

October 2011

# e update



As October is the tenth month, we thought we would create a bumper e update for members, packed with articles featuring top ten tips, advice and guides.

Inside this edition you will find top ten ways to:

- run a successful focus group
- help your principal avoid being

taken to employment tribunal

- win more patients
- avoid cash flow problems
- manage your team better and
- be a more competent PM.

You will also find all the usual news, training calendar and updates, so turn inside for more...

## Inside this edition . . .

Read all about it



For all the latest news in the world of dentistry turn to pp.4-5

Courses aplenty

Date & location	Name of event & provider	Hosting a training course?	Cost & notes
21 October Manchester	The health focused practice for patient care and profit. Share ideas with Practice Plus.		£150. £50 for practice owners. For more details contact: 01206 220000
October Widley Widley	Keeping and developing skills for the practice care and dental team. Practice Plus.		£150. £50 for practice owners. For more details contact: 01206 220000
19th Manchester	NHS Finance seminar: NHS		£150. £50 for practice owners. For more details contact: 01206 220000

For FREE employment law breakfast briefings & more turn to p.6

ADAM news



Find out why it's all go at ADAM HQ. More on p.7

YouTube the Apex Channel

www.apexezine.com

#theapexshow

www.theapextribe.com

Apex Ask Campaigns

apex

www.apexezine.com



Apex February Issue

Apex a monthly journal for the dental profession. This issue features the following articles:

- Sustainable Programs Invest in Oral Health
- ...



forward thinking | paperless | dentistry



## Contents

### Contents

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This month, read the GDC's guidance on discount deals, the latest in the tooth whitening saga and more...

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## Guidance on discount deals provided

The prevalence of discount deals – offered by companies such as Groupon and Living Social – has prompted the GDC to issue a reminder to dentists and DCPs about their responsibilities to patients.

The GDC's current guidance for registered dental professionals says they should not make claims which could mislead patients, they should be trustworthy and honest and they should ensure that they do not put their financial interests before their patients' interests.

The GDC can take action to restrict or stop a dental professional practising if these standards are not met.

If a GDC registered dental professional offers a

treatment deal he or she must assess the patient, obtain valid consent, obtain a medical history and explain all the options before carrying out any work. Registrants must put patients' interests before their own or those of any colleague, organisation or business.

The GDC is currently reviewing its 'Standards for dental professionals' and draft guidance on ethical advertising will be considered by the Standards Working Group.

Further information about the Standards Review and a questionnaire can be found here: <http://www.gdc-uk.org/GDCcalendar/Consultations/Pages/Review-of-Standards.aspx>

## PMs achieve university-accredited award

September signalled the end of a rewarding journey for the first group of practice managers to complete The Dentistry Business' year-long Level 4 Certificate in Dental Practice Management accredited by the University of Chester.

This first cohort; Andrea Quayle, Sylvia Tuladhar and Michelle McLoughlin, were accompanied to the event by their practice principals and presented with their certificates by Dr Graham Brown, member of the BDA's Education Committee, and Donna Hough, BADN<sup>®</sup> North West Regional Co-ordinator, in a ceremony held in Chester in September.

As a University accredited programme, the Level 4 course requires determination and commitment from students and provides dental nurses and practice managers with a highly regarded qualification, 63 hours of verifiable CPD and 60 credits transferable to other higher education programmes.

Donna Hough, who is also Head of Dental Education and Workforce for the North Western Deanery, commented: "The role of practice managers and dental nurses is increasingly concerned with business issues and an accredited programme such as this is of huge practical and educational value, not least in providing an externally validated qualification."

The Level 4 Certificate is a modular programme which runs on 9 days over a 12 month period and demonstrates how to apply practice management



theory to day-to-day working practices, providing an excellent opportunity for practice managers, or those who aspire to practice management, to improve their professional status.

The Dentistry Business's next University Accredited programmes at Level 4 for dental nurses and practice managers, and Level 7 for experienced practice managers and dentists, are due to start in January 2012.

