

# IMPLANT PRACTICE SUCCESS REPORT

from Thommen Medical and Levin Group



Welcome to ***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 how to get what you want and how to be a better leader when it comes to marketing your practice.

# 3 Ways to Improve Your Marketing Leadership

By Roger P. Levin, DDS

Referral marketing helps to guarantee that your surgical practice will remain strong and successful. If you have been reading this newsletter for a while, you already know that you need a minimum of 15 strategies focused on referring doctors, to build deep and excellent relationships and dedicate 15% of your marketing time and effort to non-referring doctors. You also need a highly motivated professional relations coordinator, and this individual must be properly trained.

This alone mandates a comprehensive referral marketing program that is consistent, continuous, and relevant. So, if your program is not on track, what can you do?

There are three leadership actions you can take regarding referral marketing right now. They include:

**1. Become more of a friend to your referring doctors.** We know how difficult it can be to achieve a good work-life balance. Normally, you hear about work-life balance in the business literature related to women in the workforce. However, it applies to both men and women, especially those men and women who are surgeons running practices, taking care of patients, managing teams and overseeing finances. After all of this, they just want to go home at the end of the day and be done. There is a balance that can be struck, and part of that balance is dedicating a small amount of time to being a better friend to referring doctors. This doesn't mean that you must become close personal friends or spend endless time together. However, if you want to increase referrals or are concerned about a dip in referrals, then you must work to build a good rapport with your referring doctors. It does not take a lot of time or effort to reach out to referring doctors to let them know that you want to check in, follow up, simply say hello, give thanks, get together to review a case, or share a meal. One of the most powerful things we have ever learned is it when you have a meal with someone, you've changed your relationship forever.

**2. Be a mentor.** As a surgeon, you are a specialist and much more highly trained than general dentists regarding your areas of expertise. This gives you a wonderful opportunity

to be a mentor to referring doctors. You can help them determine which cases should be referred, how they should explain treatments to patients, what role you will play versus the role that they will play, what they can expect, and what you can teach them to help them provide better diagnoses. The role of an oral surgeon or periodontist can be multiplied greatly by becoming a mentor to referring doctors who then develop deeper trust and a deeper relationship with you.

**3. Determine the best form of communication.** Different doctors like different types of communication. There are many doctors, often older, who still like face-to-face or phone communication, there are others who still check their email every day, and there are an increasing number of doctors who almost never want to talk on the phone and love texting. While texting can be a little more difficult regarding patient information, text messages get read much more quickly than email and give you an opportunity to communicate specific information. We do not believe that text messaging can replace one-on-one time with a referring doctor when it comes to building the foundation of a relationship, but it can be a terrific substitute, especially if referring doctors are equally busy and harder to get together with or to speak with on the phone. Determine how each doctor prefers communication simply by asking. For example, some of us personally like emails for long correspondence but text messages for short.

If you follow these three leadership strategies, you will almost immediately begin to enhance your referral relationships.

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## ROGER P. LEVIN, DDS

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# If You Want Something – Ask for It

By Roger P. Levin, DDS

I recently spoke to a large group of specialists for an entire day about increasing referrals to the specialty practice. At each break there was one specialist who came up to me with a very specific question about his practice. By the time I finished the day, I had answered his question over five times. It seemed that I had fully answered the question each time, but he would still seek more in-depth information specific to his practice at each recurring conversation. Naturally, being the speaker and educator, I went out of my way to try to provide any help that I could as I feel that is part of my “seminar presenter responsibility.”

On the way to the airport following the day, I realized that I had essentially provided a significant consultation to this surgeon. He was concerned about not just increasing referrals, but a very specific problem he had with his top three referring doctors. He did not fully understand the problem, but he kept coming back with questions and different angles on the same topic. Honestly, I hope I was helpful, but that’s not the main point.

What struck me was that this surgeon understood the concept that if you want something just ask for it. He was at seminar to hear a presentation and perhaps ask a question or two. However, he ended up getting very specific consultation and recommendations about his own situation, which I was happy to provide. He had turned the seminar into an opportunity to improve his practice but, again, that’s not the main point.

The main point is...

If you want something – just ask for it.

This isn’t a magic formula. It isn’t a guarantee that you will get what you want. It isn’t thinking to the universe about what you want, and the universe will deliver. It is simply a brilliant strategy with the concept being that in life if you want something you have to ask for it. If you don’t ask, you’re unlikely to get it.

## Here are some examples:

1. Why not ask referring doctors with potential to refer?
2. Why not ask referring doctors with potential to refer more?
3. Why not ask for advice from the right expert when you need it? Perhaps you will have to pay for it and perhaps not. In the example above, the surgeon received significant advice (probably around 35 minutes of individual conversation during breaks, lunch, and after the seminar) and may have received some really good ideas to help him with the challenge he was confronting.
4. Why not ask your sales representative to provide basic and advanced training for your team?
5. Why not ask your credit card processing company for better rates?
6. Why not ask every six months for an increase in your fees from insurance?
7. Why not ask [insert need here]?

One trend I observed in my 38 years of running a business and a consulting firm is that those who ask tend to get more. No, they don’t get everything, but they do tend to get more and more can be good. In fact, more can create a higher level of your practice and a higher level of your practice allows you to attract even more.

First, don’t be afraid to ask. Asking for something does not turn you into someone taking advantage. People can and know how to say no.

Second, you will be amazed at how many people are willing to help you. The surgeon who kept asking me questions at the seminar did not think about whether I was willing to help him, he merely asked. I could’ve told him that he would have to engage our company for that kind of information. However, this was a seminar, which I view as a teaching opportunity

and educational event, so it really did not matter to me if I gave away additional information and education beyond the seminar. In fact, I consider that my responsibility. He wasn't worried about how I would react to him continually approaching me during breaks because getting his questions answered was his number one priority for the day.

Third, if you don't ask, no one is going to bring the answers and help to you. Maybe you want information, insight, guidance, or something done. For example, my friend and I both take our cars to the same dealership. I learned from my friend, who frequently asked if there any discounts, that you can get a 10% discount on any repairs over a certain total. The next time I visited the dealership, I asked about discounts, and guess what? I got a 10% discount. If I had not asked, no one would be offering it to me.

Fourth, as I like to say, all you can do is ask. If you get turned down you don't need to get mad, angry, or disappointed. You just go in another direction. There are people who will ask for something, not get it, and then go find another person, place, or opportunity to ask again.

Overall, I believe that people that ask for what they want are more successful. They are not taking advantage of anybody; they just figure out what they want and make the effort to ask for it.

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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