

The TOP 5 things to consider when looking at a Virtual Team for your Allied Health Practice

When your business starts to grow and you are spending more time on administration, phone calls with clients, billing and invoicing, advertising, recruiting new staff, and marketing, then you know it is time to explore options of getting help onboard.

There are a couple of ways to do this:

- ★ Employ a part time receptionist
- ★ Employ a full time receptionist/Practice Manager
- ★ Or look at engaging a **Virtual Practice Manager** - who works offsite for your business

The first two options above require staff management, wages, PAYG, super, workers compensation, office set up, extensive training and no back up when they are on sick or annual leave – employing a Virtual Practice Manager means there is no sick leave or annual leave to worry about, training is done, no onboarding/wages, setting up an office space, finding work for them when it is quiet or staff management as well

It might sound a bit scary, weird or crazy, but we have been working with Allied Health Providers for the past 12 years and have successfully worked out the easiest way to work with our clients to provide a successful partnership from afar, so let's dive right in and learn more.

Here are the top 5 things that you, as a business owner should consider when engaging a virtual team.

- ★ **Does the team have an understanding on how an Allied Health Practise works?**
- ★ **Can they provide a customised approach to phone answering services?**
- ★ **What types of effective and efficient communication channels are in place?**
- ★ **Do they already have knowledge of key systems and technology you use?**
- ★ **Is there capacity to assist in business growth?**

Does the team have an understanding on how and Allied Health Practise works?



It is important that you work with a business that has significant experience in the Allied Health sector for a number of reasons:

- ★ They will have an understanding of the types of calls that will come through – anything from an elderly person needing their toe nails cut to a call from client who may need to see a Psychologist.
- ★ They will have empathy and a caring nature
- ★ They will have a high level of customer service
- ★ They will have knowledge of Medicare items, Rebates, APHRA guidelines
- ★ They will have an understanding of the importance of referral letters, GP referrals,
- ★ They will most likely have knowledge of the most common Practice Management Programs



Can they provide a customised approach to phone answering services?

Many virtual businesses will not be able to customise the services that you are currently providing in your business as they might not have enough staff to answer the phones and they might not have the knowledge of the practice management programs. Chat with the virtual team to ensure they can ask all the important information on the phone in the first call –building relationships with your clients - to ensure they have given a comprehensive overview of your services. It might be that they need to explain what happens in a language assessment or how much a rebate is for an appt. Customer service has to be a priority with empathy and extensive listening skills an important value of both businesses (your businesses and the virtual team).



What types of effective and efficient communication channels are in place?

How are you going to communicate with your virtual team? Think about all the things you do now, write down a list and ask them how to communicate this with you. It might be that you would like to screen new clients to ensure suitability for your business – so there are specific questions they can ask. It might be that they need to send out information to clients in a welcome pack – how is this done? Can they set up a customised email address on your behalf so it looks like they are sitting right next to you in your practice? Can they set up a customized voicemail? Can they offer efficient options to communicate that you might not have been using before... for Eg. programs like Slack and Trello – which are online ways of communicating instantly. How are they going to manage your nervousness and anxiousness of somebody else taking over the calls and converting clients into your business... building trust, openness and constant communication channels will help you ease back into the clinical work that you love to do and relinquish control of the administration of your business.... Can you imagine how amazing this would feel?



Do they already have knowledge of key systems and technology you use?

How awesome would it be to find a virtual team that already knows the practice management program that you use, how fabulous would it be that you don't have to train the team on how to use the program. (They might even have tips and tricks that could assist you in using the program better.) How amazing that there is more than one person in that team with that knowledge as well – a great back up for your business – knowing you have constant support and follow up and point of contact for your clients. Is a holiday looking more realistic now?



Is there capacity to assist in business growth?

What happens when you decide to grow your practice and take on more staff, more days, more hours. Do you know if the service and team can look after you? Some services just offer answering the phones and sending through messages.... but don't you want more? Don't you want to work with a team of people who are heavily invested in your business, love what you do, love what they do and are your business partner just in a virtual environment...If you end up working with a team that has been in the allied health space for some time, you will also find they have knowledge of other services such as marketing, branding, advertising, recruitment... so just ask... you never know what options might be suitable to you and your practice.

Interested in learning more, please contact Karen Glass on karen@timewellspent.com.au