

How to hire top performers

There was a time when we hired for a position, and the one with the most experienced won that position, that was a huge mistake. Our practice has grown from a staff of 5 to a staff of 20, and in building what I would call the best team ever, we made many hiring mistakes. I would like to share with you what landed us the top performers in our practice:

What do you look for in the applicant?

1. I look for an amazing, true smile, up-tone, friendly, confident person who carries herself well. Good eye contact.
2. She needs to have a caring, interested, and warm tone, not loud and obnoxious. There is a difference between someone with a high tone that is just loud and too much and someone that is high toned and calm and just plain likeable.
3. She must give me a good feeling.
4. She is not shy, nervous, or withdrawn.
5. She is not too confident and making it sound like we had better give her what she deserves. I want someone excited to come on board and take anything to prove to me she has what it takes.
6. I want someone that feels honored to even be in front of me interviewing. She is so excited to be given this opportunity.
7. We look for someone that tells me she works hard. She is dedicated, she takes her job seriously and is looking for a career, not just a paycheck. When pay, hours and benefits become the primary topic, this will usually result in someone who wants to come in late, leave early, never work on off times and complain she is overworked.
8. I ask her things like, What if I called you after hours because I needed help with something? What if we had a procedure going on that was causing us to work past 6? 7? Or even 8? What if I sent you an email Friday night, when would you answer that email? How do you feel about being on call for emergencies? Do you have reliable transportation to work? What happens if one of your kids is sick? How many sick days did you take at your last job? Is there anything that would prevent you from being on time or having to stay at work during the regular work week?
9. I tell applicants how much I love my job, but I NEVER give false impressions of the reality of it. I say, "We do work long days and long hours, sometimes don't get a lunch, sometimes get here when it's dark and leave when it's dark, and it gets crazy around here some days, but I would not change it. I love my job, and I love these doctors, and they definitely make it worth it."
10. Look on her application for longevity at past jobs; did she jump jobs every year? I would rather have two previous positions that she occupied for ten years each than ten jobs in ten years.
11. Google her name, check out her Facebook (you can learn a lot about someone's Facebook page), and please do a background check (I use BeenVerified- \$25 for a month of unlimited checks. I run every applicant.) You would be surprised at the number of DUI's and domestic violence we see.
12. Listen to how she talks about her past employer. That is how she will talk about you when she leaves. I don't ever hire someone who badmouths her previous bosses or workplaces.
13. Make a list of questions, scenarios, and see how she answers. Remember, she will give you the answer she thinks you want, she will be on her best behavior, so if the answer is questionable, that's a flag.
14. If I like someone's resume, this is the sequence:

- a. I call her to see how she sounds on the phone. This is huge. She doesn't know it's an employer calling. You can hear real tones here. Talk to her a bit. This is a great tool.
- b. If I like her phone voice, I have her come in and fill out an application. For this, I look to see how she dresses for an interview, how she carries herself, her eye contact, and I ask her many of the questions I mentioned earlier in this document.
- c. If all is going well, I take her for a tour of the office, and along the way, introduce her to as many staff as I can, so I can get her's and at least one doctor's perspective.
- d. If I am super excited about her, or if I still just do not know, I have her come back for a working interview. This is at least a half-day for her to participate in the area that I need to be filled so we can see how well she does. Experienced or not, we can see if she jumps in. We can see how quickly she catches onto things. We can see how she works with patients and staff. Or we can see if she just quietly leans up against the wall.
- e. If all goes well during the working interview and I want to hire, I have her speak to a few leads and at least one doctor. Once I get an okay from her, I hire.

15. We always hire with a 3-month probation period

Where do you advertise?