For more information on either course, please contact Sim Goldblum on 0161 928 5995, by email: [info@thedentistrybusiness.com](mailto:info@thedentistrybusiness.com) or visit [www.thedentistrybusiness.com](http://www.thedentistrybusiness.com)



## EU sees light on whitening says BACD

The BACD welcomes the adoption by the Council of the European Union of the Council Directive amending, concerning cosmetic products.

The BACD together with other organisations and leaders in the profession has called repeatedly for appropriate legislation regarding tooth-whitening products in line with the advice from the European Scientific Committee on

Consumer Safety.

This is how the law now stands – or will do once ratified by individual states, who have 12 months in which to do so: tooth whitening products containing up to 0.1% of hydrogen peroxide will continue to be freely available to the consumer market, i.e. over the counter.

Products containing between 0.1% and 6% of hydrogen peroxide, can only be supplied by dentists following clinical examination to ensure suitability of the procedure and the absence of risk factors or oral pathologies, after which the patient will be able to continue the treatment. The use of these products by persons younger than 18 years will not be allowed. Products containing more than 6% of hydrogen peroxide will continue to be prohibited.

The Council of European Dentists (CED) believes these changes will enhance patient safety by ensuring that they can only access appropriate products via a trained and qualified dental professional. Member States will have 12 months to transpose the Directive into national legislation after its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. The CED considers the Council decision to be a very important step towards ensuring patient safety and removing any uncertainty as to how and who should perform tooth whitening in the EU.

### “OFT report must be thorough” warns BDA

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) must deliver a thorough report that considers the pressures that shape dentistry in the UK, the BDA has warned in response to an announcement that the agency is to undertake a review of the sector.

The BDA has additionally cautioned that the timing of the review must not compromise its integrity. It comes just eight years after the OFT last looked at dentistry and in the midst of profound changes to the way that the sector is organised across the UK. The team responsible for the review has been given less than six months to complete the task, with a report expected by March 2012, according to the announcement.

The review has a wide scope and will consider issues including charging, access to the market for new entrants, access to hygienists and the ability of patients to switch dentists. The announcement also says it will look generally at whether the NHS and private dental markets are working well for patients.

Dr John Milne, Chair of the BDA's General Dental Practice Committee, said: “The OFT's 2003 report provided a reminder of the importance of good patient-dentist communication in dentistry.

“This report, too, has the potential to be useful. It is ambitious in its scope and follows a period of significant change in dentistry. In the eight years since the last review we've seen ill-conceived changes to regulation that have put box-ticking before care, the growth of corporate dental bodies in both NHS and private provision, a significant enlargement in the dental workforce, and botched NHS dental reforms in England that have constrained dentists' attempts to care for their patients.”

### Free employment law briefings

Ellis Whittam, provider of fixed fee Employment Law and Health & Safety support to employers, is holding a series of free breakfast briefings across the UK in November.

Ellis Whittam's qualified lawyers will bring attendees up to speed on all the new legislation that employers need to be aware of including changes to temporary agency worker regulations, pension reform and the scrapping of the default retirement age. Go to [www.elliswhittam.com/events](http://www.elliswhittam.com/events) for more information on venues, dates and to register to attend. Some of the dates are also listed in our Training & Development calendar overleaf.

### Risk assessment prize winner

The winner of the draw for a First Step Risk Assessment worth £834, courtesy of Datashield, is City Dental Clinic, London. The winning survey was completed by Alena Beveridge.



