

PEER-TO-PEER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY YOU
OUR MEMBERS!

MEMBER
FEATURES



MEET THE MEMBER

Krista Smith, FAADOM, is the Office Manager at Powell Dental Group in Powell, Ohio. She has over 20 years of experience in General Dentistry, Oral Surgery, Endodontics, Dental Sleep Medicine, and Practice Consulting. She is also the Founder and President of the Columbus, Ohio AADOM Chapter. Krista has a passion for helping other dental professionals further their knowledge and careers in the dental industry.

EMPLOYEE [OR] FAMILY? *Who am I?*

MEMBER ARTICLE | BY KRISTA SMITH, FAADOM

At 10 years old, I started working my first job at a family-owned wedding retail store. Most people would think it sounds like fun. However, I got stuck cleaning stinky, smelly, dirty tuxedo shoes. Yuck! Why did my family ask me to do this? Because... it was a stinky, dirty job that the employees did NOT want to do. So, guess whose job it became? Yup! Mine. Did I complain? Yeah, probably. Did I have to do it? Of course! When working with family it's not uncommon to get the "dirty" jobs. Why? Because we're family.

Fast forward to when I turned 18. My parents liquidated our wedding store and my 41-year-old mother went to dental school. Yes, dental school. She was already a music major, a registered nurse, and a music education major. Why dental school? Why now? Of course, many factors played a part in this "why". As I begin to look at colleges and pick my career path, my mom was starting a new career for herself. Why wasn't she supporting me in "finding who I wanted to be when I grow up"? Why wasn't she looking out for me? As a typical teenager, I didn't understand why. Life was about ME. And I wouldn't get it for MANY years.

Mom. My mom. Truly a "one in a million" mom. She WAS looking out for me. She WAS supporting me, and helped me find out who I wanted to be when I grew up ... in a roundabout way. My dear mother went to dental school for me and my future family. She convinced me to become a dental assistant after I pleaded with her that I did not want to be in dirty mouths all day long! And I LOVED IT! While she was in her pre-clinical years, I became an endodontic assistant to two amazing doctors. They put their faith and trust in training me to begin my dental career. I then wanted to learn more about other aspects in dentistry, and became the Dental Faculty Implant Coordinator at The Ohio State University. What a tremendously rewarding position! When it was time for my mom to graduate dental school, she asked ME to come work WITH her. Now don't get me wrong, my mom and I fought like cats and dogs when I was in my teenage years. And I'm still alive! (Thank you, mom, for not killing me!)

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...WHO AM I? CONTINUED

But now she believed in me enough to come and work with her, not FOR her. This is when I became her Office Manager.

We built our dental office from the ground up, literally. My dad worked for a company that built dental offices. So, who would be the best to build our office? Of course! My dad! However, things began to get crazy.

My mom had emergency surgery and was in the hospital during the building phase of our office. I had a one-month old baby at home. My aging grandparents had just moved from Kansas, and we needed to care for them as they developed dementia and Alzheimer's. So now what do we do with the office that is being built? Well, my dad and I pulled together and kept building! Why? Because that's what families do. I designed the layout of our office, worked with suppliers, vendors, and insurance companies to get us established. I brought my little guy with me, and swept, cleaned, and dusted (just like the dirty tuxedo shoes) my way through the wee hours of the morning. Why? Because we are family.

Working with family can also be extremely difficult. My mom and I have argued, whined, and complained. We've endured hardships, growth, loss, gained friends and dental family, and have lost dear patients along the way. We've been at each other's throats to the point that I've wanted to throw in the towel multiple times. Do I have to follow the employee handbook? Yes, I sure do. Although, employees often wonder if I'm given special treatment since I'm the daughter of the owner. Yeah, maybe. But I also put in a ton of extra hours I'm not paid for, take calls after hours from my "boss", and am expected to do those dirty jobs (like cleaning out the stinky, smelly, dirty traps - again, like tuxedo shoes!) and do it without complaining. Why? Because I'm family.

Fast forward to 2019. I'm now 41 years old—the same age that my mom was when she went to dental school. Where am I now? I'm still proudly working for my mom. We've had our office for over 15 years now. Yes, we. My mom and I are a team. Together. She is now nearing retirement and it has been very difficult for me. I'm losing the other part of WE. However, we

began our office with good ethics and morals, and now it's time I continue to share these beliefs with others as we make new transitions. She believed in me when I was 18 years old, and now it's my turn to believe in her as she makes these gradual changes.

This is where AADOM comes in. As my dental career progressed, I found a tribe of wonderful people who were dental office managers in similar situations as I was. As AADOM grew, multiple specialty groups formed, but I still felt that something was missing. I reached out to the AADOM "powers that be" and requested support for office managers that work with family. This is where the Dental Family Business Network group was born. I have been able to talk to others who also work with family and deal with difficult situations, celebrations, or "stinky shoe" jobs. We are a small clan within the bigger AADOM tribe and are looking for new members! Won't you join us while we all figure out who we are? Employee or Family? Why? Because we are a dental family! ■



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