

IMPLANT PRACTICE SUCCESS REPORT

from Thommen Medical and Levin Group



Welcome to Issue #19 of ***The Implant Practice Success Report***, a monthly newsletter on implant practice success. Levin Group and Thommen Medical are very pleased to provide business education to you and your team. Each month, ***The Implant Practice Success Report*** will feature leading edge education for managing, marketing, and maintaining a robust and successful implant practice.

In this issue we focus on team accountability and some reminders on staying in touch with your referring doctors.

Is Your Team Accountable?

By Roger P. Levin, DDS

In the world of practice management and running a business, there are certain principles that are essential, even basic. For example, every specialty practice needs to have excellent management systems that are documented, proven, and designed in a step-by-step manner to allow the team to train and go to the next level. That is how production is increased steadily throughout a specialist's career. A second core concept is team accountability.

One of the best ways to create team accountability is to always give the other person a deadline when making a request. Through its management consulting program, Levin Group teaches clients that delegation is one of the key factors in the growth and success of a specialty practice and that delegation should never be given without setting a deadline. Whether it's an ongoing task or a one-time request, a deadline should always be included.

I've often been asked how to implement accountability training into specialty practices. The answer is that you don't have to make a big announcement that we will now have accountability, but you do want to gradually create a "culture of accountability." A culture helps to guide people in knowing what to do, how to do it, and, perhaps most importantly, *when* to do it. They can only get it done on time if they are given a deadline and people must be held to their deadlines.

The next time you ask anyone to complete a task, give them a deadline. If the person agrees to the deadline, then you should not have to do anything else until the deadline occurs. In the early stages of creating a culture of accountability, you will want to follow up with the team member on the day of the deadline to see if the task is complete and, hopefully, be able to offer them appreciation, recognition, and praise. Unfortunately, early in the creation of a culture of accountability, some people may ignore their deadlines. This is often not deliberate or because they are lazy. It is usually because they don't

recognize that the deadline you gave them is as important as other the tasks that they have. In other words, they don't look at the deadlines as non-negotiable.

The next time you approach a team member at the time of the deadline and find the task has not been completed, simply ask the team member when they think they can have it done. If it is a critical deadline, then you must explain that it must be done by a certain date and time. If it's not critical, avoid criticizing the team member but explain that when they accept a deadline it must be done by that time. That remarkably simple explanation will convert most people into understanding that deadlines are non-negotiable. This is how to create a culture of accountability.

Another important factor in accountability is that the team member can't simply ignore the deadline because there is a challenge or obstacle. Explain to the team member that if they run into a barrier, they must come back to you and explain why the deadline is no longer realistic. This provides the opportunity for you to identify a new deadline and provide the team member with any help they may need to properly complete the task.

When you create deadlines, you create a higher-level team, a culture of accountability, and a smoother running specialty practice.

ROGER P. LEVIN, DDS

Roger P. Levin, DDS is the CEO and Founder of Levin Group, a leading practice management consulting firm that has worked with over 30,000 practices to increase production. A recognized expert on dental practice management and marketing, he has written 67 books and over 4,000 articles and regularly presents seminars in the U.S. and around the world.

Will You Lose Referring Doctors This Year?

By Roger P. Levin, DDS

There is an undercurrent in referral marketing that is often overlooked by specialty practices. The undercurrent I am referring to is not having enough contact and touch points with referring doctors who are below your top referral sources.

Count the touch points

Most practices accrue a large percentage of their revenue from a minority of their referring doctors. This is the classic 80:20 principle that occurs so often in nature where 80% of your results come from 20% of your effort, time, referrals, etc. This is normal, but it doesn't mean that it makes sense not to pay enough attention to the 80% of referring doctors who still make up a significant portion of specialty practice implant referrals and revenue.

Time and again, as we meet new clients, we find that there is an enormous drop off in the referral marketing effort, relationship building, and touch points when we get below the top referring doctors. Here are a few reasons why this is dangerous:

- **Six or seven doctors can make a difference.** Six or seven referring doctors that are not in the top-tier can still equal one referring doctor who is. The loss of six or seven referring doctors over time could be equal to losing one of your top tier referring doctors.
- **You never know when you could lose a top tier referring doctor.** They could decide to sell, retire, or experience an illness. They also may bring in an associate who believes that he or she can handle all the treatment in your specialty. Whatever the scenario, if you lose a top tier referring doctor, you will need the next tier and the tier beyond to remain strong to keep referrals to your specialty practice at the right level.
- **You can lose referring doctors to other practices that pay more attention to them.** You have little chance of turning a low tier referring doctor into a top tier referring doctor if you don't have enough contact with them. In fact, in our experience we find that you have

a greater chance of losing all your low tier referrals to someone who pays more attention to them if you have a diluted referral marketing effort to this group of doctors.

Design an Annual Referral Marketing Calendar

If you want to keep your referrals strong, you should design an annual marketing calendar to be conducted by your professional relations coordinator. You must make sure that you have enough strategies for all tiers of referring doctors. Levin Group recommends a minimum of 15 annual referring strategies focused on all referring doctors. Some of these should be ongoing, such as selecting three referring doctors every day and sending text messages for a select reason. Remember, don't limit yourself to the top tier doctors and make sure that ongoing strategies are rotated throughout the entire referral base. You can always have additional strategies focused only on your top-tier to thank them and demonstrate caring and concern.

Keep in mind that that a lackluster approach to referring doctors is never in the best interest of the specialty practice. Conversely, if you have the right level of marketing for all tiers of referring doctors, you will increase your top tier referring doctors, overall referrals, and annual practice revenue.

To contact Dr. Levin or to join the 40,000 dental professionals who receive his Practice Production Tip of the Day,

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