We used to have luck with the newspaper and Craigslist, not anymore. The best success we have had is:

1. **Referral from other staff you have.** She may know someone that wants to work at a better practice or that is looking for a career change. She knows these people. This works out very well. Plus, she knows she is responsible for you hiring this person. She will only refer good ones.
2. **Facebook post--** Have your staff write a super nice post about you and your practice, how long she has been there, how much she loves it, how rewarding it is. Have her ask if there is anyone out there looking to work in this environment? We offer a \$200 bonus to the one that can find us a top performer. We wait for the 3-month probation to end to assure she has made the cut.
3. **Indeed** was the last place I advertised, I did get a lot of junk applicants, but I also got some outstanding ones. My last two new hires were through Indeed, and they are both AMAZING team players, and they were experienced!

Ad wording used when we found top performers in our office.

#1 Ad

We are looking for a top performer for our surgical assisting team. Our periodontal practice provides a top working environment to serve our patients. Most staff members have been with us for years. That's more a testimonial for each member of our team as they are and have always been top performers. Only the best succeed in our office. A dental assistant in our office excels at interpersonal skills and is adept at handling patients and other staff. She is organized and works well under challenging circumstances. She is flexible in her days and hours. She is excited about challenges and learning new things. She can keep up with the speed of a highly productive office and work efficiently to keep the doctor on schedule and

anticipate his surgical needs. She is excited to be in one of the top dental practices in Florida. So if you are already a key performer or you were a key performer and have moved on for whatever reason, you'll be happy that you've contacted us. We offer a competitive salary. We work long hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (6:00 am-5:30 pm). If you think you qualify for this full-time position, please email us at es-sheldon@hotmail.com or fax your resume to 321 259-9336. Assisting experience is preferred. However, we will train the right person

This is the office of Dr. Lee Sheldon. Looking forward to hearing from you.

#2 Ad

Some things strike me as I look for our next dental assistant. They have more to do with who they are, what they are like, and why our current crew has been with us for such a long time. For good reasons, they think of our office as a place where they can enjoy themselves. And while everyone works hard, I hear things like, "I like working here because you always have my back!" You know what that means, don't you? When I say there are no office dramas, there aren't. When I say it's against policy, it means that we don't tolerate those harmful games, and our staff works in such harmony that they would feel betrayed if anyone came to work who doesn't match that harmony. Sure, our salary is competitive. Sure we give benefits. But frankly, some of us are looking for more than that. We need the money and benefits, but we also want appreciation for a job well done. We want to grow. And we want to be a part of a team that works as a team.

Yes, we all have our individual jobs. We cross-train, but frankly, it would be so inefficient if everyone did everything. Each of our team members is a specialist in her area. And when we need to pull together, we do for that moment, and then go back to what we do best after the temporary crisis is over.

We have superb management. We are exceptionally organized. And yes, we are clean. We produce some of the best dentistry that you could imagine, and we are proud of our work, not just the doctors but also the staff. Why? Because the team makes enormous contributions, they are part of the success of treatment.

And no, we're not just a periodontal office. We do restorative dentistry as well. And we're looking for a dental assistant that fits into the above category. You may need certifications. Frankly, some of our assistants come to us knowing how to take x-rays and doing expanded functions but just didn't get their certificates. So we send you for training to get the certificates, so both you and I are certain you are practicing within our state's guidelines. Of course, it is easier for us if you have dental experience, but it is not a requirement.

If you have exceptional skills and have already demonstrated an interest in healthcare, you may qualify to be a team member in our office. Because maybe, just maybe, this position will give you the career that you've been looking for.

Front desk ad:

Our growing dental office is looking for someone ready to take on a fantastic career and join our superb team. We are looking for a leader, someone whom we can depend on daily to motivate the team and excite our patients. Keep in mind this is not an ad for a job; it's an ad for a career!

We are growing. We have high standards, and we insist upon creating the absolute best environment for our patients and staff. Teamwork and pleasant personalities are mandatory. Experience is not as important as willingness, hard work, drive, eagerness, and a high/positive tone. Phone experience and the ability to multitask are needed. Basic computer skills a must. This is a full-time position, Monday – Friday, with benefits and competitive pay.