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# Business vs clinical manager

**Michael Bentley** discusses the roles of both the business manager and the clinical manager

Throughout my 17-year career I have managed several teams, and one thing that has dramatically changed in this time is the requirement for a tiered approach to managing a dental practice.

### The role of the practice manager

In the last five years it has become increasingly apparent to me that practice managers (PMs) are overwhelmed. They are working incredibly long hours to try and keep up with the increasing demands on them whilst balancing their historic job. I say historic job as it is not time to take responsibility that the practice manager's job role has changed?

Why are businesses treating the practice managers the same? The dental industry has recognised that the role has changed whilst on the ground it still has years to catch up. The PM is simply being asked to do too much and therefore their focus becomes misplaced – not on purpose but because of the sheer volume of expectation on them. So what can be done?

### Two distinct roles

Within my practice I have clearly identified two distinct roles in running a dental practice. The first is the clinical manager (CM) – this role needs to take on reactive management and be directly in control of the day to day running of the practice. The second role is the business manager (BM) who is able to oversee and support the CM whilst now proactively managing the overall vision and finance of the business.

The CM role should incorporate the following nine key responsibilities:

### Clinical manager

- Stock management
- Diary management
- Staffing/rotas/holidays
- CQC management
- Repairs and maintenance
- Staff welfare
- Clinical update meetings
- Clinical training
- Supporting evidence for capability.

The BM role should incorporate the following nine key responsibilities:



Through a period of vision planning I have found a way to competently identify the right person to delegate and to train in my reactive responsibilities

### Business manager

- Vision planning
- Finance/trading account/KPI's
- Marketing/social media
- Customer service/brand
- Professional development
- Patient complaints
- Recruitment/contracts
- Performance management
- Appraisals.

### So why have these two roles?

I speak from personal experience and I have found the only way to be proactive and to take on new challenges and changes within my practice was by finding a way of delegating reactive tasks that were eating into my existing time.

Through a period of vision planning I have found a way to competently identify the right person to delegate and to train in my reactive responsibilities.

I revisited all of my systems so that I could train the nine key responsibilities in order to continue the same fair consistent and stable success. The next challenge was to introduce these changes to the management chain and to establish the role formally with my team.

The results for me are conclusive; I have added a professional role that allows me to run my business proactively. The CM and BM combination is a winner and by putting in this structure your long-term success will reap rewards from this implementation. **D**



**Michael Bentley** has been a practice manager both within optics and dentistry. In 2001 he took his first management post in dentistry and has more than 15 years' experience

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