

# Quality Business Keep Your Team Healthy

By Tom Raffio

**D**uring my more than thirty years in the business industry, I have learned, through experience and benchmarking best practice companies, what it takes to run not only a business, but a successful one. What follows is the third article in a series of twelve that will position any business for success.

In my last column I discussed how to develop your employees' skills. While you are developing your team's professional skills, you need to help them remain mentally and physically strong, too. At Northeast Delta Dental we are fortunate to have won many awards for best practices for keeping employees happy, healthy, fit, and productive. In fact, just last year we received the When Work Works award from the Society for Human Resource Management and Families and Work Institute for our flexible workplace initiatives.

A healthy team is a high-performing team. If your employees feel good about themselves and their work/life balance, they will be more successful as they will not worry as much while at work. I cannot recommend instituting flexible work schedules and work-from-home opportunities enough; however, it may not work for certain employees. For example, most of our claims are now paperless but we do receive a few paper claims in the

mail, thus, our mailroom staff does their job best at the office. If you have employees who focus heavily on writing such as annual reports, newsletters, etc., I have found that these employees often write better at home without the distractions of the office. Another way to help your employees balance their lives is to offer flexible work schedules, we allow employees to work a normal work-week in four days instead of five. This flexibility helps employees be successful at work and at home.

Many employees have passions outside of work volunteering with important organizations in the community, something that helps employees feel fulfilled. One way Northeast Delta Dental supports the passion of our employees is by allowing them paid-time off to volunteer with their favorite charity. Of course you need to limit the number of paid-time-off hours you will allow each employee. Another option is to offer financial support to your employees' favorite charities. We have a formal

process at Northeast Delta Dental for employees to apply and of course, again, I suggest you establish an annual financial limit for each employee. All that we ask in return is that the employee who received paid-time-off or financial support for their favorite charity, writes a short article for our employee newsletter to describe their experience.

Keeping your team physically strong and healthy is critical to business success. At Northeast Delta Dental we have a fitness center, in-house Fitness Coordinator, and offer aerobics and yoga classes to our employees. Our goal is to provide employees the support to achieve or maintain fitness – and we offer them financial rewards for meeting their goals. Mental health is equally as important as physical health, and I have heard from many employees over the years that work is a great escape from their personal lives; however, it is important to provide employees assistance through offering a program where they can receive confidential help for any personal challenge.

In summary, any successful business needs to keep their team healthy through supporting the mental and physical health of its employees. A team is only as strong as their weakest link and an unhealthy team is not able to effectively deliver on their promises to their stakeholders or be profitable.

