

# MY FIRST DAY

## Negative Effects of Poor Team Training

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**T**hink back to your first day in your practice. What kind, if any, training was provided? Did that training give you the confidence you needed when dealing with your first patient? After all, you are the face of the practice. Surely, knowing this, the practice wouldn't ignore the importance of the development of a team member. Or would they?

**The success of a practice depends on how well your team performs and how your patients relate to them. Lack of team training spells trouble for any practice because it unfavorably impacts the practice, internally and externally.**

Many practices consider in-depth training an unnecessary expense and import new team members to learn on the job from other team members who have been with the practice. However, this type of training is often inadequate and creates problems for the practice in many different areas.

**Unhappy Team Members:** Team members are interested in performing their jobs well to advance the company, feel a sense of pride for a job well done and move up to higher positions. When there is no training, team members do not understand how to do their jobs and none of these goals are possible. Misunderstandings may arise because employees aren't clear about the requirements. With confusion comes frustration, as team members become increasingly uncertain about their role in the practice. And with frustration comes conflict, as team members can argue with each other or defy management because of improper training. This leads to low morale among workers, which results in team turnover. A practice with a reputation for high team turnover is also unattractive to patients and potential job candidates.

**Low Production:** Production can be low when team members don't know enough to perform their jobs confidently. Unskilled team could spend considerable time seeking help to perform their jobs or they could perform tasks to their understanding, to the detriment of the work process. This could lead to errors. More experienced employees must also spend time monitoring unskilled workers, which detracts from their work and increases the amount of time necessary to complete production.

However the costs of not training your team can hurt your bottom line even more.

**Loss of Patients:** Untrained team members cannot produce high-quality services. They also lack adequate knowledge and skills to provide exceptional customer service. This combination results in dissatisfied patients. The practice may experience lack of referrals, poor patient reviews, and a high turnover of patients. Some practices provide excellent training related to team positions but poor cross-training. Cross-training refers to training team members in positions other than their normal position. Cross-training strengthens a practices ability to compensate for team who may be out or leave the company by filling their position temporarily from within. It also increases the confidence of team members.

The two most common excuses not to train are; "We are too busy to learn something new right now" and "We just don't have the money to pay for training." Don't get me wrong; training does come at a cost. The two biggest resources used for training are time and money. Training programs and costs have an easily measured up-front cost of time and money. Those items are difficult to handle on a tight budget. However the costs of not training your team can hurt your bottom line even more. These costs do not come in the form of line items, so they are often ignored or unseen.

An investment in your team skill sets is an investment in your practice.