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TEN KEYS TO SUCCESS IN THE PRACTICE OF ORTHODONTICS

How does an orthodontic practice go from average to being highly successful? I have been asked this question often in my 28 years of working exclusively with hundreds of orthodontic practices. The same competitive motivations that drove doctors to graduate in the top ten percent of their class still drives many to want to be on top.

Although each doctor must be his/her own judge of success, I have seen hundreds of practices in the top ten percent of the profession and have found ten key factors related to this achievement. The goal of this presentation is to allow each practice to evaluate its pursuit of excellence in relationship to the highly successful practice.

1. **1. *An Enthusiast Leader:*** Personality plays a large role in leadership style and in creating the desire to be super successful. Leadership has little to do with “leadership qualities” and even less to do with “charisma.” The foundation of effective leadership is thinking through the practice’s mission, defining it, and communicating it, clearly and visibly. An effective leader knows that the ultimate task of leadership is to create human energies and human vision. He earns the trust of those he is leading, sets the goals, priorities and standards and sees that they are maintained. But when things go wrong—and they always do—a true leader does not blame others, but takes full responsibility while effecting necessary changes.

2. **2. *Having the Right Location(s):*** Location is one of the most crucial ingredients to developing a successful orthodontic practice. Some areas of the country have little competition, while other areas are loaded with orthodontists. New facilities tend to easily pay for themselves and deliver an excellent return on investment. Visibility, easy access and good parking are necessities for customers who return every 1-2 months for two years, plus retention.

3. ***A Fabulous New Patient Enrollment Process:*** Making a great first impression is essential to success whether you are marketing orthodontics or looking for a spouse! Relationship selling is the primary method of getting patients to accept treatment. The Treatment Coordinator is vital to success as she wins the patients over by providing a warm, enthusiastic atmosphere through which all of the patient's needs can be met. Having the right NP Enrollment Process can be the key to increasing the exam to start ratio 20% to 100%.

4. ***Creating Thousands of Sales Reps with WOW Customer***

Service: More than just smiles on the faces of the doctor and staff, the successful practice will make it enjoyable for each patient at each visit. It may seem unfortunate, but patients and parents will refer others based on the practice's "fun spirit" much more than for the practice's quality.

Debanding Celebrations ❖ Motivational Contests ❖ Theme Parties ❖ Coffee Bar

Celebrating Holidays ❖ Laughter and Fun ❖ Post Cards & Phone Calls ❖ Video Games!

Care & Concern ❖ Sharing with the Community ❖ Excellent Communications & Forms

5. ***Delivering on What You Promised with Excellent Management***

Systems: The stress level of a practice is often determined by its management systems. Competent staff will either develop good systems or quit. Millenium has 26 years of practical systems for the orthodontic practice:

New Patient Enrollment Systems
On-Time/Doctor Time Scheduling
Program
Staff Management Systems
Procedures
Customer Service Programs
Ideas
Forms Management

Communications Systems
Patient Cooperation

Office Policies and

Marketing Systems and

Treatment Controls

6. ***Building a Super Team and Manage Great Relationships:*** Staff members play a vital role in the success of a practice. Even one super warm and friendly receptionist can generate many patient starts. You cannot train someone to be nice, you must hire nice people. The practice must have staff members who perform their functions effectively and enjoy working together.

7. ***Creating a Lasting Image and a Focus on Quality***

Treatment: Nothing is more important to long-term success than producing consistent quality results. Quality results are the foundation on which everything else rests. The practice must develop the capacity to “consistently deliver a beautiful smile that will last a lifetime.” Unfortunately, excellent results will not create a successful practice if no one knows about them. So share the good news of great quality by showing off your results! Also, develop a “Trademark” or fun idea by which your practice is identified throughout the community.

8. ***Developing Excellent Relationships with Key Referral Sources:*** There is no substitute for establishing great relationships with the area dentists. Every doctor must have a regular lunch program, do muffin patrols, and take advantage of special occasions to develop long lasting friendships that will lead to a bond of trust that merits referrals.

9. ***Now That You Have Achieved Success... Fight to Stay on Top:*** A growth pattern is evident that at six years many practices experience a growth spurt that continues until about the 10th to 14th year. Then the practice generally plateaus from 15-20 years before starting a gradual decline. The only way to stay on top is to consistently work the systems and marketing tools that built super success. Continued success and growth depends on the leaders’ ability to insure the consistency of those systems that are effective, the elimination of those things that no longer work and the addition of new and innovative ideas that will propel the practice forward. Great practices never stand still, but are continually seeking to improve performance, customer service and quality.

10. ***The Ultimate Key to Success is to Practice with Purpose:*** After all is said and done, success can only be measured by its ability to achieve desired goals and create fulfillment. Practice size, quality of treatment and a net income are all excellent gauges of success, but the ultimate yardstick must be a life that is filled with love, joy, peace and healthy relationships.

