

The Best of Times for Your Practice with 3 Simple Action Steps!!

If I were to write a novel called "A Tale of Two Practices" it could very well begin with these famous words "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." Whatever your tale, there is no question that competition for dental patients is tougher today than it has ever been.

Successful dentists know that greater competition calls for Action Steps to keep current patients loyal and to attract the lion's share of new patients. **There are 3 Simple Action steps you can take Right Now to make it the best of times for your practice in today's competitive market.** These 3 Simple Action Steps capture the power of your team.

You've heard the saying that there is no "I" in team and you know that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Think about this revealing truth: patients will remain loyal if they LIKE the TEAM but don't particularly like the dentist; patients will leave if they don't like the team no matter how much they like dentist. These 3 Simple Action steps will bring out the best in your team and give your practice the competitive edge. Each step requires honest assessment, careful planning, and involving your team in the implementation process. The rewards include increased word-of-mouth referrals, renewed loyalty from your current patients and better numbers. The bonus is a happier place for everyone to visit, patients and team members alike.

Step #1 – Look Your Best!

We all want to look our best. That's why Whitening, Veneers, and Invisalign® have become so popular to name just a few of the cosmetic benefits that dentistry has to offer. Patients want to look their best, but in today's economic environment, they are cautious when it comes to investing their time and money in looking great. That makes them very careful when choosing a dental practice, especially when the treatment plan reaches the five digit range.

You never (emphasis on NEVER) get a second chance to make a first impression. I know this better than you can imagine from the hundreds of interviews I've done. Zig Ziglar, a well known motivational speaker, sums up the value of a first impression and addresses the importance of creating that confident glow by dressing for success. He says you have to "Dress Up and Make Up in order to Go Up!" There is nothing more impressive than a team that is color coordinated with each other and with the office. The WOW factor is undeniable when each team member has every hair in place, uniforms are clean, unblemished, steamed and creased, and the shoes are impeccably groomed. Patients have little else to occupy them while they are in your office but see every single detail that you let slide. And believe me when I say they make a connection between your appearance and the quality of dentistry. I recently visited a plastic surgery office. Each person in the office was picture perfect. Each was a glowing example of beauty. The appearance of their team went a long way toward influencing their patients to enjoy the benefits of cosmetic procedures. They provided an impressive example of the power of the first impression. Their monthly numbers are equally impressive. A consultant friend of mine believes that every dental practice should have a steam iron and ironing board and that the only time your white shoes should walk out of the practice is if they are covered with surgical booties. With all of the uniform choices at your fingertips you can stretch your marketing dollar and give it a powerful return on investment by creating a great first impression.

Step #2 – Smile!

There's a song from the sixties with the line "If you want to know if he loves you so, it's in his kiss!" I'll rephrase that to say "If you want to know if your dental office appreciates you, it's in their smiles!" Do you make it a habit to have each team member smile at each patient at each appointment? If someone was polling your patients as they exit the practice how would they answer the question, "how many smiles did you receive during your stay

with Dr. _____?"

Smiles are free and when you give them away they become priceless. Smiles are one of the few items that increase in value the instant you pass them to someone else. In fact I can't think of anything else that has that ability. Smiles show off the very reason you are in business! You've heard patients brag about their dentist "I have a great dentist – he/she has a great personality!" Translate this to the truth: "I have no idea about the quality of dentistry I have in my mouth, but every time I visit my dentist's office I walk out feeling valued." If each of your team members is not sharing a genuine warm smile, then you are probably robbing your patients of that great feeling. Smiles are free and are so powerful at creating good feelings that some therapists recommend smile therapy. I challenge you to hold a smile for 10 minutes and feel bad at the same time. I further challenge you to have each team member smile at each patient at each visit.

Years ago my college psychology teacher presented a study where average people were asked to rate the trust factor of people based on photos. The outcome was overwhelming in favor of those who smiled. People have MORE TRUST for those who smile. People are perceived to be nicer based on their SMILE. Put the power of smiles to work for building trust and creating good feelings! People naturally WANT to go where they FEEL GOOD. People WANT to do business with people that they LIKE. The saying "Smile and the World Smiles with You" is absolutely true.

Step #3 – Get Along!

When was the last time you experienced the power of employees getting along with each other? When they don't get along there is a negative tension so thick it almost forces you out the door. Their body language says they would just as soon kill each other. On the better hand, when co-workers DO get along it creates a tangible aura of friendliness and happiness. That feeling is as real as the money you spend. When is the last time you returned to a restaurant where you felt "attitude" from the wait staff? You might wonder why you paid someone to make you feel bad. Do you remember a time when mediocre food tasted great because the wait staff got along beautifully? Every successful salesperson knows the indisputable fact that people will do business with people they LIKE!

Your team's attitude creates your practice aura. Your patients rightfully expect to feel good when visiting your practice. Your team creates that feeling. Even the smallest tension can be felt by your patients. Some dentists don't even want to go to the office because team members do not get along. Hey, if you don't want to be there how could your patients possibly want to!?

Look Your Best! Smile! Get Along!

These 3 Simple Action steps may well be the easiest steps you've taken to improve your office and, most importantly, your patient's experience. The best news is that your tale will have a happy ending – a tale of the best numbers – EVER!

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Quote of the Month

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

Leo Buscaglia

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