

# ExecTech

---

## Free ExecTech Guideline

### 30 Ways to Create a Happiness-Based Practice

You spend more time in your office than anywhere else. So if you have no fun at work, the rest of your life is pulled down a bit, even if you earn a sizeable income.

When your practice is an unhappy practice, you have problems with staff members. They have low willingness, frequent conflicts and poor morale.

Patients can also tell when the practice is not cheerful. They dread their appointments, resist your recommendations and, at their first opportunity, switch to a more uplifting practice.

#### Benefits of a Happiness-Based Practice

The first, most important benefit of a cheerful office is your personal well-being. When the practice owner is happy, everyone is happy! You get more done, have less stress and enjoy more profit.

You help more people. Your malpractice-lawsuit risk is reduced. You have fun.

In a happiness-based practice, staff members work as a team. They want to do good work. They even turn down higher-paying jobs to stay with you.

Patients love to come into the happiness-based office. They get better treatment results. They brag about the practice to their friends and family. They make sure you get paid.

#### Recommendations

##### ☐ 1. Improve your manners.

Like a good lubricant, good manners make things run more smoothly while reducing heat and friction.

Words like "Please," "Excuse me," "I'm sorry," "Thank you" are still magical. Saying "Hello" and "Goodbye" to everyone, every day, shows you notice their presence and absence.

Good manners makes difficult work more enjoyable. Bad manners build stress, even when your bad manners are unintentional.

Some doctors admit the reason they are blunt or rude to people is because they want to appear important. "I'm so important I have no time to be pleasant." The truth is, you are important to the degree you can do a good job and help people. The most important people in the world have excellent manners.

##### ☐ 2. Begin your morning by being cheerful.

When you first walk into your office for the day, make yourself start on a positive note, despite all reasons you should be grumpy or serious.

Expect that today will be better than yesterday. Assume everyone will be on your side. "Start every day off with a smile and get it over with." -- W.C. Fields

### **□ 3. Only treat people you truly wish to help.**

You are not a bad doctor if you refer or dismiss a patient because of the patient's nasty personality, reactions to your techniques, foul odors or whatever. Just 2.5% of your patients can cause 80% of your troubles.

Before referring or dismissing a patient, ensure your legal bases are covered. These types of patients are more likely to sue than your favorite types. Discrimination, patient abandonment and bad PR are some of the issues you should consider.

Follow the advice of your malpractice insurer or attorney. Use ExecTech's guideline, "How to Dismiss Patients" for explanations of the applicable laws, sample dismissal letter, warnings and so on.

If you feel you need to treat unpleasant people for a little longer, gradually change your patient base each week to fit your personality.

Patients are happiest when they know you like them.

### **□ 4. Balance your life.**

If one area of your life is in poor condition, it pulls down the other areas. Like a powerful engine, you need all cylinders firing cleanly and precisely.

List each part of your life you want to do well: practice (including areas like patients, staff, management), family, self, other groups and so on. Decide which areas need more of your time, attention and energy, and which areas need less. Adjust and arrange your priorities and schedule accordingly.

You can always improve the quality of your time in each area. You do not necessarily need more time or money to create balance.

For example, you want to improve your family life. Maybe you come home, eat dinner and flop down for a nap or TV. This is not quality family time.

Instead, talk, listen and participate. You and your family enjoy more life with less time.

### **□ 5. Lighten up.**

Break the tension in your office by acting foolish. Examples: Pull a face or talk with a funny voice. Say, "OOOOH NOOOO!" when looking at the patient's chart so it is obvious, you are joking.

Wear your ugliest, most bizarre jewelry or tie (e.g., polka dots, clown faces, fluorescent green) and subtly encourage people to make fun of it; "Do you like my new tie?"

If no one laughs at your tie or jewelry, go buy something worse until they do. Shop in a joke shop or thrift store, if you must.

### **□ 6. List your 10 favorite things about practicing.**

You might find this exercise difficult at first, but keep working on it. Once the ideas start to flow, you'll remember more and more things you love about practicing.

After you have listed at least 10 items, eliminate the ones that you can't do, can't control or shouldn't do.

Focus on adding more time and effort to the items on your list you should do, can do or can control.

Note: This exercise works well for your favorite things about your family or life in general, as well.

### **□ 7. Set a cheerful example.**

If you want staff to be friendly, be friendly to them and patients. If you want your patients to be honest and loyal, be honest and loyal to them and your staff. What you outflow, you inflow.

"If your employees see you enjoying your work, they'll enjoy their work. Remember, we lead by example."-- Wally Amos, Famous Amos Cookies

**□ 8. Decorate the office for holidays.**

With a small amount of time and money, you can add a celebratory tone to your office several times each year. Staff members love getting paid to hang holiday decorations. Patients start their visit with a smile. It's hard to maintain a bad mood when surrounded by Easter bunnies or Halloween masks.

You have several office-decoration opportunities each year, such as Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Independence Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

**□ 9. Make sure you are adequately rewarding yourself.**

ExecTech consultants generally find that all practice owners leave money on the table. Because they do not understand their financial opportunities, or because they feel they do not deserve the money, these doctors do not get the profit they deserve.

