Study investigates factors that influence work satisfaction of dentist leaders

By DTI

KUOPIO, Finland: Competent leadership from a motivated workforce is important, especially in the demanding health care sector. Aiming to understand the reasons for which some dentists in leading positions become frustrated and leave, whereas others thrive, researchers from the University of Eastern Finland have investigated factors that influence work satisfaction and associated career choices of dentist leaders.

In order to investigate factors associated with the likelihood of a dentist staying in or leaving a leadership position, the researchers utilised the method of empathy-based stories, through which the participants peered five years into their imaginary future. In their essays, Group 1 imagined a situation in which they were planning to quit their management role, while Group 2 imagined staying in their leadership position.

According to the researchers, participants in both groups regarded working as a leader as a positive challenge and a good opportunity to supplement or compensate for clinical work. Moreover, education seemed to be a very important factor in determining the intention to take up a leadership position.

Enervating and intent-to-leave factors named were stress, the excessive number of duties, the loneliness of the leadership position, the lack of support, and staff-related difficulties. In contrast, supporting factors that motivated individuals to seek and remain in leadership positions were enthusiasm for leadership supported by education, the possibility of achieving meaningful impact, a positive working community and the opportunity to promote oral health care as part of health care.

While both groups were hopeful that conditions would improve in their organisation in the future, participants generally expressed major concerns about ongoing changes, mainly the uncertainty and instability in the health care sector and the status of oral health care.

Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that it is essential to provide dentist leaders with necessary education, support and time for leadership in order to motivate individuals to seek and stay in demanding and challenging leadership positions and achieve personal satisfaction and fulfilment.

Of the 25 participants in the study, the mean experience as a dentist was 20 years and as a dentist leader was 2.5 years.

The study, titled “Factors associated with staying or leaving a dentist leader’s position—A qualitative study”, was published online on 16 April in the BMC Oral Health journal.

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An interview with Hans Geiselhöringer, president of Nobel Biocare

At the beginning of 2016, Hans Geiselhöringer took over as president of global dental implants manufacturer Nobel Biocare. Dental Tribune recently had the opportunity to interview the dental technician by training, who has held a number of important management positions in the dental industry for the past 20 years, about this significant step in his career and the future development of Nobel Biocare, as well as the dental implant market in general.

Dental Tribune: Mr Geiselhöringer, you have been leading Nobel Biocare's research and product development for over six years now. What are the greatest challenges of becoming the president of one of the global leaders in dental implants?

Hans Geiselhöringer: Leading a company with the heritage of Nobel Biocare is a great privilege that comes with great responsibility. Maintaining the pioneering spirit and momentum of innovation that the company has shown over the past 50 years is an immense challenge, but one that I embrace.

At the same time, we must ensure that we are not innovating for the sake of it, but for meaningful improvement in patient care and clinical predictability. Our solutions must solve the problems that dental professionals face every day. As a former Nobel Biocare customer myself, this is something I am extremely passionate about.

Nobel Biocare is an ambitious organisation. I am confident that, with the talented global team we have in place, challenges will soon become successes.

At the end of 2014, Nobel Biocare was acquired by US science and technology conglomerate Danaher. How has this affected your business and customers?

Our integration into Danaher's dental group has gone well, and our business has already seen positive impacts. Both parties are learning from each other, and this is driving continuous improvement in our processes.

I believe our customers have felt very little difference. They experience the same dedication to helping them treat more patients better than has been the foundation of our success for many years.

Looking ahead, our customers can only benefit from the improvements that will come from Nobel Biocare joining forces with the companies at KaVo Kerr Group. In combining our highly skilled global teams, we are creating a powerhouse of dental expertise that will keep our customers at the forefront of patient care.

The dental implant market is a competitive one, with an increasing number of manufacturers in the value segment on the one hand and mergers of large companies, like Dentsply Sirona, on the other. What is the best strategy for survival in such a competitive environment, and how will the dental implant industry develop in the future?

When a customer buys a product from Nobel Biocare, we see it not as the end of a transaction, but the start. This is something that sets us apart from many others in the industry. Our model has long been about partnership, offering customers not just superior products and solutions, but also the tools and training to help them to grow their business and reputation, all the time closely supported by our accomplished sales force.

Of course, from a product perspective, innovation is key, and I am excited about our innovation pipeline for the months and years to come. One of Nobel Biocare's most important strengths is our ability to offer complete solutions that are designed and tested to ensure they work in harmony. This is essential for improving treatment outcomes. Just as an example, and a concern that is underestimated by many, unfortunately, is any mismatch between the abutment and implant. This can lead to extreme load and stress conditions that may cause the components or even the whole system to fail. Opting for low-cost products to restore even high-quality implants can lead to very expensive mistakes and, in the end, it is the patient who suffers.

In terms of the future, digital dentistry will play an ever-increasing role. That is why our digital solutions are developed to work in harmony, just like our implant components. Nobel Biocare's integrated treatment workflow continues to evolve, allowing smarter diagnostics, better treatment planning and improved communication with all members of the treatment team, including laboratories, and patients as well.

According to the World Health Organization, about 30 per cent of people aged 65–74 worldwide have no natural teeth. Over the past decade, awareness regarding implant solutions has increased and the number of implants placed worldwide is expected to double over the next five years. In your opinion, what are the consequences for the dental industry and, more importantly, for dental professionals?

This, of course, represents a huge opportunity for the dental community to improve quality of life on a large scale. However, more patients must not mean lower standards of care. Patients deserve the best possible treatment, and I believe comes only from using evidence-based products and solutions.

However, these products are of little use in the wrong hands. That is why we are further developing our global training and educational offering. We want to help ensure that those new to implantology and those who wish to develop their skills for treating cases that are more complex have both the products to provide optimal treatment for these patients and the clinical expertise to do so safely.

Digital technologies have gained increasing importance in today's dental market. How has this development changed the way dentistry is performed in dental practices and laboratories in your opinion as a trained dental technician, and how well has Nobel Biocare addressed this trend?

Technology has opened the door to improved efficiency, flexibility and results for laboratories and clinicians alike. Nobel Biocare's integrated treatment workflow is industry-leading when it comes to helping dental professionals take advantage of the opportunities presented by digital dentistry, and together with our partners at KaVo Kerr Group, our focus in this area will significantly expand.

Take, for example, the Smart-Fusion technology in NobelClinician Software. It merges and aligns medical imaging from CT and CBCT scans taken by the clinician and the data derived from the model and diagnostic set-up scanned by the NobelProcera 25 System in the laboratory. This improved collaboration allows diagnostics and planning based on accurate intra-oral tissue information, the underlying anatomy and the predicted prosthetic outcome. The fusion of data is a truly visual experience that helps the clinician not only to optimise her treatment plan, but also communicate the proposal to the patient.

From 23 to 26 June, Nobel Biocare will be holding its Global Symposium at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. What new products will be introduced?

The tag line for the event is “Where innovation comes to life” because we will have a number of exciting new products and solutions to present. I wish I could say more, but you will just have to wait until we unveil them in New York.

Places are filling up, so I would advise anyone who wants to be among the first to learn about these developments to sign up fast. The educational programme features the field's leading experts on stage and a very enticing and comprehensive line-up of hands-on sessions. Add the networking opportunities and you have all the ingredients for an unforgettable event.

Thank you very much for the interview.

Hans Geiselhöringer

“Challenges will soon become successes”