Effective leaders and managers need to be *ruthless with their time*. Ruthlessness requires discernment. Ask yourself: what is yours to do and what is not? What needs to be delegated to another person so that you can do the higher-level tasks that ONLY you can do? Often, as an office manager you came up through the ranks as line staff. You may have started as a scheduler, an insurance or accounts receivable coordinator. You were good at that task and then you were promoted to Practice Administrator or Office Manager. Unfortunately, because you were good, you may have kept part or all of your original tasks AND added them to your office management duties. Not a good idea!

If your practice or business is small, you may indeed wear many hats. Here is something to think about. If you are doing a $22 or less per hour task and your salary is $50 or more per hour, you are not efficient nor are you being a good steward of your practice’s resources. Need inspiration? Click [here](#) to download my newsletter on “Ten Hats of Dental Practice Management”.

Right now, STOP. Write a list of the tasks that you do in a day/week – all of them. Now, beside each task, write the dollar value of paying someone to do this task. If you are a dentist/leader,
consider bookkeeping or payroll, for example. A bookkeeper makes $20–$30 per hour. As a dentist, you make $100 per hour or more. Instead of bookkeeping, spend quality time looking for ways to bring in more new clients/patients. I have watched the office manager take the deposit to the bank, go to the post office to pick up mail and stop by Staples to pick up toner. I have also observed managers posting insurance checks and calling on insurance claims. When I ask if there is time to evaluate the practice’s Key Business Indicators or create a marketing plan, I am not surprised to hear there is not enough time. **Overwhelm often comes from doing tasks that could be delegated or outsourced.**

“Oh, but Linda NO ONE can do it like I do it.” That thought and mindset keeps you from growing as a leader and focusing on growing your business. One of the most essential skills for you to have as a leader is the ability to train another for each position in the business/practice. Learn to coach them on the quality you expect and need until they have it down pat and then let them do their job.

Smother mother leaders keep the strings tight and never really let go. If the person cannot do the job at the quality level you need after a reasonable time, then, it is time to move them to another position or let them find another job. (A “reasonable time” varies depending on prior experience and the details of the job, but usually 90 days is average.)

You can keep this 90-day training period moving along by giving the person feedback early and often. DO NOT wait until their 90-day review to tell them they are falling short. Human beings are most receptive to your feedback about the quality of their work in the first 90 days, after that, they believe they have done a good job OR you would have said something.

Create your own **Training Checklist** for each position. Use it to Check off the tasks as the trainee learns them and can do them to your satisfaction. When you delegate, delegate completely with a periodic check-in. For example: If the person oversees insurance processing, meet with them once per month to review the Outstanding Insurance Claims Report. Email me at linda@drevenstedt.com if for a sample **Training Checklist**.

**Unless you can train, coach, delegate and check in with your team, you will remain in Overwhelm.** You will not be able to complete the higher-level tasks that a leader needs to do without taking the work home. Learn to be **ruthless with your time** so that when you leave, you are done for the day and can focus on your **family and life balance.**

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