



The Top 20 Questions Associates Should Ask (But never do!)

I'll be honest....I'm looking for an associate.

I may send you an email to see if you are interested in working with a one of a kind team.

I have a full time, busy from the get go position available in my practice.

You will be taking over an existing patient base, working with 3 other full time dentists, and an amazing supportive team! Even in this environment we have attracted 8 RDA Level 2 team members and 6 RDH's.

We are a busy bread and butter restorative practice looking for the right doctor to join our team.

If that's you shoot me an email and let's connect!

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join my team



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The top 20 questions you should ask as an associate searching for the right fit

1. Have you had an associate before?

- This will help you understand if the practice is actually ready and prepared to support you or are they just "winging it" hoping it will turn out ok. Follow up questions: Why are they leaving, what did they produce and can you speak to them?

2. Can you speak with some team members?

- Team members will often times be more truthful and any principal dentist who is transparent and has nothing to hide will be more than happy to allow you to talk to the team. **one caveat here - the principal dentist may be keeping the associate search private for many reasons so you need to respect that if it's the case

3. How many ops will be available to you and on what days?

- This will give you an idea if the practice actually has capacity to support you. Ideally in a bread and butter dental practice you will need 2 to 3 operatories available to you to be extremely productive

4. How many RDA level 2's will you work with?

- Having an RDA level 2 or expanded duties assistant is vital to being the most productive dentist you can be. If you are not supported with at least one RDA level 2 - my advice would be to keep looking. Follow up question: How much experience does the RDA have?

5. Do you have a scheduling algorithm or system?

- You want to make sure they have a scheduling system to accommodate your "ideal days" whenever possible and to make sure you have a variety of productive procedures.

The top 20 questions you should ask

6. How many hygienists are in the practice?

- Hygiene is the lifeblood of many practices - without sufficient hygiene production the doctors schedules suffer. Ideally there should be 2 full time hygienists for each doctor in the practice.

7. What do they realistically think you can produce in an hour?

- This will tell you if they are a numbers driven practice that makes decisions based on data. If they have numbers from the associate you will be taking over - even better!

8. What procedures will you be given the opportunity to perform?

- Will you have the opportunity to do all types of dentistry or will it just be basic restorative or all the stuff the principal dentist just doesn't want to do.

9. How will exams be divided and assigned?

- With 2 or more dentists in the practice there should be way that exams will be divided so it's fair for all parties. You as the associate may have few exams to start, but knowing how they are assigned will be helpful to keep things fair.

10. Will you get to see New Patients?

- This is an important one and a caveat to this will be to find out if the other dentists or principal dentist will be also seeing new patients. And if everyone is seeing new patients how are they assigned?

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11. What type of marketing do you do?

- This is important to know if the practice is actively marketing, specifically for new patients or if they follow a more laid back approach. It's always a great idea to join practices with an active marketing plan.

12. How many new patients do you get in a month?

- This is important to know as new patients are the lifeblood of any practice. A good goal to support an associate would be at least 30 new patients per month per full time doctor in the practice.

13. Is there a formal coaching or consulting program in place?

- Practices who actively engage or have previously engaged in coaching or consulting generally have a growth oriented mindset. This will show they are continuously striving to get better and improve.

14. Is the team incentivized in any way?

- Understanding how the team of a practice you are joining is compensated is important to know as their hard work can indirectly affect your take home at the end of the day. A great bonus system should be a win win win for all - including the associate dentist.

15. How much time off can you have?

- This should be in writing in your contract but best to know up front. Follow up questions: What about major holidays - are you expected to work? How much notice is needed to book time off? How much consecutive time is allowed...2/3/4 weeks?

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16. Are there any procedures you won't be able to perform?

- Some offices have restriction on certain services they many not want their associates performing ie. implants, ortho, sedation etc.

17. What are the practices core values?

- Core values are the jumping off point to creating culture. If you know the core values of a practice you can make an easy decision if they align with your values. On the flip side - if they don't have a set of core values that tells you a lot too!

18. What is the practice Vision and Mission?

- A practice must have purpose. Without purpose we flounder. It's important for the associate to know the general direction the practice is going and how you might fit into that Vision. Knowing this also helps you determine if they align with your long term vision for your career (you do have that right?!)

19. Do you have a contract?

- I would advise you to never enter into an associate agreement without a contract. A contract is there to protect both parties and outlines the rules of the relationship. And make sure you have an independent lawyer review it for you

The top 20 questions you should ask

20. Final question...what can I expect to take home yearly? (and not...what percentage do you pay?)

- This question needs to be asked but too many associates are focused on what percentage am I gonna make? There are so many intangible factors in each associateship that asking about percentages makes no sense. What you need to understand is how much you want to take home. If a practice can support you to take home exactly what you want and do it in a supportive, mentoring fun environment - the percentage does not and should not matter. For example one office could offer 60% and give you a terrible working environment, no support, no patients and no fun - at the end of the day you take home \$200k. Another office could provide you 35% and give you an exceptional associate experience and at the end of the day you take home \$200K. Which associate is ahead in that scenario? They both took home \$200K. My hope is dentists will come to understand comparing percentages of compensation between different dental offices is like comparing apples to oranges - and is definitely not the most important question to ask! Trust me - I've interviewed and hired dozens of associates. If even one of them asked me the first 19 questions before they asked me the last one I would have hired them on the spot!

PS. I have answers to all of these questions and more 😊

If interested in my opportunity email me terri@dentalboss lady.com