Financial opportunities include better sources of new patients, higher fees, more elective care, better collections and overhead controls.

Deserving a significant profit means you recognize your value to society and feel no guilt about accepting your fair rewards.

**□ 10. Protect staff members' images.**

If patients see you do not respect your staff, you hurt your own image. Patients think, "If you think she's such an idiot, why don't you train her?" Others feel upset and want to leave you.

For example, a dentist was blunt and cold to his assistant while giving his patient an exam. The patient said, "I don't feel comfortable here and want to leave." The doctor realized what he had done and apologized to the assistant in front of the patient. The patient decided to stay.

Patients, who see that you and your team are kind and considerate toward each other, believe they can trust you.

**□ 11. Take a five-minute vacation in your private office.**

Put a "do not disturb" note on the door, put on your headphones and listen to your favorite music. The more upbeat, the better.

Alternatively, read a few pages of your current novel.

**□ 12. Balance the penalties with rewards.**

Focus on the benefits of an action, not just the potential damage. Examples:

Instead of telling yourself, "I have to make \$10,000 this month or else!" say, "I'd love to make \$10,000 this month!"

Instead of telling a patient, "You have to take this pill after every meal or you'll stay sick," you say, "If you take this pill after every meal, you'll get rid of that infection and I'll be happy with you."

Instead of telling an employee, "You must get these forms faxed by 5:00 or else," you say, "Get these forms faxed by 5:00 so we get paid on time . . . and we could use the cash!"

**□ 13. Recognize your staff members have more value to your practice than your patients.**

A good employee can boost your profit. He or she can make your practice a joy and a pleasure for you and your patients.

Give employees unlimited respect. It costs you nothing, but yields great results. Giving respect has no downside.

Protect your staff. For example, if a patient complains about an employee, keep some grains of doubt that the complaint is true. Never jump to a bad conclusion regarding your staff.

Invest in your employees, as well. If an employee proves he or she can do the job and hopes to stick with you, why not increase this person's value to the practice? For example, ExecTech's coaching programs make 3-star employees into a 5-star employees. Investing in seminars, workshops, tapes, books and other training aids, especially your time, will also pay off handsomely.

**☐ 14. Buy humorous page-a-day calendars.**

Get a different calendar for each area. The best jokes get spread around. Page-a-day calendars are also known as daily boxed calendars.

Examples: "You Know You're a Redneck If . . ." "The Far Side" and "Medical Cartoon-a-day" ([www.calendars.com](http://www.calendars.com)).

**☐ 15. If you are a perfectionist, lighten up a little.**

Face the facts. You won't do a 100% perfect job every time. Some patients are never completely happy. Staff members make mistakes.

If you accept that things will go wrong at times, no matter what you do, you enjoy more peace of mind.

**☐ 16. Hold staff meetings at different locations.**

Getting everyone out of the office is not only fun, it can improve the meeting. No one can run to their desk, take a call or talk to a visitor. A different environment also breaks up tension.

Try a restaurant, a park or your house.

**☐ 17. Own up to mistakes.**

Each time you make a mistake, own up to it, make it right and move on. Mistakes bother you if you pretend you are not responsible or if you try to shift the blame.

Apologize and make up the damage if someone is upset by your actions or any of your staff members' actions.

You are not weak or stupid if you apologize. Brave, honest people routinely admit to errors and apologize.

In fact, if you apologize to a patient and make up the damage, the patient often becomes a better patient than before. Apologies also prevent lawsuits.

**☐ 18. Work only with people you like.**

One of the joys of being your own boss is the right to choose those with whom you want to work. Choose those who make you feel cheerful. Do not work with those who pull you down or ruin your day.

**☐ 19. Make your office space more joyful.**

Your first impression starts with your office space. If it's dreary, worn out or dull, your patients' moods are not improved. Yet if the first impression is upbeat, you start the patients' experiences on a good foot.

Cheerful colors, upbeat music, clean air and bright lights can give everyone who enters a little lift.

**☐ 20. Make loud, enthusiastic sounds.**

For example, yell “WONDERFUL!” when a patient describes how much better he or she feels. Yell “ALL RIGHT!” when a staff member meets a tough quota.

Add substance to the wins in your practice with high-fives and back pats.

**☐ 21. When talking about people who are not in the room, pretend they are in the room.**

For example, staff members should not say, “Yeah, Mr. Big Shot thinks we’ll get this by Wednesday,” behind his back and then say, “Yes, Dr. Johnson, we’ll have this done by Wednesday,” to his face.

Cowards love to criticize people behind their backs. “I don’t like how Jill talks to her boyfriend all day.” Brave people face the person. “I’ll talk to Jill about talking to her boyfriend.” “Jill, we’d all like to chat with someone during work hours, but we really should get some work done, don’t you think?”

You shoot yourself in the foot if you criticize others. For example, instead of saying, “I think Anderson is a jerk; he’s rough on his patients and bad for the practice,” you say “I have the details of complaints from two of Dr. Anderson’s patients. Before I give this to him, do you know of any other patients who were unhappy with him?”

If you pretend the person you are discussing is in the room, you will not say something you will come to regret. You never know when the person might just happen to be around the corner!

