

BUSINESS & MARKETING CORNER**Strengthening Your Business Through Internal Marketing**

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I am a firm believer that people will rise to the level of expectation that one has of them. By the time I went into business for myself, I had very specific ideas about how I wanted my office to run. Because my patients expect and deserve my very best, I have spent my 28-year career training to be the best possible clinician. Moreover, I feel that my staff should also have the opportunity to train to be the best that they can be. In business many will say that treating the customer right is foundational to your success. I would take that a bit further and say if you treat your employees right, they will, in turn, take good care of your customers.

When I opened my doors for business, I felt that there were three areas that needed special attention: 1) a staff that was courteous, polite, and well informed, 2) a clinic that was clean and well organized and 3) a level of clinical expertise commensurate to delivering the highest level of care. My OCD personality pretty much took care of the clean and well-organized part, and my MDT training guaranteed the highest level of clinical expertise. The area where the most potential rested was in my staff. Your staff is an extension of you, and they will follow the tone you set. In the past I have worked at different facilities that invested ample time, money and effort into guaranteeing that the physical therapists were well-trained, but no investment was made in the administrative staff. This was a philosophy that I never really understood.

When a patient comes in to see you, they are not happy. They are in pain, they are frustrated, they are tired, they are worried about their health and well-being and they have taken time out of their busy day to see you. It is imperative that they are met with a friendly, courteous, well informed front-end staff. When hiring an office staff member, I look for one simple trait: Is s/he interested in being the best that s/he can be? If the answer is yes, from that point on it's all about the training. Beyond the day-to-day operations of running an office, I spend many hours training my staff in basic customer care principles by carving out time for crucial professional development. The foundation of this training begins with *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey, which I require all my employees to read. I have found that these basic principles transfer well into our day to day operations.

My office is a Certified McKenzie Clinic. It is who we are. I market it as a McKenzie Clinic and everything we do revolves around the principles of MDT. So, as you can imagine, all my employees are well versed in the Method, including my front office staff. I schedule regular meetings and allot time for my staff to sit and learn, review, or revisit our McKenzie Method library. Both the McKenzie Institute USA's website and Facebook page have become an excellent resource for these continuing education sessions. By using these sites my staff become very familiar with them, and they, in turn, are able to share this information with their families, friends and, more importantly, my patients. This all goes back to my basic philosophy of treating your employees right and empowering them with knowledge. They will, in turn, use that knowledge to empower others.

This idea is foundational to us at McAllen Physical Therapy, Inc. My staff is able to reinforce the information and principles that I have already discussed with my patients. The better understanding my staff has, the better understanding my patients will have. Informed patients are then better able to share and relay the McKenzie Method principles to their friends, families, and, many times, their physicians. I feel that much of my success and growth as a company has not only come from me being a MDT clinician, but also from taking the time and effort to train my staff in the same principles. All of the information you need to do the same is at your fingertips! I encourage everyone of you to consider the idea of training all members of your staff in MDT. It can only strengthen your practice.