



By Laurelyn Higgins

## Team building a big part of dental hygiene workshop

The dental hygiene professional development workshops we conduct at Smile Dental in Townsville move into their third year of operation in 2007. The “Develop the Hygienist/Develop the Practice” program has evolved and developed since it was first offered in 2004, as has a range of people enrolling.

Our October 2006 workshop has proven

team building, so we encourage practitioners to bring as many staff as they can. The more the merrier.

Dental practitioners know that patients don't value what they don't understand. The same goes for our staff. Knowledgeable, well-trained staff is the practice's greatest asset, delivering improvements in patient care, profitability and staff retention through greater job satisfaction.

We have a highly effective team at Smile Dental, and the dental hygienist is an integral member of the practice, involved in educating team members as well as patient care. This workshop is the product of this experience, and many different members of the practice are involved in its presentation.

We therefore encourage practices to attend as a team-so each member can appreciate how it all comes together, and so they can come together and put it to practice.

The workshop is designed to be relevant to the different members of the practice, and engage different learning styles, combining presentations and hands-on activities so everyone under-



*Emphasising the hospitable as well as clinical side of patient care.*

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stands. The presentation of the workshop is also a demonstration of staff potential-promoting effective use of manpower and resources. For instance, our hygiene coordinators give hand massages while the hygienist performs certain treatments-so we give a hand massage in the workshop.

Another important aspect of the workshop experience is the time spent together away from the practice. There's a big social component to the workshop, and we encourage participants to make a weekend of it. It's no coincidence we hold our workshops on a Friday and Saturday!

In a nutshell, it's all about working better, together, and having a good time.

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*Demonstrate by example: workshop participant Susan receives a hand massage from Smile Dental's hygiene coordinator Amelia Smith.*



*Workshop leader Laurelyn Higgins demonstrates a screening test.*

to be one of the most interesting and illuminating to date. Three members of a Sunshine Coast dental practice attended the October workshop. They'll be returning in 2007 with their entire team of 14 staff.

Evidently, practitioners are beginning to see the value in the workshops for the whole team. The workshop provides an ideal opportunity for group training and



*It isn't all work and no play: the workshop also provides a valuable opportunity for team building and meeting peers.*