Outsourcing human resources

Just how much HR can a practice outsource? We wanted to know so we asked some experts

By Robin Goodman, Group Editor

One day I was chatting with Dr. Lorin Berland, the editor in chief of Cosmetic Tribune, and he mentioned how much outsourcing his human resources has saved him. So I decided to get the full story from Berland’s Dental Practice Specialties magazine. As a business owner, dentists are faced with managing increasingly complex employment issues, including government compliance, employee benefits, compensation, payroll, payroll tax compliance, unemployment claims and much more.

Most dental practices already outsource one or more of the above tasks using a piece-meal approach. This requires the dentist to manage multiple vendors that each specialize in one area, such as payroll processing, employee benefits or government compliance. Unfortunately, these vendors don’t work together, so it is up to the dentist to coordinate their efforts.

For example, an employee termination would likely trigger activity in three areas and would require the dentist to contact three separate vendors.

Odyssey OneSource enables the practitioner to integrate all employment-related activities into one simple outsourcing arrangement. As a PEO, Odyssey OneSource enters into a co-employment relationship with the dentist’s employees.

This enables Odyssey to directly assume many of the liabilities that fall to the practitioner as their employer, and more importantly, assume responsibility for the time-consuming and non-productive tasks required of employers.

What problems does Odyssey OneSource help solve?

Most dentists learn about HR management the hard way, by encountering problems. This reactive process can be very costly in terms of dollars, goodwill and time. A typical dental practice simply cannot justify the cost of a HR manager, so Odyssey OneSource has created an outsourced solution that goes a step further by assuming many of the employer liabilities that clinicians shoulder today.

As the employer of record with government agencies, Odyssey assumes the liability for payroll, payroll tax compliance, unemployment claims, EEOC claims, fiduciary obligations and more.

Like larger organizations, dentists can benefit from strategic HR practices. Strategic HR focuses on recruiting and retaining the best employees, compensating them properly, providing competitive employee benefits, offering training and development, and monitoring and measuring employees’ performance.

Over time, these are the activities that make a good dental practice a great dental practice.

Our program enhances top-and bottom-line organizational performance by strengthening a practice’s most important asset — employees’ performance.

Does Odyssey OneSource have programs expressly for dental practices?

Yes, as part of our commitment to the dental industry, we have created a web portal especially for dentists and specialists. www.odysseysources.com/dental Dentists are well educated as clinicians, but often insufficiently trained in business management and labor regulations.

Odyssey partners with practice owners to help them grow their business through a full range of strategic human resource administration and management solutions.

Our human resources experts have an intimate understanding of the laws and labor regulations that affect a practice. By letting Odyssey’s subject-matter experts handle the ever-growing number of complex issues associated with being an employer, a clinician can put even more focus on his or her patients.

Can you give us a few specific examples of Odyssey OneSource’s solutions?

Odyssey recognizes that each dental practice is unique. We get to know each practice, the clinicians and team members in order to tailor our highly customizable program especially for them. Here are some questions that we ask during our initial consultation:

Would you like to upgrade your employee benefits?

Odyssey provides health, dental, life and vision insurance options that are vastly more comprehensive than a typical dental practice can obtain on its own. We have several options available in order to suit the needs of different practices.

One popular option lets the practice enjoy the tax benefits of top-rated PPO at very attractive rates by incorporating health savings accounts, or HSAs.

The IRS reports that one out of every three employers has been assessed a penalty for a payroll tax mistake, with total penalties totaling billions of dollars.

In addition, given the ever-changing nature of tax regulations, it’s easy to make an error that can
grossly affect the practice’s bottom line. Odyssey’s integrated solution relieves the clinician of payroll tax liabilities.

Is your practice in compliance with all state and federal labor regulations?

An essential element of human resources is reducing an employer’s liability. From written policies to dispute resolution, dentists depend on Odyssey OneSource to anticipate and avoid potential HR nightmares.

Odyssey provides a thorough HR assessment at the onset of our arrangement in order to identify specific areas of concern. We reduce a clinician’s exposure to employee claims and suits by customizing practice-specific training and providing employment practices liability insurance, or EPLI, that covers the clinician in the event of a claim.

Dental-specific safety training is also available. This allows the dentist to refocus his or her internal compliance efforts to patient-related risk mitigation.

Is your practice in compliance with all applicable OSHA regulations?

In today’s litigious society, practices must plan for potential problems. Odyssey’s proactive approach to risk management helps to maintain a safe and productive work environment.

Our comprehensive solution helps a clinician maximize the practice’s biggest investment — the employees — by minimizing job-related hazards and managing claims that do occur.

Odyssey employs certified safety professionals that are knowledgeable about OSHA guidelines and risk management best practices.

Does your practice maximize retirement savings opportunities for the clinician and his or her employees?

One of Odyssey’s key benefits is our executive deferred compensation plan, which offers highly compensated professionals the opportunity to defer up to $100,000 in annual earnings using a 409a plan.

This allows the clinician to defer income until a later date, helping the dentist to accumulate wealth by placing him or her into a lower tax bracket.

The tax savings alone often exceeds the entire cost of our service.

The practice’s employees can also benefit from a 401(k) plan that we administer. We have investment advisors to assist employees with their investment decisions.

The practitioner can decide whether or not to match employee contributions and can even offer a profit-sharing option if desired.