Get in touch. Send your news & views to [denise@adam-aspire.co.uk](mailto:denise@adam-aspire.co.uk)

## Training & development diary

Date & location	Name of event & provider	Cost & notes	Contact details
Oct: London, Manchester, Bristol, Leeds, Scotland, Belfast	The Dentistry Business Accredited Programmes in Dental Practice Management	L4 is £2,100 and L7 is £2,500	<a href="http://www.thedentistrybusiness.com">www.thedentistrybusiness.com</a>
28 October Glasgow	Reception and telephone skills for the whole dental team. Heather Dallas for the BDA	<b>£100 for practice managers</b>	<a href="http://www.bda.org/training">www.bda.org/training</a>
2 November London	Managing Difficult People (and good ones too). Sheila Scott	£350 (incl lunch) Plus one hour's personal follow up	<a href="http://www.sheila-scott.co.uk">www.sheila-scott.co.uk</a>
3 November London	The health focused practice for patient care and profit. Sheila Scott with Practice Plan	£150. £50 for practices connected to PP <b>or free for PP clients.</b>	<a href="http://www.practiceplan.co.uk/events">www.practiceplan.co.uk/events</a>
4 November London	Business planning and financial management for owners & managers. Andy McDougall & BDA	<b>£100 for practice managers</b>	<a href="http://www.bda.org/training">www.bda.org/training</a>
4 November London	Finance, H&S compliance and employment law for the dental practice. BDPMA	£65 for half day incl lunch or £120 for the full day	<a href="mailto:denise@bdpma.org.uk">denise@bdpma.org.uk</a>
7 November Plymouth	Practice Managers - BTEC Level 4	£1950 +vat	<a href="http://www.mintnationwide.co.uk">www.mintnationwide.co.uk</a>
8 November Plymouth	Introductory Award in Care Coordination	£200+vnt	<a href="http://www.mintnationwide.co.uk">www.mintnationwide.co.uk</a>
8 November Exeter	Free Employment Law breakfast briefing	<b>FREE</b>	<a href="http://www.elliswhittam.com/events">www.elliswhittam.com/events</a>
9 November Portsmouth	Free Employment Law breakfast briefing	<b>FREE</b>	<a href="http://www.elliswhittam.com/events">www.elliswhittam.com/events</a>
10 November Brentwood	Free Employment Law breakfast briefing	<b>FREE</b>	<a href="http://www.elliswhittam.com/events">www.elliswhittam.com/events</a>
11 November London	Reception and telephone skills for the whole dental team. Heather Dallas for the BDA	<b>£100 for practice managers</b>	<a href="http://www.bda.org/training">www.bda.org/training</a>
15 November Edinburgh	The health focused practice for patient care and profit. Sheila Scott with Practice Plan	£150. £50 for practices connected to PP <b>or free for PP clients.</b>	<a href="http://www.practiceplan.co.uk/events">www.practiceplan.co.uk/events</a>
15 November Birmingham	Free Employment Law breakfast briefing	<b>FREE</b>	<a href="http://www.elliswhittam.com/events">www.elliswhittam.com/events</a>
16 November Cardiff	Free Employment Law breakfast briefing	<b>FREE</b>	<a href="http://www.elliswhittam.com/events">www.elliswhittam.com/events</a>
17 November Milton Keynes	Free Employment Law breakfast briefing	<b>FREE</b>	<a href="http://www.elliswhittam.com/events">www.elliswhittam.com/events</a>
18 November Manchester	Handling complaints and improving communication skills. BDA	<b>£100 for practice managers</b>	<a href="http://www.bda.org/training">www.bda.org/training</a>
18 November London	Empowering your practice manager. Seema Sharma, Dentabyte	£295 per person or £495 owner/manager team	<a href="http://www.dentabyte.co.uk">www.dentabyte.co.uk</a>
22 November Leeds	The health focused practice for patient care and profit. Sheila Scott with Practice Plan	£150. £50 for practices connected to PP <b>or free for PP clients.</b>	<a href="http://www.practiceplan.co.uk/events">www.practiceplan.co.uk/events</a>
22 November Edinburgh	Free Employment Law breakfast briefing	<b>FREE</b>	<a href="http://www.elliswhittam.com/events">www.elliswhittam.com/events</a>
23 November Gateshead	Free Employment Law breakfast briefing	<b>FREE</b>	<a href="http://www.elliswhittam.com/events">www.elliswhittam.com/events</a>



## A big thank you to the exec team

October is upon us and winter is approaching, snow has already fallen in some areas of the UK.

