

## **Dental Assistant On-the-Job-Training Tips**

As the demand for dental assistants far exceeds the graduation rate of assistants from training programs, it is likely that many offices will recruit individuals with no dental training and will need to undertake the task of on-the-job training (OJT). The Dental Practice and Benefits Committee has recognized the challenge of integrating OJT assistants into the dental office environment and has designed these tips to help get you quickly get your new hire up to speed.

### **Step One**

#### **Create Job Descriptions**

It is essential to have written job descriptions for all positions within the dental office. It should outline the education and qualifications of each position and detail the duties required. The job description will communicate the doctor's expectations and requirements of the respective job title. It will serve as a training and coaching guide in helping the new hire achieve successful integration in your office.

MDS members can view sample job descriptions from the ADA website, [ADA Sample Job Descriptions](#), to assist in customizing their job descriptions to meet their particular situations.

Our committee has developed a list of suggestions on how best to navigate this time-consuming task by using the following tools to help streamline the process and reduce the learning curve with the goal of having a successful and productive new hire in a short time.

### **Step Two**

#### **Create a Clinical Operations Manual**

- Begin by reviewing each of your dental procedures. Identify if there is a way to simplify the process and make each procedure set up standardized. Take photos of your setup, labeling each item in the photo with the name of instruments and materials. Document the process step by step using your photos for reference.
- Create a Clinical Operations Manual of each dental procedure with a photo of the set-up and a description of the procedure. This manual should have the manufacturer's instructions on the operation and maintenance of your autoclave handpieces as well as a copy of your exposure control protocols. You should also create an Excel sheet to track dates of required maintenance of autoclaves etc. This spreadsheet should be posted prominently in your office for easy lookup.
- Make this Clinical Operations Manual accessible to all staff and use it as a training guide for new staff members. Continue to update it with any process changes.

### **Step Three**

#### **Review Additional Resources**

- There is a huge library of videos that demonstrate the various facets of dental assisting. Go to your browser and type in dental assisting videos. You can search for specific categories of videos such as dental assisting 101, dental instruments, dental terminology, dental assisting training, and composite procedure and create your own library by creating a playlist of your favorites and have it ready for easy viewing for your trainees.
- The ADA website has several online continuing education courses for dental assistants that can be a useful resource, [ADA CE Online Courses for Dental Teams](#)