



Season Two – Episode 18

## Large Tattoos On Team Members – Do You Hire Them?

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**Dr. Richard Madow:** Hiring new team members has always been a bit of a tricky proposition, but it seems like these days there's a new complication that's been thrown into the mix. We're going to hear about that on our question in this week's episode of the Dental Practice Fixers Podcast. Welcome, welcome, welcome everyone. I am Dr. Richard Madow, along here with my cohort and co-host.

**Dr. David Madow:** Dr. David Madow. How are you all doing? Welcome back, we really appreciate you and let's get right into the question today.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Let's do it.

**Dr. David Madow:** It's a great one. I'm surprised we haven't got this question earlier.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I know. I think we've got it in our live seminars before. Yeah, I think so.

**Dr. David Madow:** Have we got it? Oh okay. Anyway, this is something that is probably going to affect if it hasn't yet, every single dental practice out there. It starts out with Rich and Dave, hey guys, love the podcast. Thank you so much, we appreciate that. I've been a practicing dentist for over 35 years and still love every single day in the office. There are no plans to retire. Well I'm not sure that's great because you should have some kind of exit strategy at some point.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Well it doesn't mean he can't afford to retire. It's just means he has no plans to retire. That's great.

**Dr. David Madow:** Like most dentists, we have staff members who leave for various reasons. So, every now and then we need to hire someone new. The last few times I've interviewed people, they all had very large visible tattoos which I found to be unattractive. I know these things are

commonplace these days, but many of my patients are older and I don't think they would appreciate team members with tattoos, piercings, etc. What do I do? Dr. Abner Smith from Georgia. That explains the whole thing. But actually, it doesn't because tattoos are ubiquitous. No matter what state...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** State, city, urban, rural. I mean they're just – they're everywhere. Tattoos are extremely...

**Dr. David Madow:** Hey have you ever seen mine?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I don't want to. Hold on...

**Dr. David Madow:** It says Marshall.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Is this Marshall? What?

**Dr. David Madow:** This is Marshall. I had one that said Barb but I took – I covered it with Marshall.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** As you remember many years ago, I think it was Marshall – Marshall's our middle brother. It was he's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday so he's 61 now.

**Dr. David Madow:** Wait a minute...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** So it's 11 years ago.

**Dr. David Madow:** It was 11 years ago. Are you sure it's that long ago?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** The three cool brothers were in Atlantic City. Well it's not the three cool brothers, it's just us – for Marshall's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and I think we should all get like some kind of brothers tattoo. If everybody agrees on them and you said you're in. Right?

**Dr. David Madow:** I was in.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Then Marshall wouldn't do it. You know what? Thank you, Marshall, I'm glad you didn't say do it.

**Dr. David Madow:** I think we should have done it. I think Marshall should have done it. Even a small – little small thing – who would care?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** When we were kids, I think – and again, I don't know, maybe we had a sheltered upbringing. Only men with like a tough upbringing like the merchant marines or whatever would have tattoos.

**Dr. David Madow:** Do you remember our barber's name when we were kids?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Rudy?

**Dr. David Madow:** No, way before Rudy.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Rudy was in jail.

**Dr. David Madow:** Yeah way before, but you might have been too young to remember.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I don't remember.

**Dr. David Madow:** We went to a place called Pete and Sam.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I remember Pete and Sam. Sure.

**Dr. David Madow:** Do you remember that? You just said, I think they might have been in the merchant marines.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Merchant marines. Right.

**Dr. David Madow:** They had tattoos.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** So, when we were really little kids, early to mid-60s, those were typically the kind of people and then it became much more common for men to have tattoos. Any kind of job, education level or whatever. And now, obviously, it seems like more women, more young women have tattoos than men. So, they're very typical, they're very normal. They don't mean anything other than the fact that you've got the tattoo. I mean that's all it means. So, I think if you're going to say, I don't want to hire people with tattoos, well you're going to be cutting yourself out of a huge percentage and probably some very talented and smart people or you're going to be discriminating against it so to speak.