With the excitement of BDTA and this being our first e-newsletter as ADAM it is appropriate to acknowledge the hard-work and support of everyone in the team and say a huge thank you to everyone who participated.

This certainly is a jam packed newsletter full of tips and useful information. Take a look over our topics which feature our ten chart toppers, and why not share with us what your top ten

Welcome to my regular column. Each month I hope to keep you informed about ADAM news and to talk about issues that affect, annoy and delight us as practice managers and administrators. *Jill*



tips would be as a manager or administrator via twitter or Facebook?

There is still time to book your place on our seminar on Friday 4th November at the British Institute of Radiography, London (more on page 17).

And now is the time to start planning your application for Practice Manager of the Year, Administrator of the Year and Treatment Co-ordinator of the Year (see below).

## ADAM events

### ADAM dates for your diary are revealed

It has been a busy time at HQ, what with launching ADAM at BDTA Dental Showcase, setting in motion the Denplan-sponsored ADAM Awards and organising the ADAM Conference!

Our conference, *The nuts and bolts of running a successful practice*, will take place in Harrogate on May 18 and 19.

The two-day event at the four star Barceló Harrogate Majestic Hotel, will include a mock disciplinary hearing and will cover areas such as assertiveness, dealing with bullying and harassment, and lots more to be confirmed.

Delegate rates will be announced soon and early birds can make the most of significant reductions.

At Conference we will be announcing the winners of the ADAM Awards to crown Practice Manager of the Year, Administrator of the Year and Treatment Co-ordinator of the Year.

Each category winner will receive a cheque for £500 and will be presented with their accolade at the ADAM Conference dinner on Saturday, May 19.

A judging panel will include Jill Taylor and ADAM's honorary vice-president, Hew Mathewson, who brings

with him a wealth of experience as a past chairman of the GDC and an adviser to the MDDUS. They are joined by Roger Matthews, chief dental officer at Denplan. Roger joined Denplan in 1995 having spent 20 years working in practice and as a dento-legal advisor for the Medical Defence Union. He oversees dental advice to the company and its links with professional bodies, and is responsible for Denplan's professional services.

More information, application forms and flyers will be available to download from our website in the near future. The deadline for entries will be February 14 next year, so get your thinking caps at the ready!

Accommodation at The Majestic costs £85 B&B per single room per night, standard twin/double room for sole occupancy £95 B&B per room per night, standard twin/double room for double occupancy £105 B&B per room per night and premium room supplement is £30 per room per night, subject to availability.

Bookings should be made directly with The Majestic Hotel. For details visit [www.barcelo-hotels.co.uk/hotels/northern-england/barcelo-harrogate-majestic-hotel](http://www.barcelo-hotels.co.uk/hotels/northern-england/barcelo-harrogate-majestic-hotel)

# business planning & strategic marketing



for dental practices *with*

## Andy McDougall

*Perfect for  
practice managers*



**If you are looking to gain practical advice on how to strategically manage your business, this is the event for you.**

Covering business planning and strategic marketing and headlined by Andy McDougall from Spot On Business Planning, whether you are just learning the business ropes or looking to expand your knowledge and tools, you will take away practical advice and tips on how to manage your dental practice.

### the course...

#### Find out how to develop a business plan by:

- Understanding why a business plan is so vital
- Discovering the principles for developing a plan
- Managing the results and focusing on what is important.

#### This event will develop your understanding of marketing:

- Where to focus your marketing efforts and how this fits into the overall business
- How to create and build your practice brand.

## Marriott Hotel Sunderland

Wednesday 23rd  
November 2011  
9.00am - 4.30pm

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included*

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Tel: 01494 782873  
e-mail: [admin@bdta.org.uk](mailto:admin@bdta.org.uk)

A £10 on the day registration fee will  
be charged to visitors who do not secure  
tickets in advance. Advance registration  
closes 17 October 2011.

