

## Building a Better Team

By Mary Schmidt

Improving the work environment within the practice is the responsibility of everyone, doctors and staff alike. There are many things that each person can personally do to contribute to the overall wellbeing of the practice and build a better team. To get you started, here are 10 things YOU can do to improve your work environment:

**Be Friendly:** Being good at your job is important, but if you bring a dark cloud with you to work everyday, you can have a huge negative impact on your practice. Improve the atmosphere in the office by smiling and say hello to everyone each morning. Set the tone for friendliness.

**Offer to Lend a Hand:** If you simply walk by someone when they are swamped, don't be surprised when they don't jump in and help you. Grab the phone if it's ringing off the hook, file a few charts if you have a moment before the next patient arrives, neaten up the reception area, grab a dust rag and clean a display.

**Be First in Line:** There are thankless tasks and chores that always need to be done in the practice...if you volunteer to take it on everyone benefits, plus the manager and/or doctor won't forget.

**Make it Better:** Don't be the person that everyone has to clean up after. Whether it's in the break room, the dispensing table or the front desk, leaving a mess annoys everyone. Be aware of being a pigpen.

**Lead by Example:** Go out of your way to be helpful in solving a problem or improving a situation. Help with a patient who is difficult, be willing to work late or arrive early if a patient or co-worker needs you.

**Be Aware of Yourself:** Do you irritate your co-workers? Always complaining? Late arrive each morning? Don't brush your teeth after lunch? Take some time to evaluate yourself!

**Allow Everyone to Be Part of the Process:** Don't always be the first one to talk. Be the last to voice an opinion. Listen more than you speak...even if you KNOW the answers.

**Lead with a Positive:** Find opportunities to compliment co-workers. We often discuss each other's shortcomings; how about making it your goal to say something nice to one co-worker every day?

**Reach Out to All Co-Workers:** Do you always eat with the same people? Meet after work with only a few people? Include everyone, stop the gossip train, and assume the best until you are proven wrong.

**Drive the Practice Toward Good Deeds:** Lend a hand to those less fortunate than you. Adopt a family at the holidays, organize your co-workers to volunteer for a local charity or raise funds for a vision charity.

Begin building a better team today...it all starts with YOU!