**Dr. David Madow:** Many young people. Maybe even the majority.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** But what do you think? Do you think that if this person truly is in an area where his patient population is maybe older and really conservative that he should be cautious about hiring people with visible tattoos?

**Dr. David Madow:** So, you said visible tattoos. So, in other words, let's say if somebody comes in to the interview, let's say a woman comes in to the interview and let's say she has tattoos but you can't see them. They're not visible. They're on her back or wherever they may be. They're not visible during the interview. Does anything need to be said at all like I just want to make sure if you have tattoos whenever you'd come in, they're covered up or if you can't see them during the interview, do you assume they will never be seen during work time?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** That is a really good question. In other words, I guess the basic question here is do we have an office policy, no visible tattoos.

**Dr. David Madow:** I think that's a possibility. But suppose – where do you draw the line? Suppose a team member has a little tiny tattoo that he can't hide but it's not getting in anybody's way and it's not in bad taste or anything.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I was going to say I've seen young ladies with tattoos on kind of the inside of their wrist. Right here, a cute little design. Nobody I think would say it's horrible. They look nice. That's a visible tattoo.

**Dr. David Madow:** Yes. So, what's the rule? Where do you draw the line? So, what we're talking about is if somebody comes in and they are no visible tattoos but you still have like an office policy in place that says – that it clearly states no visible tattoos during patient treatment time or something like that.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Oh I see what you're saying. So like after hours, you don't care what they do. They can walk around with very short sleeve shirts...

**Dr. David Madow:** I think you can't tell somebody what to do after hours...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Of course not.

**Dr. David Madow:** I think you can't tell them that. But is it out of line? I guess it's legal or with HR – will the HR police get after you if you have it in your booklet that says no visible tattoos allowed during clinical patient time.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** When I finished my residency and again, times were different. This was 1985. I'm sure you remember one of my very early associateships was in a suburb of Baltimore called Dundalk. Now Dundalk is the classic...

**Dr. David Madow:** Tattoo palace.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Right. Stereotype blue color town, tattoos everywhere and we had this dental assistant and I don't think she had tattoos. But she wore like this weird makeup. She had all these different colors on her eyes and she had one of those haircuts where it was shaved on one side and slicked over on the other...

**Dr. David Madow:** In the 80s?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** 80s.

**Dr. David Madow:** That was a little weird.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** She was really radical. And I'm thinking, what the F? This is a dental office. Who's going to come in and let this woman treat them? So, the flipside of that is, of course, she was a great person, fantastic with patients, excellent clinical assistant. I forgot about it like working with her for a day or two. I didn't even look at her and see this kind of freaky persona. I just saw this great person who was a fantastic dental assistant and I think people were much more closed minded in those days. I've got another story I want to share, but I think on this question, my answer is to loosen up, tattoos are normal. Obviously, you don't want somebody with a teardrop tattoo come out of their eye which means they're in a gang or murdered someone.

**Dr. David Madow:** Is that what it means?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I think so.

**Dr. David Madow:** I don't even know that.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Or like profanity or something like that. But I think using the word tasteful is tough because that's objective, subjective.

**Dr. David Madow:** Subjective.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Thank you. That's a subjective term.

**Dr. David Madow:** Right. You can't say that only tasteful tattoos are allowed. Well who decides?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I think it's time, it's 2019. If you're listening to this, it's current. I think it's time to let it go and just hire people who are – present well, have great clinical skills, are good with patients and not worry about it. What do you think?

**Dr. David Madow:** So you're saying that – I think you need to have some type of guidelines in place because by what you're saying, it will be totally fine especially on a warm day when your assistant is wearing something sleeveless...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Well they can after work clinical attire. They can't wear...