# The Dentabyte Compliance Cloud

0208 297 9100

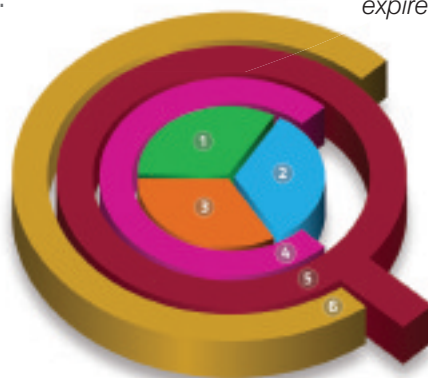


Example above of RAG report showing soon to expire certificates

Dentabyte launches the first **digital system** for maintaining compliance with **CQC**, a system that makes life easier for Practice Managers and owners as they balance performance management with practice success.

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- **Equipment maintenance and safety checks**
- **Mobile – use it from the office, home or on the move**



- 1 Involvement and information
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- 3 Safeguarding and safety
- 4 Suitability of Staffing
- 5 Quality and management
- 6 Suitability of Management

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[seema.sharma@dentabyte.co.uk](mailto:seema.sharma@dentabyte.co.uk)



# Top 10 tips for running a focus group

A number of members have been in touch about how to run patient focus groups to inform them of what patients want and need from their practices. Practice manager, Nicki Rowland, from Perfect 32 in Beverley has been hosting regular focus groups for NHS and private patients for a number of years. Here are her top 10 tips for ensuring they run smoothly.

Focus groups are a great way of building trust, empathy and good connections with your patients. They are an opportunity to gain feedback, brainstorm ideas and carry out market research face to face with the people that really matter to your practice.

New ideas, services and how patients feel about various areas of their care can be discussed in an open forum. Focus groups can also isolate issues that cannot always be quantified by patient surveys. So, if you are planning one here are 10 tips to help it all go smoothly.

1. Choose a day earlier in the week when people will be fresher and more likely to attend. Early evening tends to be a better time and attendees usually prefer to come straight from work.

2. If you are hoping for a group of around 8-10 people then be prepared to invite over 50 to start with. NHS focus groups are notoriously more difficult to recruit for than private ones so bear this in mind.

3. It is a good idea to send a formal invitation by letter and then follow this up by telephone or e-mail if you



have not received a reply by the RSVP date.

4. Plan your focus group like you would a staff meeting and put an agenda together. This gives you a format around which to work and allows you to plan what to say.



● Nicki Rowland

5. Send an agenda out with each patient invitation. This helps to engage the potential attendee by giving them more information about the event you are planning.

6. Plan your agenda with a timeframe for each point to be discussed. This will allow you to plan the length of the meeting and inform people of the time you will require them for.

7. Offer refreshments and perhaps a few freebies to the people you invite to the group. Enticements are always a big help in encouraging better attendance figures.

8. Take minutes at the focus group and put an action plan together afterwards. Keep patients updated as to the progress of agreed ideas to be implemented. People like to know that they have been listened to and that you care about what they say.

9. Focus groups should be run alongside patient satisfaction surveys. Despite their value, focus groups give you the voice of the minority not the majority.

10. Thank the people who have given up their time to attend with a gift such as a bottle of wine. It will encourage them to attend any future focus groups and shows them appreciation for their support.



# A guide to winning new patients

Let's face it, there is no shortage of advice when it comes to suggesting how you should approach winning new patients. E update editor Vikki Harper gives her top ten tips for increasing patient numbers.

When you consider the breadth of marketing initiatives that you juggle to meet your monthly new patient targets it can leave you ... out of breath! But are all marketing initiatives equal?

Let's refer back to that all-important 80-20 rule I have mentioned before. I would highly recommend you use it as the basis of your whole approach to management; it helped me enormously when I was a manager.

The principle applies to all things in life, not just work. For instance in your home, 20% of your carpet will receive 80% of the wear and tear; on your body, 80% of your hair will be on 20% of your body. And in marketing your practice, 80% of new patients will come from 20% of activities.

## The 80-20 rule applies to everything

That means that instead of expending huge amounts of time and energy on lots of different marketing initiatives, you should focus on the few that generate the most return (success) and get them absolutely right. Then you can throw the net wider.

