The internet use policy should be a written document that specifies consequences for misuse. The dentist must be willing to enforce these consequences. The policy should include details about what safe internet use is, clear descriptions of if and when staff members can access social media, policies and restrictions regarding the use of personal e-mail accounts through practice computers, instructions regarding how to create and protect passwords and avoid viruses, and the rules regarding the use of computers for gaming or other entertainment. All activity and communication on the practice computers should be subject to audit, which should be clearly specified as a warning to staff members. The written document outlining the internet use policy should be signed by all team members and reviewed frequently.

An information technology (IT) professional should be engaged to install and configure a firewall that will protect the dental practice. In addition, anti-malware software needs to be in place and updated frequently, preferably without requiring the dentist's intervention. In addition, the IT professional should provide a comprehensive monitoring system that will alert the office and the IT support team about any potential threats to the practice technology. A managed services package may be purchased in many cases to provide ongoing security and IT help for the practice.

Dentists should provide regular staff training regarding the internet use policy and how to identify malware or potential breaches. The IT professional may be able to provide educational materials, videos, or personal seminars to use in staff training sessions.

Clinical Significance

Initially it may seem like installing the necessary safeguards to protect the dental practice from technology intrusions or misuse involves more work and less benefit than the dentist would prefer. However, once the practice is adequately protected and staff members are well-trained in their responsibilities with regard to internet use, they will be able to see the advantages the internet provides for performing their duties. Eventually, having a safe and well-functioning internet will become indispensable. The business and clinical aspects of the practice will be accomplished more efficiently and productivity will be enhanced.

Lavine L: Safe internet usage in a dental practice. *Dentaltown* Jan 2019, pp 82-85

Reprints not available

MOTIVATION

Reigniting your enthusiasm for dentistry

BACKGROUND

In the past, most people considered their work as a *job* that provided an income for the family, allowed for the necessities of life and perhaps a few niceties, and was viewed as a necessity. Some people have viewed their work as a *career,* which includes progression in pay, leadership responsibilities, and expertise. These people are considered professionals. Finally, there are those who feel they have a *calling*. They describe themselves by their vocations and are committed to doing an excellent job. Money isn't the primary motivation in many cases, with people who have callings often found in helping and altruistic vocations. They see their work as personally fulfilling and can be engaged in it their entire lives. Today, dentists tend to be in the career or calling category at the beginning of their careers, but it can be difficult to stay motivated after many years of performing the same dental work. Regaining that enthusiasm and motivation can require the dentist to make some changes.

MINDSET

To become more enthusiastic about dentistry again, it's important to have a good mindset. Dentists need to recognize that dentistry is the best profession among all the health care professions, as reported by *US News & World Report*. Many characteristics have gone into this ranking, but one of the most important is that dentistry gives individuals the opportunity to help others while also helping themselves and their families. It gives dentists a sense of satisfaction when they can help patients out of their pain or make them able to eat or smile as they would like to. It's important to recognize that dentists are fortunate to be in this profession because this mindset is essential to the level of satisfaction they obtain from their employment.

CHANGES THAT IMPROVE MOTIVATION

To regain motivation to enjoy dentistry and derive satisfaction from it, dentists should make some adjustments in their lives

and their practice behaviors. To gain more personal and family time, it's possible to change work schedules and delegate some clinical tasks to staff so that the dentist can have more time at home. Rather than remain in a rut of dental procedures, dentists can select and train for some new clinical procedures to do, incorporate more continuing education courses, or become a part-time faculty member at a local dental school. These activities can also lead to new friends and colleagues, which can enliven both the dentist's work and family life. In all of their life activities, dentists should plan to be out of their comfort zone at least 10% of the time. Learning new concepts is both intellectually stimulating and socially rewarding.

Volunteering is another way to add interest to the dentist's life. This could include joining a service club that adds diversity and stimulating activities. In any case, it's important that the dentist dial back on the time spent on the internet. In fact, this would be a time to use electronics to simplify life but not dominate it. Instead, the dentist can enjoy the new friends and relationships that have been formed, take pleasure in volunteering and helping others, and relax more with family while pursuing recreational activities.

Clinical Significance

It's easy to feel motivated and enthusiastic when you first begin practicing as a dentist, but that can fade after a couple of decades. Instead of being challenged, you feel comfortable, which can soon lead to burnout. Taking steps to actively engage with others and to challenge yourself both intellectually and personally can reignite your passion for dentistry. Remember—you have the awesome privilege of practicing the best health care profession in the country.

Christensen GJ: Staying motivated in the profession. *Dent Econ* 109:45-46, 2019

Reprints not available

STAFF MANAGEMENT

Rest and meal breaks

BACKGROUND

No federal law mandates than an adult employee must receive meal or rest breaks when at work. However, a number of states do have regulations pertaining to these breaks, and dentists need to be aware of the rules as well as the penalties for breaking them.

FEDERAL LAWS FOR BREAKS PROVIDED WHEN NOT MANDATED

Federal rules are in place for employers who provide meal and rest breaks at their own discretion. All breaks that last 5 to 20 minutes must be paid, whether it's defined as a rest or a meal break. The time also counts toward overtime for the week. If an employer's policy clearly states the duration of the break and clearly indicates that extensions of that time will be punished or not paid, unauthorized extra break time could be unpaid.

For a meal break in which the time taken will be unpaid, the break must last a minimum of 30 minutes and the employee must be fully relieved of all work duties. A gray area exists when the break is just 25 minutes, so it is recommended that only meal breaks lasting 30 minutes or more be unpaid unless there are special circumstances.

Employers are required to clearly communicate their meal and rest break policies, ideally in writing in a policy manual. The elements to be covered include a clear distinction between meal and rest breaks, definition of expectations regarding the duration of each one, and clear indications of the penalties for not following the rules.

STATE LAWS

Meal Breaks

Most state laws regarding meal breaks mandate at least 30 minutes for an unpaid meal period that must occur within the first 5 hours of work. Employees must be relieved of all job duties and usually can leave the premises. The meal period

Clinical Significance

Dentists need to be aware of the rules and regulations regarding meal periods and rest breaks for their employees. Although not all states spell them out, dentists should be familiar with what their state law says and follow the rules to avoid having to pay steep penalties and fines.