



**THIS MONTH:  
PERFORMANCE  
PLANNING FOR  
YOUR PRACTICE**

DO YOU really know how good your secretary is? On the surface all may seem well, and indeed be perceived as such by both parties, but is it? Peak performance in any field is all about measurement. So, consider establishing some Key Performances Indicators (KPIs), writes Alison Ryan.

Before you begin to use KPIs in running your business, you must ensure that they are 'tight'. The ones you choose must:

- Reflect the business goals;
- Be critical to its success;
- Be measurable and comparable;
- Allow for corrective action if things go wrong.

Have you ever wondered how many patients' phone calls into your practice are answered and how many go to voicemail? A report in 2004 by [www.customerservicemanager.com](http://www.customerservicemanager.com) found that:

- 69% of callers hang up if they get an automated response or answering machine;
- 80% of callers hang up if they get a 'busy' response;
- 80% of callers won't call back if they get no answer.

Begin to monitor your calls by installing a system that allows you this function. You can then implement targets for your secretary that will improve his or her performance and, in turn, possibly grow your practice.

Have you ever considered how much bad debt you have? Most consultants rightly trust their secretary to manage their accounts efficiently, but unless your system is transparent, how do you know this is the case?

Why not implement a system that will measure how quickly an invoice is sent following a consul-

tation, and set targets which have to be met? Agree on a robust collections system with your secretary and ensure it is adhered to.

What about your secretary's overall performance? Everyone wants to know if they are doing a good job.

Consider setting up a mutually agreed appraisal system. By implementing measurable KPIs and ensuring regular reviews with your secretary, you will both feel that 'all is well'. Your secretary will feel more valued and will be able to demonstrate that your practice is being run in the most efficient way.

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