

Practitioner Support Personnel

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Until you begin making frequent and abundant sales of your certification program, support people who can address the needs of your coaches, licensees, and practitioners are unnecessary. In fact, some experts say that, until you start selling a steady 15-20 certification programs a week, you should do all Practitioner Support of your growing network yourself in order to establish a knowledge bank of frequently asked questions, learn about issues that need to be answered with established policies, develop follow up procedures that help with post-purchase reassurance, and uncover other valuable information about coach and practitioner needs.

Once you begin making more frequent sales, however, it's time to free yourself from this task and begin to work on the business—not in it. At this point, practitioner support personnel will become a vital addition to your cash-flow generating staff—and, in fact, can greatly affect how successfully you retain practitioners in your network and continue to sell them more services.

Finding Good Practitioner Support Staff

Good practitioner support staff go the extra mile to help practitioners remain satisfied after their purchase—but they also work under established procedures so that all practitioners are dealt with in the same professional, helpful manner. No single practitioner should be treated any better (or worse) than any other practitioner simply because they scream louder, threaten, flatter the practitioner support team, smooth-talk, manipulate, and so on. Additionally, a good practitioner-support representative does not provide confidential or other information that a practitioner can “latch onto” in order to gain special treatment or concessions.

So where can you find highly skilled practitioner-support professionals?

If you've already in this module how to hire a salesperson and inbound telephone person, you know that you can advertise locally, find people already circulating in your universe or outsource this function. You also know that you should advertise the non-salary benefits of working for your company along with the financial aspects. Additionally, if you pay bonuses to practitioner-support staff for sales made or refunds reversed, you should mention that in your advertising.

One way to handle this function when you are still a small company is to hire a virtual assistant (VA) to handle customer service by phone. This way, you can draw from a larger talent pool (the World) and have your VA receive calls dialed to your practitioner-support line. They'll only charge you for time actually spent providing practitioner support on your behalf. And most all practitioner-support functions are provided by telephone, email or Zoom anyway.

Interviewing Practitioner Support Staff

Like good inbound phone staff, practitioner-support personnel are also articulate, quick-thinking, personable and knowledgeable. They have the ability to learn and understand your methodology and services—backwards and forwards—and can help the practitioner with questions about usage, content, and so on. But most importantly from a sales standpoint, they have the ability to guide a satisfied practitioner to the next most logical purchase or upgrade in their training journey. Because they are often the first point of contact after the sale, practitioner-support personnel can usually upsell practitioners more often than even a trained

salesperson who does not have this level of first-hand contact with the coach or practitioner. By default, a good practitioner-support staffer becomes sort of “junior” salesperson.

For these reasons, your interview questions should focus on determining their level of knowledge, work ethic, attitude, helpfulness, verbal communication, natural sales ability and other qualities. If your certification program is a high-ticket purchase, you need someone who uses good grammar, thinks on their feet, and understands the needs and wishes of affluent buyers. Virtually no amount of training can change bad grammar or articulation, poor listening skills, unhelpfulness, or the inability to grasp how people use your methodology and services.

Planning Your Practitioner-Support Interview Questions

To plan for the interview process, write below the questions you want to ask. Then, add any questions that will help you determine the attitude, work ethic and service-mindedness of your future practitioner-support person. Use your own experience in conducting initial coach or practitioner support for your certification program to create what-if questions that cause the candidate to think about what they would do in certain situations. Jot down your questions below.

Planning Your Practitioner-Support Interview Questions

Work Experience Desired

Specific Skills Desired

Natural Sales Ability/Customer Service/Order-Taking Experience _____

Availability/Hours/Days _____

Knowledge of Your Industry _____

Knowledge of Your Type of Product or Service _____

Attitude/Work Ethic _____

Hiring and Negotiating Pay

For some reason, most companies pay their customer service representatives little more than minimum wage. I think this is a mistake, particularly since they'll be "selling" for you and maintaining your all-important coach and practitioner relationships.

One way to cut down on weekly costs but still hire top candidates is to:

- Hire an assistant who provides part-time services for you along with performing duties for other clients like you. That way, you only pay *only for the actual time they work on your behalf*—not for the time they sit at a desk in your office waiting for emails or the phone to ring. These individuals can be found as virtual assistants, internationally based help desks and technical support departments, and fulfillment centers.
- Pay your full-time practitioner-support representative a lower hourly wage, but pay them bonuses for accomplishing special functions such as order taking, upselling, save-the-sale and more. This way they have a huge incentive to focus on bringing in the cash for you.
- Have your practitioner-support representative handle other duties such as part-time marketing projects management, Internet promotions help, media assistance or other cash-generating staff activity in order to justify the full-time wages you pay.

Defining Practitioner-Support Job Duties

Before you advertise the position or hire a practitioner-support representative, be sure to determine what support services you want them to do for you—including any other duties if you will be combining multiple jobs into one person. The list below will help you get started listing practitioner-support job duties.

- Answer and respond to email inquiries from coaches or practitioners
- Answer and respond to (or forward to sales) email inquiries generated at your website
- Answer the telephone at your company (if you are not hiring an inbound phone answering person)
- Take orders of post-certification merchandise and upsell buyers into additional services
- Coordinate and check on shipments with an outside fulfillment center or your warehouse
- Research order status and shipping issues
- Provide product or service information for post-certification merchandise
- Forward unanswerable questions to the business owner or other department; track reply and report back to customer
- Help write FAQ (frequently asked question) scripts so that common questions are answered appropriately and reliably
- Help determine policies and procedures for handling coach or practitioner inquiries

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