

Training an Expert Staff: Trapēzio's Training Model Leads the Way

Among the many issues facing orthodontists today, identifying and retaining staff members is a recurring challenge that directly impacts both the efficiency of the practice and the care delivered to patients. For orthodontists, when it comes to juggling the myriad of activities involved in running a successful, efficient practice, the task of providing high-quality training standards for both new and existing staff members is often conducted in a less-than-optimal fashion. With the increasing need for professionally-trained staff and orthodontic assistants, orthodontists today have an ideal resource at their disposal for meeting this challenge, namely Trapēzio.

For the past 10 years, Trapēzio—home of the Academy of Orthodontic Assisting (AOA)—has been providing targeted, relevant training curriculum to orthodontic assistants throughout the world. With over 2000 graduates to date, the AOA trains and accredits orthodontic assistants, in addition to providing continuing education courses. Founded by practicing orthodontist Dr. Doug Depew, Trapēzio empowers orthodontists to provide the highest quality care to patients in an environment that benefits the patient, the staff, and the orthodontist. As such, the AOA curriculum is endorsed by the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) for educating and training orthodontic assistants through a platform that provides tangible, measurable results. Course curriculum covers a variety of topics including oral and dental anatomy, intra-oral procedures, appliances, models, infection control, x-rays, patient management, and much more.

With a highly-skilled and professionally-trained staff, orthodontists can more effectively focus their skills on generating treatment plans, interacting with patients and parents, and maintaining an eye on the future of their practice. For orthodontic assistants, the AOAC certificate provides confidence, an established level of specialty-specific expertise, and a sense of ownership in the practice. Combined, these factors drive successful practices forward with a reduced turnover rate among staff, an established regimen for professional growth within the team, and an optimized ability to evolve the practice with a stable, comprehensively-trained team in place.

Says Dr. Todd Gililand of Gilliland Orthodontics in North Mississippi: *"[My team] feels competent to answer more questions, which reduces the load on me. Thus, I can operate more as a CEO than as a manager. In the long run, this increases my productivity and enables me to concentrate on our treatment and vision for the practice."* (*The Bulletin*, April 2009).

Expanding on the relevance and comprehensive nature of the AOA curriculum, noted industry consultant Rosemary Bray says: *"I had the extreme pleasure to observe the AOA in action recently and I was so very impressed. The technical training, the program completeness, the physical environment and the*

personal attention afforded to the students is both remarkable and commendable. I wish I had the opportunity 30 years ago to receive this type of training. KUDOS to Dr. Depew and his team of instructors - truly they have created something they are qualified to teach and most passionate about."

More specifically, the AOA course curriculum includes both online and hands-on components that provide a comprehensive approach to training orthodontic assistants and maintaining continuing education standards. Initial coursework and testing is completed via an online platform. Additionally, "CE Retreats," site-based courses managed by Trapēzio, enable participants to share their insights and experiences, improve in areas of need, learn new skills with the advent of new technologies, and expand their knowledge base in critical areas of patient care. Continued enhancement of staff expertise is a key focus of the AOA curriculum, and graduates are encouraged to participate in CE Retreats to hone their skills after they complete the online curriculum.

Looking towards the immediate future, Trapēzio is increasing its course curriculum to include expanded areas of coverage. These areas are supplemental lessons to the traditional AOA course and include relevant topics such as converting new patients, the biological basis of tooth movement, proper positioning of x-rays, the assistant's role in soft tissue lasers, and orthodontic insurance coding. With the added value of these important topics, Trapēzio is building a truly comprehensive training model to meet the needs of each orthodontic practice.

As orthodontists seek to improve their practice efficiency and patient care standards, employing and retaining a highly-skilled staff falls at the center of those goals. With Trapēzio's AOA curriculum at the heart of educating staff members, orthodontists can continue to enhance their practice-building techniques.

For more information on Trapēzio and the AOA, please visit www.trapezio.com or call (877) 976-4536.

Chad Greer is currently the President of Trapēzio, home of the AOA, located in Acworth, GA. Mr. Greer is a respected industry veteran with over 13 years in the orthodontic business. Most recently, he worked as Vice President of Sales and Product Marketing at TeleVox Software. For more information, Mr. Greer can be reached at (877) 976-4536 or chadg@trapezio.com.