



Build a team that ‘rocks’ to improve patient care

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It seems everywhere you turn, someone is saying something “rocks,” people are “rock stars” or it is time to “rock ‘n’ roll.” That terminology has become more common, challenging one to put a bit more content and description behind these terms when using them to define building a team that “rocks.”

When working on building the best team, there are specific values, traits, qualities or personality styles you – the practice owner – want. Some join the team with some or all the qualities you desire while others might need some guidance or training to help them improve in one or more areas.

In order for your team to become great, it is important each team member is continually working to improve and grow professionally. No employee is perfect, and if someone on your team thinks he or she is, you might want to find a new team player. Building a rock star team requires a mentality that allows room for growth and a willingness to learn in an effort to improve patient care and the success of your practice.

To assemble an amazing team in your practice, you should seek all different types of strengths. The backbone of a good team is knowing who is strong and in what area, relying on each other while working together to achieve a better result than one team member can do alone. A great team combines each element listed, knowing that with the whole team working toward the same goal, anything can be accomplished.

Breaking this down: ROCKS

■ **Responsible** – definition: Capable of being trusted and morally accountable for one’s behavior.

This is the foundation to building a great team. Those who are responsible are accountable for their actions. They step up when needed. They don’t turn and look away from challenges. Instead, they jump in and do what they can to help situations.

Responsibility can be confused with blame, which is pointing fingers at each other and not taking responsibility

for something. When you have a team that has a foundation of responsibility, each team member is looking to make a difference. Team members understand how they play a part in the bigger picture and always do what they can to improve any situation.

■ **Organization** – definition: An efficient and orderly approach to tasks or an organized body of people with a particular purpose.

First, your team members should be organized in their work. Not everyone needs to be organized to the extent of being “Type A,” but your team should have systems, plans and follow-through to carrying out tasks. It is critical for staff to have a system of organization in place to fulfill their responsibilities.

Organization also relates to a team’s understanding of the practice as a whole. As mentioned, team members need to understand and value they are part of a bigger group and how their roles directly correlate to the success of the practice. You may have a staffer who is not necessarily the most qualified or experienced employee, but that staffer puts all the effort possible into accomplishing tasks. That is highly preferable to a staffer who thinks he or she is the perfect employee but does not work well with others or feels too valuable to put in any hard work toward achieving team goals.

■ **Conscientious** – definition: Wishing to do what is right, especially to do one’s work or duty well and in a thorough manner.

At the end of the day, a great team also is made up of staff who do right. Being conscientious as an employee means you make decisions carefully, have the best interests of the practice and patients at heart, follow policies and guidelines and are a trustworthy member of the team.

To build a team that rocks, everyone needs to be able to rely on each other, believe team members are honest in what they say and do and know everyone is doing the best to ensure they do not drop the ball or let tasks fall through the cracks.

■ **Kind** – definition: Having or showing a friendly, generous and considerate nature.

No one wants to be around someone who is unkind. Staff spend more time with their coworkers than they do their

continued on next page



own families, so working with kind staff makes for a more enjoyable situation. Employees need not walk around with flowers, compliments and smiles every day – that is not realistic. But a good team will have staff who value the thoughts and feelings of others when conducting themselves at work.

In any industry, there are unhappy employees. If a practice has a team of unhappy staff who do not consider the feelings of others, that builds an unhappy office culture. This is not only negative for staff – it also is negative for patient care, as patients can pick up on these sentiments. Being a kind individual means understanding the world does not revolve around one individual. Everyone's feelings matter, and making an effort to be nice is just as critical to job performance as carrying out individual tasks.

■ **Succeed** – definition: To turn out well; to attain a desired object or end.

The final metric that makes employees be considered rock stars is having the desire to succeed in their role – for patients, coworkers and themselves. Success can look different depending on the individual, but mostly, it is about trying to do right. Not every team member is going to be successful from the start or all the time. But if a team member is putting in effort to improve, he or she is in the process of becoming a success. Having a team member who wants to learn, grow and look for ways to be successful is much preferred to one who puts in the bare minimum.

A work in progress

Lastly, it is critical to stay in regular communication with the team on each of these elements. Building a team that rocks is always a work in progress. It is important to recognize employees are not perfect and practices are always changing. An open dialogue with staff on their development in these areas is important, as is



acknowledgement that even a small improvement is a step in the right direction.

This helps team members understand how their efforts are contributing to the practice's success as a whole. Practice leaders should measure themselves against these same five metrics (R-O-C-K-S), which will help reinforce the importance of each. Lead by example, foster open communication and never let anyone on the team forget he or she is a rock star. ■

Additional content is available in the author's webinar recording, [Build a Team that Rocks](#), at [AAOMS.org/CEonline](#).



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