One of the most pleasant jobs I have to do is being the Master of Ceremonies (that is a posh way of saying 'the man on the mic') at the local village regatta in Port Navas. I stand in the back of a pick-up truck with a microphone and people bring me beer throughout the afternoon, whilst I witter away to my heart's content reporting on all things from lost mobile phones to the arrival of the RNLI helicopter, from cakes for sale in the field to who's winning the rowing!

Rowing Race
Invariably the weather is fine and the tide is full. This year, one of the events was a father and child rowing race. It is precisely what it says on the tin: One father, one child, one dinghy (with oars). The idea is to row around a simple course. The first home wins. Simple!

I enjoy badgering people to have a go. In particular people who are down on holiday and perhaps don't often get a chance to be on the water. One chap, who I assumed was the father of the child in the dinghy (no DNA testing this year), had clearly never rowed a boat before, or possibly even been in a boat. He sat at the back, rowed the boat backwards, whilst his daughter looked down helplessly at him from an angle of about 50 degrees.

This caused a huge amount of amusement amongst the crowd and any number of people came up to me and helpfully suggested I should 'tell him what to do'.

'Tell him what to do'
Well, needless to say, I didn't. After all, in my experience I could not be sure that he even thought he needed help. So for me to start shouting instructions at him would be pointless. However, as the 'race' continued, it became quite clear. He was overtaken by everybody - even the man with the dog hanging over the bow and barking at everyone (that's the dog barking, not the man). He made very little progress and in order for the event to continue before all the water drained out of the creek he was eventually towed back by the rescue boat and received enormous cheers from all those standing on the quay.

I was thinking about this just the other day. He had all the right qualifications: He was the father; he had a child; he was in a dinghy (with oars). So what was the problem?

Well, by looking around him, he very quickly realised that he was not very good at rowing, or at least lacked the skills to enable him to be a better rower. So he had the qualifications, but lacked the skill. Now we are getting somewhere!

New skills
I see this many times over in
some of the practices that I vis-
it. They are very much like the
guy in the boat. They are quali-
fied to be there, so they think
they should be, but often have
absolutely no idea how they
are doing against the rest
of the pack. But if they did, do
you think that might motivate
them to do something about
it? Maybe to learn some
new skills?

Well of course they should! Most dentists are trained to be
dentists, not businessmen. Run-
ing a business needs skills in
finance, marketing, sales, op-
erations, people management,
client experience and personal
development (like leadership
and vision).

But getting skills is only half
the story. Like the poor guy
in the dinghy, for part of the
race he had absolutely no idea
he even needed help. That was
until he started measuring his
own performance against the
rest of the dads (and children and
dinghies).

Benchmarking
So, what about benchmarking?
There are, of course, hundreds
of things you could measure.
So here is a selection of my top
ten monthly KPIs (Key Perfor-
mance Indicators) that we regu-
larly bench mark amongst our
clients.

1. Principal ADY – Good old
‘average daily yield’
2. Associate ADY – No hid-
ing here, simply the bigger
the better
3. Hygienist ADY – Ditto
4. Wages as a percentage of
gross fees – We are talking
about non-fee earners here.
Often this can be the practice’s
single biggest overhead
5. Fixed costs per surgery –
This has been phenomenally
revealing in the current eco-

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Simple. Smart. Streamlined.

A-dec 300 is designed for the health of your practice. Because your every movement counts, every detail
matters. That’s why A-dec 300 is setting a new benchmark for optimal ergonomics, smart efficiencies, and
lasting value. By asking what’s going to help you feel great at the end of the day, A-dec has arrived at a
treatment room solution that ensures an easy, continuous flow that is as healthy as it is natural.

In a world that demands dependability, A-dec delivers a proven solution without a single compromise.

6. New patients – This is new
patient registrations. The life-
blood of any practice
7. New patient conversions –
The acid test for selling skills
8. Number of surgery hours
available – Where 60 hours in
a week is the base line, multi-
plied by the number of surgeries
9. Net Profit – After drawings or
owners salary
10. Net Profit as a percentage
of the principal’s income – This
is where many dentists realize
that everyone in the building is
earning more than they are!

I guess the proof of the pud-
ding is in the eating. Measuring
things means you focus on them.
Sitting with a group of dentists
just a couple of weeks ago we
found the average increase in
turnover was a staggering 54
per cent in the past year.

So, what do you think of that
then? Can you think of a better
way to win a rowing race other
than to:

a) Measure yourself against
your immediate competitors
b) Train in all the skills needed
to row?

I am yet to find a dentist
without a cutting-edge, hard-
nosed competitive spirit!