Take Facebook and Twitter. We are bombarded with advice that unless we have a social media presence we will be left behind. In a panic we rush to set up a Facebook page that we have no real idea how to exploit, that is not properly branded and that has not been considered in terms of our overall marketing strategy. The result may be a few additional patients but does that reflect the effort invested?

Here are my top ten priorities for increasing overall patient numbers. I would be very interested to hear from anyone who achieves significantly different results.

1. Patient/staff referral – by far the most successful, most time efficient and least expensive activity. Success requires an exemplary patient journey, post treatment calls or letters, featured testimonials and successful distribution of referral cards.

2. Web – your web is the permanently open shop window. It needs to encapsulate your brand, appeal to your target



audience and most importantly, be found!

Applying the 80-20 rule, patient referral and web account for around 20% of all your marketing activities but they will generate around 80% of your success. The remaining activities will change depending on your area, your target audience and your approach but in no particular order, here are mine.

3. Advertising in your local (free) A5 magazine

4. A presence in Yellow Pages (and it doesn't have to be a big one)

5. Posters around the community, in the post office etc.

6. Social media

7. Open evenings/events at the practice

8. Selective adverts in appropriate magazines

9. Selective Google Adwords campaigns

10. Well-written press releases providing free newspaper coverage



# The top 10 causes of poor cash flow

There is a world of difference between profit and cash flow but if you didn't understand the difference you wouldn't be on your own.

Many people incorrectly believe that if their business is profitable, they should be cash rich. Unfortunately that is not the case and if you have been through periods of cash drought, you will know exactly what we mean.

How do you avoid those periods when you stress over how to pay the wages? Our overview lists ten reasons, in no particular order, why dental practices suffer from cash flow issues.

1. Consistently drawing out more than the profits of the practice generate.

● If business has dropped below the level of takings, has your principal reduced his drawings in tandem?

2. Lots of short term debt leases that added together amount to too much debt.

● You may be better off amalgamating your debts and paying them over a longer period to release some cash in the short term.

3. Too much money tied up in stock that sits on the shelf.

● Typically practices tie up tens of thousands of pounds of cash in too much stock.

4. Having the wrong associate pay structure.

● If it is incorrect, the more you make, the more you could give away.

5. Running the practice inefficiently results in requiring a higher cost base in terms of staffing.

● A fresh look at processes, rotas and your approach may determine a more efficient way to run the practice.

6. Spending lots on marketing that does not generate the required return.

● Are you measuring your marketing spend effectively and taking action accordingly?

7. Too many gaps in the appointment book.

● You still have all the costs of running the practice even if you don't have any patients



8. Closing the practice or the dentist taking holiday (with no dental plan in place to provide cash income in his/her absence).

● Dental plans at least provide guaranteed monthly income to cover your costs – even when your principal is away.

9. Not being aware of the profitability of each type of treatment and filling your appointment book with the wrong kind.

● Even if your appointment book is full, how do you know those treatments generate a sufficient contribution?

10. Maintaining a pricing structure that is insufficient to cover the costs of the practice.

● Strategic pricing determines what you charge covers

## Cash is king

the profit you want/need to generate.

They say that turnover is vanity, profit is sanity but cash is king. Even in a profitable business where the level of drawings, tax and loan repayments are significant, the business could experience a significant issue with cash.

**For further details about Spot On Business Planning [click here.](#)**



# Chart toppers for managing people

Anyone responsible for people will understand the highs and lows of managing them. On a great day you feel motivated, like anything is possible, but when individuals underperform or work against you it feels as if the weight of the world is on your shoulders and you stand alone on the precipice. So how do you build a positive, motivated, high-performing team? Here are our ten chart toppers.

## Set individual objectives

Team members need to clearly understand what is expected of them and what their priorities are. In other words, they need specific objectives. To get the most out of people you should agree objectives with them so that they buy into what you are trying to achieve (your vision) rather than imposing them.