**Dr. David Madow:** They have like the whole arm – what do you call it? a sleeve. A whole arm tattooed up and maybe the neck. Is that okay? For professional practice.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I think it's fine. It's funny, I think that there are certain rules that we have to have with our team members. And one is they have to present well. It means they can't come in poorly dressed. Clothes that don't look right in a clinical – it doesn't mean you have to spend a lot of money. But it means your clothes have to be clean and they have to look great in a clinical setting. And your hair is to be pulled back properly and you can't have long dangling earrings. These things get in the way of proper treatment. But I think when it comes to somebody's looks which includes tattoos, I don't know. I wouldn't mind if a woman has a sleeve tattoo working in my practice if she's a great assistant and dresses normally.

**Dr. David Madow:** I think it depends on the area. Like you said, Dundalk, Maryland it will totally...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I think you call it tattoo palace.

**Dr. David Madow:** It's not like a knock on Dundalk but like Upper West Side of Manhattan, a practice there. If somebody was totally tattooed up, I don't know if that's so cool.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Upper West Side Manhattan, I would say you've got a huge artistic community...

**Dr. David Madow:** Upper East side. Let's go Upper East Side.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Upper East Side, that's a little snootier.

**Dr. David Madow:** Going into a dental office and someone just – a person is just tattooed up, I mean I personally have nothing against tattoos or I have nothing against them. But again, I have nothing against a lot of things but a lot of things shouldn't be necessarily ok in a dental office.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I guess I can only speak my personal opinion. I certainly wouldn't mind being treated by a dental assistant or a dentist or whatever that had sleeve tattoos as long as they were great assistants or dentists. Will people leave your practice? I don't think so.

**Dr. David Madow:** Let me just give you an example. It's been two or three years, I met a waitress in Ruby Tuesday.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Again? You know waitresses.

**Dr. David Madow:** I met her. There was a waitress at Ruby Tuesday and she was super, super nice and she was – let's just say for a lack of a better term, I'm going to use – she was all tattooed up.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** All tattooed up. ATU.

**Dr. David Madow:** She was ATU all the way and she told us a story that sometimes people would come in like an elderly couple would come in and she would say hi I'm your waitress today, and they would go to the manager and say, I do not want this woman waiting on us with all this tattoos. So again, not everybody thinks the way we think, and is it possible it's hurting the practice having somebody that's all tattooed up working on patients. I think it could hurt the practice. I mean it could.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I guess the other side of that coin is sometimes you have to make a decision like are you going to stand by your principles even if in some way it could be detrimental to your practice. And back to this woman in that Dundalk practice, sometimes she would come in with a big blue streak in her hair and some people would say she's a freakazoid, but she wasn't.

**Dr. David Madow:** Right. I think we're going to have to leave this as it's up to each practice to decide but you should have something outlined in the office manual.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I want to get back to the Ruby Tuesday for a second.

**Dr. David Madow:** Yeah sure.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** And we've seen this many times. There are waitress, servers, waiters, waitresses, whatever you want to call them. As a matter of fact one worked in a restaurant near here. No tattoos, very clean appearance, but gingivitis. That's I think gross.

**Dr. David Madow:** Well you've got to say no gingivitis will...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** But most restaurant owners don't even know and now that is gross.

**Dr. David Madow:** They've got to have a soft tissue management program in the restaurant.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** So that's disgusting. That person has got billions of disgusting infectious bacteria in her mouth. That to me is much more important than tattoos or piercings or something like that.

**Dr. David Madow:** Yeah, I agree with you, but I'm thinking it goes without saying that you're not going to have somebody with gross periodontal disease working in the dental practice. You're just not going to allow that.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I see people with bad teeth working in dental practices. You have too. Sometimes it's the dentist.

**Dr. David Madow:** Absolutely. We have seen it. We definitely have seen it.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I guess what I'm saying is I think if you're worried about this, you're worried about the wrong thing. If there's anything that could cause patients to leave, I'll bet there are patients who for one reason or another said, I don't want a male hygienist.

