

EP. 36 Interview with successful Hygiene Team Leader, Zulma Rodriguez

In this episode, we interview hygiene team leader, Zulma Rodriguez, where she shares tips on how to boost morale in the office and great words of wisdom on how to be a great team leader.

Q: Where is your practice and tell us about your hygiene department?

A: I work at a pediatric and orthodontic practice in Long Beach, CA, that's been in practice for 14 years. We have 7 hygienists on our team.

Q: How did you come into the position as the hygiene team leader?

A: I started out as dental assistant and the doctor saw potential in me and believed in me. We started departmentalizing and growing each department.

Q: What are some of the changes you've noticed in the hygiene department?

A: Two big things that have created engagement were that we gave each hygienist a project to feel more part of the team, take on ownership, and build morale. It helped the hygienists feel engaged and realized they had more of a role instead of just "cleaning" teeth. Also, everyone carries a card with their number on it to hold them accountable. At any point you can ask for their number and they know what it is.

Q: Was it tough for the doctor to transfer the responsibility over to the hygienists?

A: In the beginning the doctor felt like he needed to do a lot. Now he is starting to let go of a lot more stuff and with the coaching from SI he's been allowing the leaders to take on more. He also sees the results and the numbers speak for themselves. Everyone is passionate and engaged!

Q: What are some ways you celebrate wins?

A: We have lunches and spa days. We just went and saw the play, Wicked. We went to Cirque de Soleil and a lunch and shopping spree. We are getting better at celebrating wins.

Q: Any words of wisdom to listeners as a hygiene team leader?

A: Checking in with each hygienists and asking them what you can do to help them reach their goals. They are not working for us we are working for them.