**☐ 22. Improve your knowledge and skills.**

Ask yourself, “What would make practicing more enjoyable, if I had a new or improved skill?”

For example, if you felt practice would be more enjoyable if you were using the latest computer technology, you go learn more about it.

Simply taking a single step toward improving a skill or gaining certain knowledge that will make your practice more enjoyable, makes your practice more enjoyable!

Learning is a constant process and essential to the happiness-based practice.

**☐ 23. Keep life forms in the office.**

Fresh flowers and living plants add pleasure to indoor spaces. Fish or small animals can give everyone some inexpensive entertainment.

For example, a pediatric practice is more popular with its patients if it has sand crabs, frogs or turtles that the kids can touch.

**☐ 24. Add fun to staff training.**

Successful practice owners give a few minutes of training as part of each weekly staff meeting.

Add fun to this training by demonstrating how NOT to do something. For example, how they should NOT handle patient complaints.

People rarely forget lessons they learned when laughing.

**☐ 25. Buy your way out of things you hate to do so you can do the things you love.**

If you hate paperwork, hire an assistant who does as much of your paperwork as possible so you have more time to treat patients or leave early.

If you hate hiring people, train a personnel manager to do everything except make the final hiring decision. If you hate computers, pay an expert to handle your systems. You can then spend more time listening to Beethoven or Beyonce.

The more money you have, the greater your choices. From doing or not doing your yard work to driving or not driving your limo. This is one way you can buy happiness.

**□ 26. Include your happiness in your decisions.**

When making decisions, consider what is best for your practice, your patients, your finances and your happiness. Ask questions like these: “Will making this change make me happier?” “As well as boosting our income, will this new equipment make me happier?” “Does this new associate contract make me happier?”

**□ 27. Get out.**

If you are depressed, angry, outraged or upset, go take a short walk. Get out of your practice before you ruin your image or make a mistake.

Clear thinking is difficult when your negative emotions are in control. Removing yourself for a few minutes can snap you out of the problem and prevent you from shooting yourself in the foot.

**□ 28. Stay challenged.**

If your game is too small, you get stuck in “unsolvable” problems.

For example, after owning your practice for a few years, you pay off your loans, buy a big house and take an expensive vacation. You have it made! But you stick at your plateau.

Practicing becomes boring, tedious and difficult. You are not challenged.

You may even recreate your old challenges. You build up new debt, have house problems and have a difficult time taking vacations. You solve these challenges at times, but they always return. Until you start a new game.

If you are not challenged, set some new, exciting goals. Stretch your capacity and do something incredible.

**□ 29. Give prizes.**

Print your practice logo on shirts, baseball caps, coffee mugs, pens or whatever. Pass the items out as rewards to staff members, patients who refer and others who deserve an acknowledgment.

As well as encouraging more support, giving out prizes makes you notice the many positive actions people take for you and your practice.

**□ 30. Make others happy.**

It’s impossible, absolutely impossible, to remain gloomy, dissatisfied, angry, depressed, irritated, apathetic, moody, sad, hostile or grumpy after you make someone else happy.

Making someone happy is more than satisfying a patient, thanking a referral source or acknowledging an employee. It’s kindling good feelings for them, looking them in the eye and giving them a boost.

Mechanical law does not apply. You do not lose happiness if you give happiness to another. Instead, you get back more than you give. Your supply is unlimited.

## **Additional Recommendations**

1. Read the ExecTech booklet, *Seven Steps to Becoming a Happier, Wealthier Practice Owner* at [www.exectechweb.com/sevensteps.htm](http://www.exectechweb.com/sevensteps.htm) or receive a hard copy by contacting the office nearest you.

2. Complete ExecTech's Practice Analysis Questionnaire. For more details, visit [www.exectechweb.com/practiceanalysis](http://www.exectechweb.com/practiceanalysis).

3. Schedule a complementary telephone consultation for 30-60 minutes. Learn how ExecTech can help you increase your profit, decrease your stress and reach your goals.

Contact the office nearest you to schedule an appointment.

ExecTech of Northern California, LLC  
21760 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 100  
Cupertino, CA 95014  
800- 555-6063 or 408-253-1700  
800- 566-1559 or 408- 253-1703 fax  
[noca@exectechweb.com](mailto:noca@exectechweb.com)

ExecTech of Florida, LLC  
2856 Chelsea Place North  
Clearwater, FL 33759  
800-340-6737 or 727-796-8000  
800-804-5420 or 727-791-1800 fax  
[fl@exectechweb.com](mailto:fl@exectechweb.com)

ExecTech of Southern California, LLC  
3500 West Olive Ave., Suite 300  
Burbank, CA 91505  
888-788-2777 or 818-752-8890  
888-788-7770 or 818-752-8896 fax  
[soca@exectechweb.com](mailto:soca@exectechweb.com)

ExecTech of Colorado, LLC  
2 West Dry Creek Circle, Suite 100  
Littleton, CO 80120  
888-361-8400 or 303-290-9993  
866-801-1456 or 303-221-1846 fax  
[co@exectechweb.com](mailto:co@exectechweb.com)