**Dr. David Madow:** Oh 100%.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Well, you know, get with it.

**Dr. David Madow:** So we'll just leave it with that. It's subjective and it's up to the practice.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** It's a great question.

**Dr. David Madow:** It is a really good question. So, Dr. Smith, thanks so much for sending that. Everybody, keep sending your great questions because we really appreciate you...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I would love to hear your opinion on this because I know that we have a really – I know we would want to handle this question but I don't know if we ever really came to what we would say is a definitive answer for us.

**Dr. David Madow:** No it's subjective. It depends on the office.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Please, if you're listening to us, we'd love to hear you weigh in on this topic. That will be great.

**Dr. David Madow:** Yeah that would be fantastic.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** How do they reach us? Now I can't remember. [info@madow.com](mailto:info@madow.com), you can't go wrong with that. [info@MADOW.com](mailto:info@MADOW.com)

**Dr. David Madow:** Also, [podcast@madow.com](mailto:podcast@madow.com) will get to us. But pretty much anything [@madow.com](mailto:@madow.com). You can send it to [crazy@](mailto:crazy@) -- no it won't get to us.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** No don't do that. [rtrain@madow.com](mailto:rtrain@madow.com) – it's still info. Hey before we do our call of the week. Who is coming to TBSE this year? Yes, November in Las Vegas at the fantastic Tropicana Resort Hotel. We've got an incredible lineup of speakers. It is the best bang for your buck in dental education. Nothing else is even close. So, go to the website, check out the speakers, sign up while the tuition is still really really low. It's an incredible two days of not just dental

education, but fun, motivation, team building and a great vacation. You certainly deserve a little vacation, especially when the practice can pay for it. So that's up to your accountant of course but I hope you're charging all your CE to the office. Go to [tbse.com](http://tbse.com). The Best Seminar Ever. [Tbse.com](http://Tbse.com). Look at the speaker line up, it will absolutely appeal to you and bring the team. We'll be there, we'll be hanging out, we'll be shooting the breeze, having a good all time with you in Vegas. So again, [tbse.com](http://tbse.com) and we'll see you there.

**Dr. David Madow:** 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We've been here for 25 years.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Yeah 25 years. Cheers.

**Dr. David Madow:** How have we been doing this for 25 years?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Unbelievable. I'm not so sure.

**Dr. David Madow:** It's going to be special though.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** It's kind of like a disease. We can't get rid of it. It comes back year after year after year.

**Dr. David Madow:** It's going to be very special.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Special.

**Dr. David Madow:** Before we move on to the call Rich, let's talk about something. I know we mention this every single episode for a reason.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Is there a reason?

**Dr. David Madow:** Because if somebody just said to me, how would you like to have a check or how would you like to save a lot of money every single month. I'd be stupid enough not to listen especially if it were so simple that everybody could do it. Well that's why we talk about Fattmerchant. The credit card processing company that we truly believe in. We use them here at the Madow Center, we switched to that – how long – about a year ago?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** About a year ago. Maybe a year and a half ago.

**Dr. David Madow:** Something like that, but we've never been happier. Transactions are smoother. Everything goes well, plus we've saved so much money and you can do the same thing in your dental practice. When you sign up with Fattmerchant, it's simple to switch. They do everything for you including if you use our special link that we're going to give you. They'll give you the free terminal. Free terminal, you don't have to do anything and you'll start saving a lot of money every single month. If you're not doing this, you're kind of nuts not to do it. Why wouldn't you want to do this, go to [bit.ly/fattmad](https://bit.ly/fattmad) which is F A T T M A D, if you're watching on video we're putting a little thing down there so you can make sure you have the spelling right. But however you get there, if you're not doing this, you'll be losing out on money every single month, why wouldn't you do it.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** All right, let's do the call of the week.

Voice Recording: For quality of service, this call may be recorded.

[phone ringing]

**Female Speaker:** Good morning, thank you for calling. How may I help you?

**Dr. David Madow:** Hi, my wife asked me to make this call. She kind of put it on my to-do list today. She wanted me to ask you if you're accepting new patients.

