



# Eight Leadership Mistakes to Avoid in 2015

Don't fall into any of these practice management traps.

BY JAN VINCENT

**N**ow that 2015 is well underway, it's a good time to reflect on your business progress and concentrate on important elements of your practice as you go forward.

Successful leadership develops over time, and can only be improved when you know how to diagnose and treat obstacles to great leadership. Here are some leadership alert signals:

**1. Overlooking the importance of evaluating business activities**

"Business as usual" is an easy habit to fall into. It doesn't take much effort to perform routine tasks and never change course simply because that's the way things have always been done. Continually assessing your business processes is important. Ask yourself which activities are necessary and relevant. These should be tracked regularly to assess effectiveness as well as efficiency.

Having the ability to quantify your successes makes it easier to set goals and to motivate employees with concrete data. Who doesn't love to hear

ers form an accurate picture of an applicant's past behavior, but pre-employment screening for a potential employee is a more accurate predic-

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that their hard work has paid off?

**2. Speeding through the selection and hiring process**

Practices run the risk of hiring the wrong people when they don't take the time that thorough selection requires. They end up wasting time, effort, and money on someone who was never qualified to begin with. Excellent hiring practices, at all levels, improves overall performance. Traditional interviews and background checks can help employ-

tor of future behavior. If you don't invest time and money now in hiring the right person for a job, how can you ever expect to receive a significant return? It is imperative that you and your staff are well-equipped to implement an effective hiring and onboarding process.

**3. Assuming employees know the practice's vision, goals, objectives and purpose**

Even if your practice has imple-

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mented an impressive strategic plan, it is worthless unless it is understood and embraced at all levels. Effective leaders should take the time to train and teach employees about the practice's objectives. Leaders are also responsible for goal-setting and communicating these goals clearly and consistently. Objectives and purposes should be restated each time a goal is set within the practice. By repeatedly setting goals with the vision and objectives in mind, employees will gain knowledge and understanding of what the organization stands for.

### 4. Failure to develop your team's skills

Not developing your employee's talents through appropriate training is a waste of resources. Many practices spend more time negotiating and paying for technology and equipment than they do training their staff. Yet, they claim that their employees are their number one asset. By investing in employees, practices are investing in their future success. Training helps employees to succeed. Ignoring appropriate training and development risks the

past occurrences, but it is much more effective and motivating to continually communicate with employees. This will also enable mistakes or miscommunications to be fixed earlier and leave less to clean up later.

### 6. Assuming you're doing a great job

Assuming that your patients are satisfied simply because you have not received complaints is not necessarily an accurate barometer.

### 8. Refusing to continuously promote and market your practice

Even highly successful practices should actively market themselves. Marketing, PR, research, and advertising are critical. These disciplines provide strategies for identifying new markets, communicating with referral sources and existing patients, and establishing your brand and message among all of your channels. Marketing and technology is constantly evolving, especially in the

## Implementing valuable suggestions from patients will improve your practice's success.

Your practice should have mechanisms in place to encourage customer feedback. Social networking sites, website options, and mobile applications allow for a multitude of easy ways for consumers to offer valuable feedback. Implementing valuable suggestions from patients will improve your practice's success. Take this feedback seriously; it is invaluable!

last decade with the popularity of social media in marketing. Failure to actively pursue these new strategies will impede your practice's ability to compete.

Effective leadership is achievable through effort and understanding. Leaders who are most successful are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and will work to create strengths from their weaknesses. Leaders set the framework for their practices. With knowledge of common mistakes, leaders can better equip themselves to take preventative measures for a better future. Here's to leadership excellence in 2015!

It's going to be a great year! **PM**

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chance of failure for the employee and the organization.

### 5. Resisting feedback

Just as you must evaluate your business activities, you should also evaluate employees on a regular basis. Whether through performance reviews or conversations during the course of daily activities, meaningful, constructive feedback is necessary to produce good performance and to help employee career development. Start communicating from the beginning with employees about expectations and their performance. End-of-year reviews often highlight

### 7. Failing to review yourself

Not taking stock of yourself can hinder your professional and personal growth. Appraising your own performance can be very helpful. Did you meet your prior year's goals? How can you take your performance up a notch? Is there any professional reading you have been intending to do? How about training courses—are there any on the horizon? Should you engage a practice management coach? Needing and asking for help is not a sign of weakness. Truth be told, it signals intelligence and self-awareness.



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at night rather than spending endless hours, energy and expense struggling with people frustrations. Jan regularly authors business articles and teaches job readiness and business programs at private practices, corporations, non-profits, and the academic community.