

A few years ago, I decided to take a step back from the day-to-day view of running my office and get a bigger look at my practice, my goals and the direction I wanted to take. There were many successful parts of the practice, but I felt we could do even better and I didn't want small frustrations to accumulate into bigger issues.

About that time I was contacted by Silkin Management Group, a nationally recognized practice management firm in Portland, Oregon. They offered me a free evaluation of my practice and it seemed like just the right opportunity at the right time. In Silkin's analysis, they showed me why I had become unsettled about the future of my practice. Up until that time, our management strategies were based upon trial and error or intuitive steps that left me uncertain that I was truly covering all the management bases. I'm well trained to care for patients but I simply never got the management education required to run a successful practice, especially in this economy.

It was a relief to me to find out that I didn't have to reinvent the wheel. Paying attention to management is one thing but having the time and energy to formulate and implement workable systems seemed overwhelming. Silkin outlined a simple approach that I could realistically execute with common-sense steps I knew would make mine a stronger practice. It was a big decision to hire Silkin, but I knew something had to change and I was more comfortable than I expected moving forward.

Right away my confidence was confirmed. Silkin started by showing me the unnecessary habits we had fallen into and how to eliminate them without causing any harm. They then gave me the needed systems we actually wanted to use. What a difference that made! Before long all our efforts aligned and we had a streamlined method of dealing with each situation in the best interest of the patient in front of us. My staff became trained, which empowered them to do more and made it easy to hold them accountable for their work. My stress level reduced and I am now [focused more on treating patients and less on the management of my team. For any practitioner, that is HUGE.](#) We also found ease in attracting and keeping new patients, which is an ongoing challenge in any practice, but is a stable component for us now.

As a result, we grew 20% last year, which exceeded my expectation and validated my decision to look at the management side of the practice. The problem never was if we could or wanted to help more patients. We simply weren't organized to do it before. The Silkin program kept us focused and assured, which meant all we had to do was follow simple guidelines to get where we wanted to go.

Now I tell others what it took me too long to figure out for myself. If you are frustrated with where your practice is and feel haven't

