



How to Survive After the Words “I Quit”

Few things will shock a Dental CEO more than these words spoken by an employee: *“I quit.”* The first shock is followed immediately by the second moment of horror: *Why is she leaving? Is it me? How will I take care of all of those scheduled patients? Where will I find a replacement on such short notice when the market for dental staff employees is already exceedingly tight? Even more important, will I ever find the “right” person who will be a perfect fit for my practice?*

As **THE DENTAL COACH**®, I have seen this happen to many clients over the years. The first reaction is often one, or a combination of these:

- Find a private place to sit and cry.
- Offer the employee a 10% raise; two weeks of additional vacation time and the kitchen sink.
- Extend your own hours to pick up the extra slack and perform hygienist work.

Once you allow the shock waves to dissipate, it is time for strategic thinking. Below is a strategic 7-point plan for dentists to handle this conundrum and come out on top. As you go through the plan, identify someone who you can call on for help to keep you accountable and on-track. This can be your Coach or a trusted professional.

1. **Re-visit your dental practice’s Core Values and Vision Statement.** These two documents, above all others, will provide the clear direction needed to solve this issue.
2. **Schedule an Exit Interview** with the departing employee to identify opportunities for growth and improvement in the dental practice. To avoid this type of shock in the future, discover your blind spots.
3. **Don’t rush.** If you find that you need more than “2 weeks notice” to find a proper replacement, make arrangements with a local temporary service to cover your schedule for as long as necessary. It is important, however, to create a timeline for the process of finding a permanent employee. A temp service is just what it says, a temporary solution.
4. **Develop an Ideal Employee Profile.** While this is the fourth step, it is also the most critical. The Ideal Employee Profile is a clearly outlined list of the qualities and attributes you need and want in a new staff member. Do not leave this to chance, so put it in writing.
5. **Arrange a High Level Staff Meeting** with your team to apprise everyone of your game plan, the timelines and to share your Ideal Employee Profile. Enlist your staff’s support and ask the team to share in the responsibility of finding and training a new teammate.
6. **Do not remain a secret!** Make an announcement to the world that you are looking for the perfect new staff member. Believe that what you are looking for is looking for you, too. In order to make this connection, inform as many people as possible of your search. Print up 3x5 cards with your name, phone number, a short introduction and request for help. Hand them out liberally, with a brief-scripted elevator pitch to patients, colleagues, vendors, dental supply representatives and

former staff “alumni.” Offer a referral fee of \$200 to any member of your staff that has a direct hand in finding your ideal employee.

7. **Develop and implement a training and integration plan.** Do not let this final step be your undoing, so develop minimum levels of performance over specific time lines with clear, written expectations. When each benchmark is achieved, let a reward be earned. The new team member will then advance to the next level of training and income potential.

As you are going through each step of your plan, remember to keep your desired outcome in mind – finding, hiring and training a new top employee.

By creating an employment plan in advance, you are able to discover and hire the best staff member, do it in less time, reduce your stress and maintain the practice revenue.

Dr. Ron Arndt is an International Coaches Federation, Master Certified Coach, known for taking a highly personal approach to Dental Practice Management.

Dr. Ron's book, "[Killing the Practice Before It Kills You: How Throwing Out My Business Model Saved My Life](#)" tells his personal story of how a young dentist and business man started his practice, made just about every mistake possible, and survived a life-changing, stress-induced heart attack. His experience convinced him to develop and implement steps that enabled him to take back control of his practice (and his life) rather than his practice controlling him.

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