



Encourage Your In-Office Business Partner to Be As Good As Mine

By William Simon, DMD

I have heard a lot lately about the changing face of dentistry. It is certainly true, but no discussion of this topic is complete without including the changing role of the dental office manager. As the complexity of operating a dental office expands, the role of the office manager becomes an increasingly critical component of success.

This growing complexity is affirmed when we examine some of the more recent developments in dental practice management. Computers and the digital age, while streamlining some tasks, have introduced a much more complex business environment with which we must now become proficient, including:

- electronic claims and billing
- e-referrals and online reviews
- office websites and social media
- electronic patient communication systems
- marketing
- customized messages on hold
- patient financing

These are all in addition to the long-standing traditional tasks such as customer service, payroll, HR management, maintenance and repairs, accounts payable, and training.

A dental brainchild

In 2003, a forward-thinking person named Heather Colicchio saw this rapidly expanding role of the dental office manager and recognized a niche in dentistry that was not being filled: a lack of resources and education available for these professionals. She casually began putting people in touch with others to help them fill this need, but her entrepreneurial spirit kicked in and soon the American Association of Dental Office Managers (AADOM) was born.

Its mission is to provide its members with networking, resources, and education to help them achieve the highest level

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of professional development. With over 3,000 members, AADOM has now grown to be the largest professional association for dental office managers and hosts the country's largest dental office management conference.

The more, the merrier

It is important to note that membership in AADOM is not limited to dental office managers. Practice administrators, patient coordinators, insurance and financial coordinators, and treatment coordinators of general and specialized practices are also welcome to join and further their professional development.

AADOM offers its members many benefits. Along with access to one of the most powerful networks of dental office managers in the country, the online AADOM

Member Forum provides a secure message board where ideas, questions, and resources for best practices are shared. Another benefit includes a weekly email blast to members that captures questions from the forum.

CE extraordinaire

The AADOM Annual Conference is the premier event for dental office administrative and business professionals to learn best practices from internationally recognized speakers, as well as providing a valuable opportunity to network and socialize with their colleagues. While membership in AADOM is not required to attend the conference, it does reduce the registration fee.

My business manager has attended the conference for the last five years, always returning to our practice with astounding energy and excitement about new ideas, new products and new friendships. She states, “The classes that I have taken at AADOM conferences have improved our practice's professionalism, communication with patients and fellow employees, and have taught me how to become a better leader.”

AADOM also provides its members with continuing education. *The Observer*, which is the official magazine of AADOM, provides valuable information geared specifically to the needs and concerns of office managers. Additionally, a weekly email newsletter called *AADOM Insights* highlights the current week's dental practice management-related news stories. Free webinars spe-

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cifically designed for office managers are offered through industry sponsors of the association. Along with a national study club registry to help find local study clubs, AADOM offers a national virtual study club to its members.

Membership also provides a special opportunity for career recognition and development, the AADOM Fellowship Program. This designation truly distinguishes an office manager as one of the best in his or her field and not only affirms a high degree excellence, but instills a level of confidence that promotes even greater success. To quote my business manager, "Being a Fellow of AADOM has given me more confidence, a sense of accomplishment and the recognition that I craved as a professional in the dental field."



Professional development for all

As the owner of a private dental practice for over 25 years, I am excited to have an organization like AADOM available to support and advance my business manager. As a member of AGD, ADA, CDS, and the Illinois Dental Society for the same period of time,

I can appreciate the abundance of benefits that come from having a strong organization of my peers. I am glad that my business manager has AADOM to provide her with similar benefits. I am a firm believer that her successes are my successes, and vice versa. AADOM offers me one of the best tools to promote that success.

Five years ago I had an opportunity to attend the AADOM Annual Conference. I was so impressed that I gave my business manager a lifetime membership to AADOM as a token of my appreciation for her 15 years of service. Additionally, I have committed to sending her to the conference every year with expenses paid, and compensation for her time. I am confident that the return on my investment will be substantial.

About AADOM

The American Association of Dental Office Managers (AADOM) is an organization of professional office managers, practice administrators, patient coordinators, insurance and financial coordinators, and treatment coordinators of general and specialized dental practices. The largest association of its kind, it is our mission to provide our members with networking, resources and education to help them achieve the highest level of professional development. For more information please visit www.dentalmanagers.com or email info@dentalmanagers.com. ■

Dr. William Simon is the owner of two general dentistry practices in Chicago, Illinois, City Smiles and Sonrisa Urbana. He received his Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) degree from Southern Illinois University in 1983 and has lectured and consulted on numerous topics relating to the private practice of dentistry.

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