

The A to Zs of Employing Associate ODs: Course Outline

Title: The A to Zs of Employing Associate ODs

Description: You will learn the A to Zs of employing associate ODs. Learn best practices, avoid common pitfalls, and take productivity to a new level.

Learning Objectives/Outcomes:

- Learn strategies for recruiting an associate OD
- Manage goals and expectations for the associate
- Understand various compensation models

Intro

Current state of the workforce

- The questions of...
 - Too many optometry schools
 - Over-saturation
 - The job market

When is the practice ready?

- Assessing patient demand
- Full-time vs. part-time
 - Budget
 - Candidates' preferences
- Owner's goals
 - Grow the practice
 - Increase personal time

Costs

- Additional staffing
- Cost-of-goods
- Space and equipment
- Reduction in owner's time

Finding the right fit

- Interview techniques (what to look for)
 - Behavioral-based interviewing
- Clarify service expectations
 - Hire for culture fit

- Have candidate shadow you before accepting position.
- Clarify the office culture
- Observe and mentor

Setting production expectations

- Patients seen per day
 - Should mirror owner's patient load
 - For most practices 20-24 patients per day is a good target
- Revenue per patient
 - Also should mirror owner's revenue per patient, unless patient bases look meaningfully different
 - Recommend full suite of solutions
- Capture rate
- Address obstacles and challenges to meeting expectations

Role

- Grow own patient base?
- See patients that owner drives to the practice?
 - OBJECTION: offered it and practice just didn't grow

Compensation

- Flat pay
 - Preferable
 - Per diem vs hourly vs salary
- Bonuses
 - Elective by owner?
 - Set formula?
- Straight production
 - Typically 15%-18% of total production (professional fees and materials)
 - Risk of going well over normal rates for highly productive practices
- Blended Rate
 - To avoid over-running normal pay scales, consider a blended rate.
 - Work backwards from a desired total comp at desired production level.
 - Probably adding 1%-2% to base pay
- Benefits

Managing associate

- Patient Volume
 - Keeping the associate busy

- Marketing the new OD
 - Scheduling
 - Moving long-time patients to the new OD
 - Staff's role in promoting new OD
 - Associate's responsibility in "building" his/her patient base
 - Should I take more vision plans?
- Revenue per patient
 - Note demographics of patients seen; may not match owner
 - Industry average
 - Addressing under-performance in this category
 - Strategies to increase revenue per patient.
- Patient experience
 - Can you teach "niceness"? Hire for it.
 - Efficiency as service
 - Culture of YOUR office, not culture associate brings.
- Office culture
 - Will have to manage some of your staff
 - Consider how OD treats non-OD staff
 - Culture of your office will affect overall results, and a key person like an OD can have a dramatic impact.

Concluding thoughts

- Associate ODs are a great way for owners to increase their income, free time, or both.
- While maintaining control and equity of the business
- Secret sauce is for all ODs to produce at same level.
- Large practice with associates is easier to sell than a solo-OD practice
- For all the reasons that associates are great for single owners, they are not guaranteed exit strategies when owner is ready to retire.