



# Support for Office Managers

*From peers to Patterson Dental, resources for job satisfaction and a job well-done*

By Heather Colicchio

Eight years ago, I founded the American Association of Dental Office Managers (AADOM) because there was no other organization out there that offered resources specific to the unique challenges faced by dental office managers.

Since then, the title “dental office manager” has become more common and the challenges associated with the job more complex. Managing a dental office today is a multifaceted job, with many systems that must be maintained and updated on a regular basis.

Effective managers realize that, in order to stay on top of everything, they must take advantage of a wide variety of support systems, from peers and online courses, and even their dental distributor.

Dental office management today often goes beyond the traditional role of making sure the schedule is filled and that patient bills are paid on time. Human resources, practice marketing (can you say Facebook?!) and complex financial systems now greet office managers, and the questions they produce can be overwhelming.

How do effective office managers stay on top of everything? Here are just a few ideas:

## 1. Network with peers

- Members of AADOM network online via the member forum by submitting and answering questions by their colleagues. If you’ve ever wanted to discuss a perplexing situation in your office and haven’t known where to turn, this simple online forum is a great first step. Visit [dentalmanagers.com](http://dentalmanagers.com) to learn more.
- Attending the AADOM annual conference is a great way to meet other members in person.
- Patterson Dental offers its Patterson Advantage® members a complementary one-year membership in AADOM. Ask your representative how to sign up!

## 2. Prepare for the unknown

- Stay current with information from a variety of sources and you’ll be more likely to know what’s coming down the pike.
- Well-managed dental practices have tried-and-true systems in place that ensure effective management on a daily basis, even when the industry changes or new regulations are put in place.
- Make time when you are not stressed or under a tight deadline to implement new requirements or make necessary changes.

## 3. Call on your dental distributor

A good dental representative is an often-overlooked resource. I made the decision to partner AADOM with Patterson Dental because they were actively looking for ways to support and educate dental office managers. Today, Patterson has become one of the office manager’s greatest advocates.

Patterson Dental has also become a leading resource within dentistry, offering a full line of HR products to help keep you and your practice in compliance; an absolute must for any good office manager.

## 4. Use the web, but use it right!

Before you begin using social media to promote your practice, ask yourself the following questions developed by Rita Zamora, an authority in social media marketing for dental professionals ([dentalrelationshipmarketing.com](http://dentalrelationshipmarketing.com)):

- **Who will manage your social marketing for you?**  
Will you have a team member handle it or will you seek outside assistance?

- **What will you post on your Facebook page?** What type of content will you be posting on a daily, weekly, monthly and/or occasional basis?
- **How often will you post?** Will your team post on your behalf, “when they have time,” or will you schedule specific days to handle this new task?
- **How will you promote your Facebook page and engage patients?** What strategies will you use to motivate patients to join your Facebook community?
- **Why are you doing this?** Joining Facebook just because everyone else is doing it, is not necessarily the best idea. A major reason for being on Facebook should be to build a thriving community and to grow relationships. This will allow you to attract new patients and retain existing ones.

My advice to stay current and sane, is to gather frequently with your peers, either virtually or at in-person networking events. Learn from one another and remember that you are not alone. Ask your Patterson representative about membership in AADOM and begin the sharing!

*Heather Colicchio is the founder and president of the American Association of Dental Office Managers (AADOM). Heather has brought her background in business management and her unique skills in professional networking to help drive the success of AADOM, the largest professional organization of dental office managers in the country. She is also the Chief Editor of *The Observer*, the official news magazine for dental office managers, and serves as executive director for the annual AADOM conference.*

