



The Associate Agreement

You want to make the Associate relationship a wonderful experience for everybody involved. Life is too short to be in a business relationship for eight hours a day with a colleague from hell.

How do you create a successful Associate relationship? Here are some of the key ingredients:

1. A sharing of values and philosophies as they pertain to the treatment of patients, and staff.
2. A common passion for continuing education.
3. The practice being able to support another dentist.
4. A written Associate Agreement.
5. Both parties being willing to share and accept advice and recommendations.
6. The Principal being genuinely interested in the Associate's success, which includes mentoring and assigning of challenging patient treatments.
7. A mutual understanding where the relationship is going long-term, e.g. ownership of practice.

The arrangement should be in writing and completed prior to the Associate working in the practice. A written agreement forces the parties to consider all elements of the ensuing relationship. It underscores the importance of the relationship, minimizes misunderstandings and avoids disagreements.

Here are some of the basic provisions to be included in the agreement. The sample clauses shown here are for illustration only. Do not use these samples without engaging a lawyer.

Resist the urge to save a few dollars by drafting your own agreement. It may not be worth the paper it's written on. A well-crafted legal agreement is like an insurance policy, as it facilitates the process to resolve disputes without resorting to any legal action.