## Regularly review performance

Objectives must be reviewed regularly to see how people are measuring up. Ideally you should get together with every member of your team each month, it need only take 15-20 minutes on average.

## Acknowledge performance

Your 1:1 s (above) should result in congratulations for exceptional performance, encouragement for being on track and action where performance is under par. That action could be further training/coaching to offer support or disciplinary if it is an on going performance issue.

## Progression plans

Most of us like to enhance our skills and improve. Identifying how individuals could contribute more and agreeing training plans for their develop is highly motivational and leads to greater accountability and contribution.

## Equitable management

It goes without saying that you should treat all team members equally. Understandably it is easier said than done when demanding members of your team flex their attitude.

## Be available

We're not just talking about an open door policy. Listening is important but acting is vital!

## Remuneration



Ensure salaries are fair. Don't have people in the same jobs paid different rates if it is unjustifiable. Pay people fairly so you are not left open to criticism.

## Bonus scheme

In difficult economic times, such as we are facing, you are not in a position to provide salary increases. While pay is not the number one motivator of people, it does contribute. A well thought out bonus scheme can provide the necessary focus and drive targeted performance to achieve a win-win for the team and the practice.

## Good recruitment

You are not just replacing one set of skills with another. You are adding a new dynamic to your team so think carefully about the person you choose. They have to be able to perform the job you require but also fit culturally with your existing team.

## Teamwork and culture

One team: one focus: no deviation. Your priority is to drive team performance to achieve the goals of the practice. Deal with undercurrents and ensure everything you do encourages a teamwork ethic.



# Top 10 reasons employers end up in employment tribunals

Jane Hallas, (pictured), Senior Associate Adviser at Employment Law and Health & Safety specialists Ellis Whittam, looks at the top ten reasons why employers end up in employment tribunals - and what can be done to avoid them.



## 1. Failure to follow a fair procedure

Whilst employers may have a sound reason to dismiss an employee, they often trip up on following a fair procedure. There should be a fair process with at least a meeting with the employee before dismissing and a right of appeal. Other than in cases of gross misconduct, employees should be given warnings before being dismissed. For ill health dismissals, an employment tribunal would expect to see a prior warning that the employer is contemplating dismissal and a doctor's report that confirms the employee is not likely to return to work in the reasonably foreseeable future. If making redundancies, always consult with employees about avoiding redundancy first.

## 2. Failure to investigate properly

This goes hand in hand with a fair procedure. Investigations need to be thorough with the aim of establishing the facts. When investigating, use the 5 Ws: what happened, when, where, what time and who else was there?

## 3. Inconsistent treatment

If you dismiss one employee and not another for the same offence this is likely to be unfair.

## 4. Ignoring a claim

Employers may be tempted to ignore an employment tribunal claim and not respond. Even if the claim is unreasonable it is imperative you file a response within 21 days otherwise the tribunal will award a default judgment.

## 5. Ignorance of the law

Ignorance of the various facets of discrimination law often trips employers up. Typical examples include failing to realise an employee is disabled and failing to take women's child caring roles into account. Always make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. Seriously consider requests to work part time and follow the statutory flexible work procedure.

## 6. Lack of realism

It may be better to try and settle a claim early on rather than fight it.

## 7. A claim culture

If you are too quick to settle this can encourage claims, which have been on the increase with a greater awareness of employee rights and no-win, no-fee advisers. The government is looking at introducing a fee for bringing a case, but at the moment it costs an employee nothing to bring a claim.

## 8. Breakdown in relationships and miscommunication

Often, managers receive no training in managing people; this can lead to poor employee relationships. Claims are more likely to arise where the employee feels 'wronged' or slighted in some way by the employer. Mediation can help.

## 9. Failure to deal with performance issues

Employers often ignore performance issues. It is always best to 'nip in the bud' issues as they arise. Use probationary periods; if the employee is not performing, take early action.

## 10. Failure to investigate grievances

Employees may raise a complaint without making it clear it is a grievance. It is also worth investigating complaints and checking whether the employee wants their concerns dealt with formally or informally. You should then investigate and see whether there is any merit in their complaint and take appropriate action.

