



TEAM CULTURE GUIDE

A guide to build a powerful Team Culture
for your dental practice by



TEAM CULTURE is the beliefs and behaviours of the people within your practice.

Your Team Culture describes the patterns of thinking and behaviour that team members demonstrate when working towards the vision. This is important because once the team have identified and committed to the culture, they will be more empowered, enlightened and confident to determine, in almost every situation, the appropriate behaviour to adopt in moving forward.

The culture you define for your business is the chosen, deliberate manner with which to provide your product or service. It is the culture that will direct staff members how they are to behave in their realisation of the vision.

It tells them:

What will my behaviour at work be?

How will I communicate with staff and patients?

How can I expect to be treated by others?

What can I, as a responsible member of staff, encourage in those around me?

What behaviours/responses/communication is unacceptable and why?

The Team Culture of a business, if supported and encouraged, becomes the conscience of the staff. A business with no conscience is like a person with no morals. There is nothing stopping them from stepping outside social boundaries and creating a very poor working environment for everyone. However the opposite is also true.

A living Culture will provide structure, safety and guidance to employees. The working environment will be vibrant and productive. There will be no confusion. It will not be at the mercy of negative attitudes and damaging influences.

A strong, effective culture statement is vital in providing team members what they need to be successful in their roles.

The following pages have questions that you can ask yourself and your team members to assist in frank and helpful conversation about what Team Culture will have the greatest impact in your practice.

Where are we now?

What behaviours are rewarded? (By either direct acknowledgement or less obvious feelings of approval.)

What behaviours are punished? (By either direct reprimand or less obvious feelings of disapproval.)

What aspects of each team members job brings them happiness?

What aspects of each team members job brings them frustration or stress?

When does each team member feel most motivated?

Ask each team member, if there was one aspect of your team culture that you would change, what would it be?

What causes conflict in your team?

How does the team manage mistakes?

How is feedback delivered to team members?

What kind of people seem to be most successful here?

Current attitudes that are HELPFUL to our practice are...

Current attitudes that are UNHELPFUL to our practice are...

Designing your Team Culture

Design your Team Culture with your team. Your Team Culture should:

- Inspire team members to be better than they planned to be.
- Enlighten team members to a more constructive and powerful path.
- State very clearly the expected methods of communication to be used.
- Highlight how each team member has the power to make or break effective teamwork.
- Emphasise each team members RESPONSIBILITY in being an effective team member.
- Encourage hard work, mindful behaviour and celebration of successes.

Your Team Culture should also...

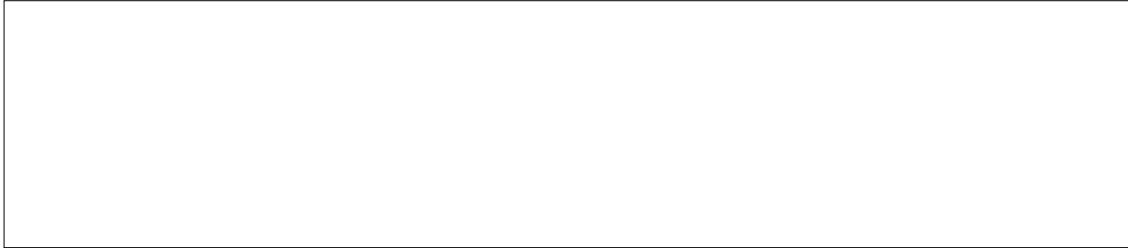
- Promotes a feeling of safety for employees. Safe from bullying and safe to achieve success.
- Encourages all staff to be the best they can be.
- Encourages building each other up, rather than being in conflict or competition with one another.
- Motivates staff to achieve all practice goals.
- Empowers all staff to tackle every challenge, knowing they will have the support of superiors.

Carefully consider each of the points above. Write down your thoughts, wishes and goals. This information is what you will be 'drilling down' to form a concise, impactful and inspirational Team Culture.

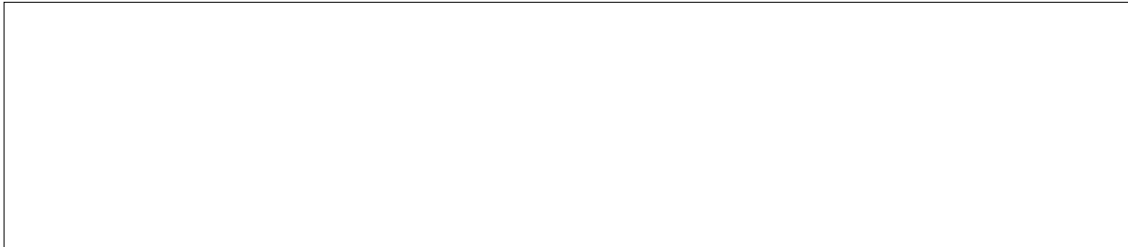
The following pages have some questions you can ask as a Team that will guide you on the path of creating your own powerful Team Culture.

Where are we going?


This is how we give and receive feedback.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing the process of giving and receiving feedback.

This is how we agree to manage mistakes.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing the process of managing mistakes.

This is how we agree to interact in stressful times or during conflict.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing the process of interacting during stressful times or conflict.

This is how apply new systems and behaviours.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing the process of applying new systems and behaviours.

The attitude that each team member will bring to the practice every day is...

We will encourage each other by...

This is how we celebrate our wins.

This is how we describe our team.

How to Cultivate your Team Culture

There is an undisputed fact in the business world: All statements, procedures and policies developed in any business will be forgotten if not paid attention to. Know this, accept this, and react accordingly. What is needed for business practices to be acknowledged, remembered and acted upon? Transform them into living entities! In order for any living thing to thrive, you must nurture it and feed it. You nurture your Team Culture by:

Discussing it regularly,

Intentionally using it to guide your behaviour & decisions, and

Encouraging others to nurture it.

You feed your Team Culture by adding and adjusting it so they grows with the business. Remove points that are no longer necessary and feed in points that are. Don't write up a culture statement once and never modify it. Appreciate the opportunity to add more flavour to the practice vision and culture, as the business progresses.

So remember the **3 STEP PROCESS** to keep your Team Culture Statement alive;

Talk It Up – Keep it as part of an ongoing discussion. Intend to speak about it daily. It may seem a lot how-ever it doesn't take long, and the impact this has on the statement's influence is huge.

Live It – If the owners are not willing to acknowledge, promote and live all practice statements then they cannot expect employees to understand the importance of the process. It must start with setting the example from the top.

Acknowledge Others Engagement – It is pure gold when others follow your lead and start 'talking up' and 'living' the company vision and culture. Acknowledge these efforts one-on-one and do it publicly. This way you are clearly communicating to all staff "this is how we all should be operating and behaving".

If you ever find that your Team Culture is not having the impact you would expect or desire, the reason will be either;

- Lack of clarity in the statement; or
- Your 3 Step Process of **Talk It Up**, **Live It** and **Acknowledge Others Engagement** is not being practised by the 'influencers' within your practice.

There are personalities that do display a natural 'leadership' quality. Discussing the importance of the 3 Step Process with these personalities will result in the example being set. The rest of the team will then learn very quickly how they themselves can bring 'life' to the practice's Team Culture.