

## Four Steps to a Better Denturist Practice

“If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves.”

- Thomas A. Edison

### **Step 1) Take 100% Responsibility**

Before I was involved in making software for denturists I used to work construction with this grumpy guy named Hank. Hank would have a baloney and mustard sandwich in his lunch every day. And every day he'd complain about it. One particular afternoon, after a rather animated bout of cursing at his baloney sandwich, he turned to me and said that if he has one more baloney sandwich for lunch he'd throw himself right off the building. I asked if he ever talked to his wife about making him something different. He replied, “Wife!? What wife!? I make my own dang sandwiches !” Ok, it's not entirely a true story. Regardless, the sandwich does illustrate a mantra that most happy people wax on about: that there is only one person responsible for the quality of life you live. That person is you.

It is commonly known that if you want to be successful, you have to take 100% responsibility for everything that you experience in your life. That means giving up all the excuses, all the victim stories, all the why you can't and why you haven't and all the outside circumstances holding you back. You have to give them all up forever. It's a simple equation really: Event + Response = Outcome. The thing about this equation is that once the event happens, it's done. What we do have 100% control over is our response to the event and thus our outcome. Taking 100% responsibility does not mean that you were necessarily responsible for the bolt of lightning that hit your practice last night. But you are definitely responsible for how you react to that fact. It does not mean that you are directly responsible for every mistake that is made in the office. But it does mean that if you are not achieving the desired results in your office, you need to make changes. Taking 100% responsibility is a pre-requisite to good practice management.

### **Step 2) Decide What you Want**

“If you are bored with life, if you don't get up every morning with a burning desire to do things – you don't have enough goals.”

– Albert Einstein & many others.

Once you have realized that you have created your current experience, then you can uncreate it and re-create it as desired. But the question then becomes, what do you want? This is where goal setting comes into play and it is probably the most fun part of managing anything. We can let our imagination run wild and dream as big as we can on this step! Here are a few helpful guidelines when goal setting:

## Ideas vs Goals

Dreaming and imagining is fun but not particularly helpful unless we get specific and measurable. When there are no criteria for measurement it is simply something you want, a wish, a preference, a good idea. Here are a few examples of good ideas vs goals:

Good Idea	Goal or Objective
I would like make more money	My gross revenue will be over \$1 million dollars on May 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2015 income statement.
I need to treat my employees better	I will meaningfully acknowledge each employee for their contributions this week by 5pm this Friday.

## Chuck it Down

Take each goal and chuck it down into sub-objective and timelines. The more specific the better. If your goal is have a gross revenue of \$1 million dollars a year from now you definitely have some sub-objectives to define and measure. You could start by taking some current measurements, then setting more specific weekly and monthly goals. Some initial measurements could include:

- How many brand new patients entered the practice last month?
- How many of those new patient had what you define to be major fees?
- What was the total value of the discounts you gave out last year?
- How many equilibrated dentures did you sell compared to standard dentures?
- How many quotes have been given out in the last 4 months which have not been followed up on?
- Generate a list the all patients in your practice who are under 90 years old, have insurance, and have not had a reline in the past 2 years?

Once you have a starting point, you can make weekly or monthly measurable goals. Each goal should have an action plan with specific time deadlines outlined.

## Review Daily

If you are serious about achieving these goals you MUST review them daily. Make a sticker on the inside of your wallet that reads "\$1 mill - May 31". Take out your goal book every morning and read the fact that your revenue will be \$1 million dollars on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Review what needs to be done today, this week, and this month. Even if you had not tasked yourself something tangible to accomplish on a given day then just reading your goals solidifies something psychologists often refer to as "structural tension" in your brain. Your brain wants to close the gap between your current reality and the vision of your goal. Athletes understand this and have it down pat. The same principal can be applied to the goals of your practice.

## Bruce Lee's Letter

If you ever get a chance to visit Planet Hollywood in New York City, look for the letter hanging on the wall that Bruce Lee wrote to himself. It is dated January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1970, and it is stamped "Secret." Bruce wrote, "By 1980 I will be the best know Oriental movie star in the United States and will have secured \$10 million dollars... And in return I will give the very best acting I could possible give every single time I am in the front of the camera and I will live in peace and harmony."

### **Step 3) Take Action**

"Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle."

- Abraham Lincoln

There is going through the motions and there is making a commitment to taking action. When I was designing practice management software I had a problem. Denturists are different than dentists. Denturists want to use wireless devices like laptops and tablets and they wanted to take these devices home or remote locations. The problem is that the remote devices rely on a wireless network or the internet to access the software. This is a problem because the wireless networks and internet can occasionally stop working at the most inconvenient times for my denturist customers. We committed to developing the first and only software for denturists (and in the whole dental\medical industry) that could work offline and synchronize changes once it got back online. This seemed like an overwhelming task to do at the beginning. But by committing to the process and doing whatever it takes to get there... well, we got there. If you want to create a working environment that is pleasurable and profitable, then commit to the process and take action!

### **Step 4) Organize and Measure**

"What gets measured improves."

- Pretty much anyone who accomplishes anything great ;o)

There are reasons why some denturist practices continually spin their wheels while still working hard. Until one commits to becoming organized and measuring results there will be a lot of running on a hamster wheel. How many outstanding insurance claims? What is your Accounts Receivable right now? How many premium vs standard dentures did you do this year? How much money did you forgo in discounts this year? How many people in your files are due to get a reline or a new denture? How many cancelled or missed appointments last month and did they all rebook? How many referrals are you getting from dentists and how many patients have you referred to a dentist? How many patients come in from your yellow pages ad? And how many of those patients referred someone else? There are a lot of things you can measure. Following the first three steps in this article will invariably give you some indicators that you will want to start to measure.

"He who stops being better stops being good."

- Oliver Cromwell

*Dean Fenwick is passionate about helping denturists achieve the peace of mind that comes with a well-organized profitable denturist clinic. He has developed DOMx (Denturist Office Manager) - the only practice management system can be used effectively on tablets and access your data away from the practice, even when offline. He can be reached at 855-494-0057.*