

# Tips From A Dental Assistant

The role of dental assistants has broadened in recent years, as has the number of assistants who seek to grow in their careers by receiving advanced training. Dental assistants play a key role in providing a quality patient experience, from participating in supportive procedures to direct patient care. Assistants also cultivate meaningful connections with patients, as regularly it is the assistant who answers patient questions and keeps patients relaxed while they receive dental care.

With expanded functions and an ever-increasing list of duties entrusted to them, dental assistants are playing as valuable a role as ever in practices. *Patterson Today* spoke with three assistants who shared insight on their day-to-day functions and how they contribute to the practice.

**PT:** *What inspires you in your work?*

**Amanda Bass:** What inspires me the most about dental assisting is seeing a new patient transform from fearful and ashamed of their dental health, leave at the completion of treatment confident to continue care with us and proud to smile about it.

**Ana Sandaire:** My inspiration comes from every smile of gratitude that I see on the faces of our patients and from the love Dr. Lazare has for dentistry.

**Maria Nayan-Del Alcazar:** There are people who are very self-conscious about their smile. After treating them, they can become a very different person. I find that very fulfilling – the transformation. It's not just what you can see, it's visible in their whole personality.

**PT:** *What type of support or service do you provide the doctor in your practice?*

**Amanda Bass:** As a dental assistant, I do many things, chiefly provide support for Dr. Fischer as well as support for the patient, inventory control, making sure lab cases are sent with all necessary information and are coordinated with the front desk for return, organization of supplies, daily maintenance of CEREC and sterilization of all areas.

**Ana Sandaire:** I try to meet the needs of our office so that everything runs smoothly and our patients always have a pleasant experience.



**Amanda Bass** is a dental assistant for Ariel Dental Care in New Paltz, N.Y.



**Ana Sandaire** is a dental assistant for Dr. Marc Lazare, DDS, MAGD in New York, N.Y.



**PT:** *What service or tool from Patterson plays the largest role in enhancing the way you do your job?*

**Amanda Bass:** That's an easy question for me to answer. As far as service is concerned, my Patterson representative is my right hand. He makes sure my orders are perfect and on time whether I am ordering online or over the phone.

**Maria Nayan-Del Alcazar:** GALILEOS, CEREC and everything that goes along with restorations and tooth replacements, such as crowns and implants. In that, we can all express the artistry in making the tooth really look, feel and function like natural.

**PT:** *Offer some key tips on how other assistants can add value to their teams.*

**Ana Sandaire:** Try to anticipate the doctor's moves, love what you do, enjoy finding creative ways to make your patient's day, and work as a team with your co-workers.

**Maria Nayan-Del Alcazar:** I think everyone should feel like they own the practice. Everyone should feel like they're improving on something, because we are all a part of making a practice better.

**PT:** *What advice would you give someone who was new in the field?*

**Amanda Bass:** First, find an office that suits you and your personality best and one that you can be proud to be part of. Always remember you are of service to your doctor and patients. Often patients are fearful of having dental work. Always take a few minutes to put your patient at ease and reassure them they will be getting the absolute best care from you and your doctor.

**Ana Sandaire:** If you do everything with love and care, success is guaranteed. Every new assistant should always strive to master new skill sets and do whatever they can to add value to the office.

**Maria Nayan-Del Alcazar:** The foundation of trust lies in ethical behavior and honesty, sharing useful knowledge through ideas, and/or experiences among team members.



**Maria Nayan-Del Alcazar** is a dental assistant for East Madison Dental in Tenafly, N.J.

