

Be Aware

BEWARE

OF TRANSITIONING TO A DSO

MEMBER ARTICLE | BY BRANDI WILLIAMS, FAADOM



In the world of dentistry, it's not uncommon for a business owner to open a dental practice, hang a sign out front, and embark on a journey of entrepreneurship. However, as the landscape evolves, many dental practices are finding value in partnering with existing groups.

For dentists, deciding to sell their practice is an emotional undertaking. One aspect frequently weighs heaviest on their minds: the well-being of their dedicated team. Dentists, who have spent years nurturing and building a practice alongside their trusted team, are acutely aware of the responsibility that comes with such a decision. Ensuring that the team is not just retained but well taken care of by the new owners becomes a monumental concern in the process of practice transition. As a member of a team, it's important to understand that you play a crucial role in the transition of the practice. Here's a guide to help you navigate this process successfully using these key indicators to remain AWARE:

A - ASK TO BE INVOLVED IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS

It's not uncommon for dentists to harbor fear when contemplating the sale of their practice. They fear how their valued team will react to the news. There's a genuine concern that sharing their intentions might breed fear among the team, potentially leading them to seek alternative employment out of anxiety about the unknown. However, we can address this apprehension by normalizing the idea that the team can actively partner with the doctor in this important phase.

BE AWARE CONTINUED | PAGE 17

...BE AWARE CONTINUED

By inviting team members to take an active role in the selection process of the new group, dentists empower their teams and foster a sense of ownership in the practice's future. This approach not only dispels fear but also cultivates commitment among the team members. When the team has a voice in the selection of the new partner, they become stakeholders in the practice's ongoing success, ensuring a smoother and more collaborative transition for everyone involved.

Don't underestimate your influence as a team member. Lead or join discussions and decisions regarding the selection of the new group partner. Collaborate closely with your doctor to ensure that the values and culture you've cultivated over the years are in alignment with the new direction. Your perspective as a team member is invaluable in maintaining the practice's unique identity while adapting to the changes ahead.

W - WRITE OUT YOUR CURRENT BENEFITS

During a transition, it's easy to overlook the benefits and perks you've enjoyed as a member of the existing practice. Take the time to list and document these benefits. What has the practice provided you over the years that you value? Benefits can extend beyond the monetary; consider workplace culture, work-life balance, and personal growth opportunities.

By identifying what matters most to you, you can communicate these preferences during the transition to help ensure that your needs are met in the new partnership. It's not uncommon for the dentist to inadvertently overlook certain benefits or underestimate their significance. This oversight can have unintended consequences when transitioning, potentially making the team members feel undervalued by the new owners. To prevent this scenario, it's crucial to document and communicate every benefit that has contributed to your job satisfaction and well-being. By ensuring that these benefits are transparently shared during the transition, you help maintain the team's sense of value and demonstrate the importance of continuity. Building this positive relationship early on can contribute significantly to the long-term success and well-being of the team and the practice as a whole.

A - BE ADAPTABLE

Change is inevitable in any transition, and adapting to new ways of doing things is key to success. Embrace flexibility and openness as you navigate the shift. You might find that some of your current processes are not only retained but also shared and improved upon within the group.

Prepare your mindset and lead your team through changes with enthusiasm.

AADOM24 PRESENTER



MEET THE MEMBER

Brandi is passionate about leading and developing successful dental practices by sharing her zeal for exceptional patient care combined with over two decades of dental industry knowledge. She is the Founding President of the Central OK Chapter of the American Association of Dental Office Management (AADOM), which recently transitioned to The Oklahoma Society of Dental Professionals, a Dental Professional Learning Network (DPLN). She serves on the Dental Professional Learning Network Advisory Board and is a proud member of Women in DSO. Brandi is an energetic leader with a 29-year tenure leading operations, developing teams, acquiring and transitioning practices, exceeding financial and performance goals, and pioneering growth strategies within the field of dentistry. She is recognized as a highly adaptable, results-oriented leader with a proven track record of triaging and building successful dental practices and teams.

Brandi will be presenting an educational session at the 2024 AADOM Conference for multi-location practice managers and regional managers.

BE AWARE CONTINUED | PAGE 18

...BE AWARE CONTINUED

Being proactive and resilient will make the transition smoother and more exciting for everyone involved. It's natural for team members to feel uncertain or even apprehensive about what lies ahead. However, the key to navigating these changes successfully is to view them as growth opportunities rather than disruptions. When you embrace change with this perspective, you set the stage for fostering a culture that promotes continuous improvement and development.

R - RESOURCES AND CAREER PATHWAYS

Learn about the resources and growth opportunities available to you and your team within the new group. Understand the steps for personal and professional growth within the organization. Identify the individuals or departments you can engage with to discuss your goals and aspirations.

By proactively seeking out these resources, you can chart a clear path for your future within the company and ensure that your professional development aligns with your career objectives.

E - ENCOURAGEMENT

Transitioning a dental practice can be an emotional journey. Each transition is unique, and some may be sudden while others are carefully planned. Throughout this process, your role in encouraging your dentist, team, and patients cannot be overstated. Share positivity, provide support, and maintain open lines of communication. By fostering a sense of enthusiasm and unity, you'll help your team and patients navigate the journey with confidence and resilience.

So whether you're an office manager, dental assistant, hygienist, or part of any vital team role, your involvement in the practice transition is significant. Be AWARE of your influence, and use these steps to play an active role in ensuring a successful transition for yourself, your team, and your patients. Together, you can embrace the change and contribute to the continued success of the practice in its new phase. ■

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