**Ellis Whittam provides employers with fixed fee, unlimited support on Employment Law, Health & Safety and Human Resources. Many services such as webinars and monthly e-briefings are free. To find out more you can [email Jane Cuffin](mailto:jane.cuffin@elliswhittam.co.uk), call her on 0845 226 8393, visit the [website](http://www.elliswhittam.co.uk) and follow them on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/elliswhittam).**



## Feature

# A guide to the competences of a PM

There is no one size fits all approach to management but there are competences that come up time and time again making them fairly fundamental to the success of any management position.

The degree to which any one is more important than the other will very much depend on the culture of your practice, your relationship with the owner/s, the type of market you are in and your personality, so while the order and sequence of our top ten might be argued, we think the ten competences listed are vital for success in the role. What do you think?

## Leadership

Nothing positive and lasting is achieved without the willingness and support of the team. Building a high-performing team requires great leadership skills so as the leader of the practice team, it is essential you develop your leadership skills. A leader has been defined as a lot of things but essentially a leader is someone who has followers? Do you?

## Strategic vision

You can't lead people without knowing where to take them so knowing your vision (or that of your principal) and having a plan of action that seeks to achieve it, is vital.

## Financial awareness

You cannot implement strategies that seek to fulfil a vision if you have no understanding of finance. Everything you need to know about the performance of the practice is there in your figures. A 3-year financial plan, an annual budget and monthly management accounts are fundamental to success, and managing your cash flow is vital.

## Marketing prowess

Determining and implementing strategies relies on an understanding of the market you are in, the types of customers you want to attract, where those customers are and what would attract them. In other words, having a good understanding of marketing principles is essential to the growth of the practice.

## Human resources

We're back to people again. Told you they were vital!



Recruiting the right people in the first place, managing their performance to ensure they are performing as required, removing any deadwood or naysayers and ensuring you comply with the latest legislation are all core activities for any manager.

## Multi-tasking

It's called lots of different things but this competence relates to your ability to have your finger on the pulse! Another way of putting it would be your ability to delegate. Essentially your job is not about doing; it is about achieving through the motivation and guidance of others.

## The rest...

OK so we may have cheated by grouping the last three competences as 'the rest' but in truth if you have all of the above nailed, everything else will fall into place. Health and safety, clinical governance, rotas, IT, the building and so on, can all be delegated, managed and multi-tasked. Want to be a successful practice manager? Nail the first six!





Get in touch. Send your news & views to [denise@adam-aspire.co.uk](mailto:denise@adam-aspire.co.uk)

## Feature

# Still time to book a seminar place

There are still spaces available at our seminar titled 'Finance, H&S compliance and employment law for the dental practice', taking place at the British Institute of Radiography in London on Friday, November 4.

Tickets cost £65 for a half day including lunch or £120 for the full day, with £5 from each booking going to Saving Faces, our chosen charity for the year.

Jane Hallas will take the afternoon slot, following Matthew Rogers from Clear Vision Accountancy in the morning.

Members will be familiar with Jane as she regularly writes employment law features in the e-update and Practice Focus.

Jane is a qualified (non practising) solicitor. Previously she was a director of a change management company for 10 years, whose clients included various FTSE 100 companies and public sector organisations. Projects including

conducting a Formal Independent Review of an agreement between the EOC and one of the largest employers in the public sector and working on a large scale redundancy for a FTSE 100 company.

She spent 10 years sitting as a lay member of the Employment Tribunal Service. She was also previously a senior lecturer in law, and published various academic and non-academic papers in the UK and USA, and co-authored a book on Sexual Harassment.

Jane has a LLM (Distinction in employment law) and a Distinction in the Legal Practice Course.

As well as supporting her clients, Jane speaks at numerous seminars and conferences and is the author of many published articles. Her hobbies include playing tennis, walking, playing poker 'for fun' and volunteer work.

To book a seminar place, please call Denise at HQ on 01452 886 364.

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