Recipe for success

To develop and grow your practice, you’ll need to adopt the mindset of an entrepreneur as well as a scientist, insists Dr Bhavna Doshi, senior dentist at The Perfect Smile Studios

Most dentists want a successful and profitable dental practice. So why aren’t there more of them around? The problem lies in the fact that when you feel like things are going your way, suddenly you face difficulties. Perhaps the number of new patients entering your door reduces or patients fail to continue with your recommended treatment. So why does this happen?

The answer lies in the way we interpret success. Most people think in the now, and will achieve the revenue they desire in the short term. However, a truly successful practice must not only generate short term increased revenues but also have established strategies for long term future growth. The reason for this is the false security we give ourselves when the going is good. We tell ourselves it will always be good and so we don’t plan for the ‘rainy’ days. And these ‘rainy’ days inevitably come.


tions of the practice should be designed to either create patients (for example, new patient acquisition) or to keep patients (so they don’t take their custom elsewhere). Any other requirements, such as increasing revenues, will easily be met if the main purpose is obtained. This is often because our team members are the first point of contact any patient has prior to being seen by a good a dentist you may be. It is, in fact, it is extremely difficult for anyone to know exactly how good you are until after they have decided to go ahead with a treatment recommendation. So patients use other information to help them decide if you are the right establishment for them.

That information often includes how good you make them feel while they are in your care, for example, how good your customer service is. And only your team can create that high level of customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction means future custom and referrals of other patients to your practice who already know how good you are.

5) Fresh innovations

One major way of developing a growing thriving practice, is by the introduction of new innovations and breakthroughs. The dental world is continuously bringing out new technologies to benefit either the dentist or the patients.

Any one of these technologies could be used to market your practice as a provider of the benefits of that technology. This will assist you in developing a unique selling advantage to other dentists in your locality. A simple idea would be to organise a cheese and wine evening to publicise the new technology or to have an article created for you in the local newspaper.

Examples of these innovations include: laser technology; a new way of providing pain-free anaesthesia or a spa type environment with associated beauty treatments. The list is endless. All these innovations can be successfully marketed to help patients accept dentistry. This method can allow you to attract new patients or keep existing ones and generate increased revenues because you are seen to be different.

4) Marketing agenda

Marketing is a critical element in the success of any practice or business. No practice would be able to survive for long without a correct marketing agenda on how to accomplish the aims of a flourishing business. Successful marketing will attract new patients to your practice hence keep the life line of your business intact; and also it will maximise the treatment accepted by your existing patients, thus maximising your potential growth capacity.

To optimise your ability to acquire new patients and maintain your existing ones, you need to set into place carefully worked out strategies and plans for both internal and external marketing media.

Not only do you require a plan of action, but also on how and when you will execute each step of the plan and thereafter you will need monitoring systems. Monitoring your plans is vital to provide you with information on whether something is working or not, so you can make better decisions.

Also, you need to plan to make maximum use of your marketing budgets. This is so you can have the maximum exposure to your marketing message as possible using the correct mediums.

Working in harmony

If you are to be maximised to their full potential, it wouldn’t be difficult to ensure a successful practice.

Most practices concentrate on linear growth and only achieve improvements in certain areas. This will often be in an area, which is the ‘tip of the iceberg’ or what everybody else in the industry is doing. This way, a practice will only achieve marginal improvements over a short time period. Eventually, budgets may not allow for further growth in this area; you may have reached your full capacity to grow in that area or you will have expended so much energy that you will simply give up the notion.

For example, team motivation alone may not be sufficient for all your patients to go ahead with your recommended treatment. You need to work at all areas of your practice to become a flourishing business, this also includes personal development in continually acquiring knowledge.

If these fundamental areas of business growth were to be divided into their corresponding subdivisions, the marketing and to their final systems, you will begin to understand the many ‘moving parts’ of your business which either need improving or a change of strategy. This exercise alone will give you phenomenal insights into what you should do to obtain three-dimensional growth. This type of growth allows you to expand your business in all dimensions.

If you would like further information on any other business growth strategies, please email De Bhavna at bhavna.theperfectsmile.co.uk.

About the author

Bhavna Doshi is a senior diplomat at The Perfect Smile Studios. She has a special interest in smile design dentistry and focuses on practice productivity, management and finance. If you have enjoyed this article and would like further information on effective time management or any other business growth strategies, please email me at bhavna@theperfectsmile.co.uk.