeping your database organized?

Consider what the job entails, and do one of two things: either re-work the job description to fit your employee’s strongest assets or wish them well on their journey to the perfect job.

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