**Female Speaker:** Yes, we are.

**Dr. David Madow:** Okay great. I'll let her know. Thank you very much.

**Female Speaker:** No problem, bye, bye.

**Dr. David Madow:** Okay, bye.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Do you ever just want to like raise your hand and scream. Is anybody listening?

**Dr. David Madow:** I don't get it. I really don't get it Rich.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** The simplest of all calls; two patients because I would assume the husband and wife are coming in. Right?

**Dr. David Madow:** I was just going to say the same thing. Almost guaranteed two patients. She answers the question, yeah we're accepting new patients but she didn't take it any further. And you know something that I think might have been one of the problems. Okay so did you hear as soon as I started the question, another phone was ringing in the background. I think what was on her – on her mind was I've got to get to that other call. And it rang twice and I said okay thank you very much. It was much easier for her to say no problem and take the other call than to start explaining. And then the other call keeps coming in and that's what I thought. I felt it.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** It's a really good point. I think when there's another call coming in whether it's even in your personal life, when you got that annoying call waiting thing or your whole focus shifts. Who's this new caller? Is this more important than the call you're on? Do I need to put Mom on hold? You're right, you're so right. So first of all, nobody should be in that position in the dental practice. You should have enough people to answer the phone and even if there's a clinical team member who is not busy that second, they should be – they should have the mindset that they're going to grab that phone if it's ringing. So really good point.

**Dr. David Madow:** So I wonder if they had proper staffing there and somebody else took that other call that was obviously ringing in the background, if she would have more time to devote with me, if she would have been better she would have...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** My guess is no.

**Dr. David Madow:** Maybe not but at least she would have a chance. But now all she's thinking is I need to pick up that second call.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** So in that scenario, she could have said excuse me for one second. I'll just put you on a very brief hold.

**Dr. David Madow:** Yes exactly.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Boom and then just handle that call even if it means getting some information and calling someone back or putting them on a brief hold. She's got a live wire right here that wants to know if you're accepting new patients.

**Dr. David Madow:** My wife said – made it a point to send me to call...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** And I'll do whatever my wife said.

**Dr. David Madow:** Exactly. Your wife asks you to call, there's a reason you're doing this. You're trying to find a dentist who's taking new patients. Are you the one or not?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Well we're accepting new patients, we're just not appointing them.

**Dr. David Madow:** That's exactly right. So here's the thing Rich. I guess every single time, the doctor who's obviously doing great clinical work is thinking...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Obviously, well not so obviously but...

**Dr. David Madow:** Thinking that oh my front desk person, my scheduling assistant or...

**Dr. Richard Madow:** June is fantastic.

**Dr. David Madow:** She is great, she is so nice and she's taking care of answering questions. Does he have any idea this is going on?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Clueless.

**Dr. David Madow:** No idea.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** No idea.

**Dr. David Madow:** And we say this every time for a reason because I know there are probably doctors who are listening or watching right now and saying, well this would never happen in my practice. Well guess what, it probably is.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Send us your number. We'll find out. Send us your number.

**Dr. David Madow:** Grade?

**Dr. Richard Madow:** I hate to keep failing people but I think it's going to have to be an F.

**Dr. David Madow:** We got to fail her. F

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Yeah she's a failure.

**Dr. David Madow:** Because she didn't ask for anything.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** She did nothing. Thanks for nothing.

**Dr. David Madow:** Thanks for nothing.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** She did nothing. Alright.

**Dr. David Madow:** I think that wraps it up.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Next I'm telling you, next episode it's not going to be an F. They got to be at least a B plus.

**Dr. David Madow:** I really hope – I want that. We really want that. We want to prove that some people are fantastic.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** We want everyone to pass.

**Dr. David Madow:** Until next time, Dr. David Madow.

**Dr. Richard Madow:** Dr. Richard Madow. Thanks for listening and watching. We'll see you soon.

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