

Cracking the passive talent pool

LUKE ARNOLD tackles the issue of successful recruitment strategies...

FINDING a talented dental professional to join your team can be easier said than done, especially if you've got high expectations about the sort of candidate you want to take on. So unless you want to come up dry or face the prospect of employing an applicant that doesn't meet your requirements, extra consideration must be paid to your recruitment strategies. Ask yourself, how do you intend to reach your target audience? How will you maximise your search to optimise your chances of finding the 'ideal' candidate?

The traditional method of print and online advertisement through classifieds and job boards is a common way of approaching the recruitment process, but this will only get you so far. After all, if you consider that approximately a quarter of employees are looking for a job at any one time, how can you be sure that you're reaching the entire talent pool if your search is reliant upon applicants stumbling across the position? Assume you even reach half the amount of people who are actively looking for a job, which is not guaranteed, you are still only accessing an eighth of the potential candidate pool for your vacancy.

Of course, none of that would matter if the eighth you had access to were all

exceptional applicants, but the harsh reality is that's rarely the case. If you could only reach a restricted portion of talent to begin with, it would more likely be that you would struggle to find sufficient candidates with the appropriate skills to interview, thereby limiting your options and compromising your recruitment outcome. This is far from conducive to finding top talent – but there is another way.

Targeting passive job seekers, in other words those not actively looking for a job, can provide a crucial source of hidden talent. Indeed, just because an applicant isn't diligently on the hunt for a new role, doesn't mean they couldn't be tempted to change jobs if the offer was attractive enough. At least that's the case of 71 per cent of workers according to a study conducted by job site, Indeed.

As such, if you have the resources to target 100 per cent of the potential talent pool, why not do so? Not only would you have the advantage of more choice, but your chances of finding the perfect candidate that ticks all the boxes would be greatly improved too. After all, just because someone isn't looking for a job, doesn't mean they wouldn't be perfect for it. In fact, it is often the case that some of the best candidates are those who aren't

actively looking, as high performers tend to be recognised, looked after and developed by their employers.

Bear in mind, however, that 52 per cent of those who participated in Indeed's talent attraction poll thought that they would be more successful in a job they found on their own versus one they got from a recruiter or company that contacted them. Moreover, 78 per cent said that if a recruiter or friend proactively contacted them about a position, they would still consider other job options. Then again, when you consider that 75 per cent of UK HR professionals have reported recruitment difficulties this year, due in part to Brexit, as well as the fact there have been ongoing problems with recruiting dental associates for some time now for a number of various other reasons, it is no longer enough to wait for candidates to come to you. Action has to be taken otherwise you risk missing out on talent; or worse – not filling the post at all.

Tailored job alerts and social media updates are a great way of engaging with all manner of candidates, as is enrolling the help of a well-connected recruiter with a vast database of talented candidates. Dental Elite works solely with the dental profession to help practices find

suitable candidates by using its extensive network of contacts. With its unrivalled connections, years of experience and market knowledge, the recruitment agency is well placed to help access both passive and active applicants.

As an employer you want to hire the best talent available for your role and organisation. That means looking at the entire 'candidate universe' i.e. everyone who is suitably qualified and experienced to do the job, whether they are active or not. Only by looking at the whole market can you adequately appoint the best person. ■

About the author

Luke Arnold has more than 10 years' experience working in the recruitment sector, and has developed his skills specifically within the dental industry since joining the team at Dental Elite in 2011. He is currently the Director of Recruitment Services for the company.



The difference between great leadership and great management

SUKI SINGH looks at what it means to lead and manage well, and the difference between the two...

SUCCESSFULLY running a business such as a dental practice requires strong leadership and good management. The two are not interchangeable terms, as people sometimes think, and don't necessarily come from the same person within the practice.

However, great leaders can feel that they also have to be great managers and vice versa, but that often means you end up being neither as it's an impossible task to wear both hats well. What, then, is the difference between leading well and managing well? And how does that look in a dental practice?

A leader, usually the principal dentist or practice owner, has the vision for the practice and needs to be able to communicate their passion for it to the team. Their role is to inspire and influence; to instil the belief in the vision and the enthusiasm to achieve it in those they are leading. That way it becomes a shared goal that everyone is aiming for.

For example, if the vision for your practice is to become the best in your area in terms of customer service, as the leader you need to ensure your team understands that this is what you're working towards. But, to really secure the team's buy-in, you need to do more than just tell them that this is what you're trying to achieve. You need to explain why you believe this is the best way forward, the benefits it would bring to the business, staff and patients and emphasise each person's important role in

making it a success.

Leading doesn't necessarily mean drilling down to a granular level and looking at the detail of how this vision will be achieved. This would fall under the manager's role, but with strong leadership inspiring and motivating the team, their job will be made much easier.

A successful manager is one who ensures that the things that need to happen in order to attain the business' goals are done, and done well. They will identify what steps need to be taken and who needs to be responsible for what task, and then monitor progress.

Taking the earlier example of aiming to

become the number-one dental practice in your area for customer service, a practice manager might identify any areas in the patient journey that could be improved. Maybe there needs to be more staff on the reception desk at certain times to ensure calls are answered promptly, or training for the practice team in better communication and relationship building.

Whatever the changes are that need to be made, a great manager can pinpoint them and plan out how they need to be implemented, by whom and what tasks should take priority. This is not something they necessarily need to do alone either. Turning the practice vision into

reality is a team effort, so why not ask the team what they think could be done differently. If they have come up with the ideas themselves, they will also be keener to help to implement them.

So, whilst the roles of leader and manager are different in terms of their function, they both support each other. There are similarities as well as both require excellent communication with your team and it is vital as part of that to build strong relationships with them.

There may also be other leaders within the team and it's important to recognise that quality and empower them to voice their ideas and take control of projects. Not only will this help to share the workload and ease practice management, it will also mean staff are happier, and therefore more productive, in their roles. ■

About the author

Suki Singh has been a Regional Support Manager at Practice Plan for nine years and has 13 years' experience in the dental industry. Practice Plan is the UK's leading provider of practice-branded patient membership plans, partnering with over 1,500 dental practices and offering a wide range of business support services. If you are looking to move from another provider, call 01691 684165 or visit <http://switch.practiceplan.co.uk>.

