

# PRACTICELIFE

## Dealing with negative team members

**Michael Bentley** discusses how to deal with negative team members in your practice

One of the first things I smell out when I go into a practice is the negative team member. For me, they may as well put a neon sign on their head saying 'I am a pain in the ass' as it always shows. These people may try to hide in the dark but I am afraid their game face does not work on me. By the end of the day the practice manager will come to me and talk about their negative team member. I loathe negative team members but I also know that you have a responsibility to sort these individuals before they turn others into a witch's coven.

In my experience, there are four ways in which you end up with a negative team member:

1. Your recruitment process is not thorough enough to explore an individual. Ten-minute interviews by the

business manager do not cut the mustard and can lead to a hideous HR pathway

2. You inherit a negative team member taking over the practice. These are established negative team players and think they are untouchable
3. Too many changes can sometimes change a loyal employee to the dark side. You have somehow lost their respect and thus the negativity starts
4. A bored staff member who is not challenged and simply cruising along. Therefore their new daily hobby is to create negativity.

There are, of course, others but keeping it simple these are the top answers. So what do you do? Do nothing? This is what most practices do and I understand why – you dread the work involved in dealing with them and quite honestly it is draining on your emotions to sort.

### The solution

However, all of that said the only way to deal with these



people is to face the situation head on. If you have one of these team members you can't start directly with them, my recommendation is you start by reinducting everyone. Firstly, you need to take all the team back to the start and work from there. Then you implement a series of systems and standards that you expect from all. You train this standard for each system so that every team member gets the same fair and consistent training. The team must sign to say they understand this training and this becomes a capability. A welcome telephone call with a smile on their face, uplift in voice and a script to follow is a system. The negative ones will unlimitedly fail at these new systems or by some miracle now comply. The beauty of this process is that you are collecting evidence that can eventually lead to dismissal for lack of capability.

**I loathe negative team members but I also know that you have a responsibility to sort these individuals before they turn others into a witch's coven**

### Get organised

Does this sound easy? Well it is if you are trained and you feel confident. The other vital component is writing the systems; you cannot train what you don't have a system for – this may be your starting point. Once you have started to train on your systems see how the negative team member responds. **D**

**MICHAEL IS** a business consultant for Horton Consulting. Contact Michael on [info@horton-consulting.com](mailto:info@horton-consulting.com), [www.horton-consulting.com](http://www.horton-consulting.com) or call 01279 882720.



Michael Bentley has been a practice manager both within optics and dentistry. In 2001 he took his first management post in dentistry and has 15 years' experience as a practice manager and seven years of experience working as a treatment coordinator. Michael is a qualified and GDC registered DCP. Michael has managed several teams throughout his career and has on many occasions had to deal with the team members he calls the dementors of practice life.

The easy equation to create a smile sensation.

a simple, easy, beautiful SMILE

Aura is the new ultra universal restorative system designed to make your chairside restorations easy, fast, predictable and reliable. Using a simple and logical equation, enamel plus dentine, you can achieve natural looking results every time. Aura also offers outstanding handling, sculpting and easy polishing to bring your restoration to life.

To order or for more information visit [www.sdi.com.au](http://www.sdi.com.au)

**SDI** Your Smile. Our Vision. [www.sdi.com.au](http://www.sdi.com.au)

SDI Dental Limited  
Email [uk@sdi.com.au](mailto:uk@sdi.com.au) or contact Kelly on 00800 022 55 734 for details of your nearest SDI representative

**Hands on courses now available!**  
Please contact Jayne on 07970 156 178 or email [Jayne.Cahill@sdi.com.au](mailto:Jayne.Cahill@sdi.com.au) for details of your nearest course

**aura**  
ultra universal restorative material