

9 ways to be the best boss ever!

By Monica Wofford

Rewards for Boss of the Year come few and far between. You are more likely to see the reflection of your efforts in your patients' faces.

Your patients and your employees are who will judge your behavior as a boss and whether or not you are doing it well.

These nine secrets will surely help you gain the recognition you seek.

1 Hire right. Nothing makes your job more difficult than hiring the wrong people. And no amount of teaching, training, coaching, or guiding will put those skills in someone who is not suited for the job. Hire those who love people to be your "directors of first impressions" at check in, and those who love to file to be in charge of paperwork. In other words, hire for attitude, then teach the skills.

2 Consider the team. Your opinion is not the only one that counts in your practice. Before you hire someone to join the team, consider how that new person might fit in with your existing team.

Consider including your team in the interview process, perhaps a second or third interview that includes a panel of current staff members asking questions that are important to them.

The more the team owns the decision to hire that new person, the less they will complain to you if it doesn't work out. More importantly, the more they will contribute to helping that person succeed.

3 Different does not equal difficult. Each person will arrive at a goal or result in a different way. Just because someone is different or works differently, does not make them difficult. Yet the label of being a difficult person is tough to shake, so be very careful to give it out in the first place. Embrace differences that give you perspective.

4 Make expectations clear. State what you expect to all employees — even if you think they have already figured it out. The more you make your

expectations clear, the easier they will be to follow. Put them in writing, and make them fun and easy to remember with a rhyme or incentive for adhering to them. Whatever you do, get clear on what your expectations are and share.

5 Keep track of their lives. There is great value in treating those you work with like you would treat a friend. You would remember a friend's birthday with a card, or a friend's child's graduation or other milestone, wouldn't you? Whatever you can do to pay attention to your employee's lives, the more they will be willing to pay attention to the practice that makes up most of your life.

6 Learn to separate. Not every person has the ability to be an employee and a close friend, which is why you often hear "avoid hiring friends to work with you."

It does not mean you have to keep it all business all the time — nor is it realistic in a small practice — but it does mean you need to learn to separate work from personal and friend from boss. State this clearly among those employees you are close with so when you are talking work they know to take you seriously, and when you are being their buddy, they know the difference. Without this delineation, you may end up sending mixed signals.

7 Remain realistic. Those who own their own business tend to be driven by a force greater than they realize. They are passionate, focused, ambitious at times, and pour much of their life into the success of that business. Those who work with you may not share those characteristics. They may not be as driven, as ambitious, as willing to work late, or as committed. Realistically, if they were, don't you think they would have struck out on their own?

8 Catch 'em doing it right. Spend some time looking for ways in which people do things well, right, or darn-near perfect. Always look for the things they do right, even if you need a microscope to find them.

9 Provide frequent praise. Not everyone needs a party for their achievements. But everyone enjoys hearing appreciation of a job well done. Whether it

