



# Implant Game Changers

***A Whitepaper Series By Roger P. Levin, DDS***

Implant Game Changers is a monthly whitepaper on an important implant practice management topic. It provides you with a quick and easy way to understand a specific business challenge and how to translate the solution into higher production and profit, greater efficiency, more implant patients, lower stress and greater personal satisfaction.

# Documented, Proven, Step-by-Step Systems and the Staffing Crisis

Dentistry, like many businesses, is facing a staffing crisis. When facing a crisis, it's always necessary to produce new and innovative approaches to successfully solve the problem.

At first, many practices simply focused on hiring. Get a new person in place, train them as best you can, and rinse and repeat until you have enough employees. Unfortunately, this created a degradation of the quality of team members because many of the new hires had less experience than the people who left. We also heard stories about staff members accepting positions and not showing up for the first day or quitting a few weeks later. One notable example was a new hire who received a \$2,000 signing bonus and quit a week later—a prime example of why you always make it a payout over six months.

There are many traditional and new approaches to solving this staffing crisis, but one of the most important methods that is still being overlooked is...

## Systems, systems, systems

All great businesses work by having excellent, clear systems. Systems tell everyone what needs to be done, how it should be done, and what the expected result should be. Inherent in the concept of systems is that if you follow them, they will automatically lead to the expected result almost every time. Yet, many practices have put very little effort into keeping their systems up-to-date and operating at the highest levels.

Let's begin by understanding that every practice has systems, but they are usually outdated or only semi-designed. The team will never reach its true potential without systems. Maybe this didn't matter as much before the pandemic and the staffing crisis, as practices

had a team of people who generally understood what to do. Fast forwarding to now, we see that many practices have turnover and are experiencing challenges such as getting new hires up to speed, seeing the right volume of patients in the face of infection control, and facing decreased insurance reimbursements and increased competition. Outdated systems will no longer sustain the success most practices want to achieve. We are already seeing practices that are working extremely hard but have lower revenue and income to show for it. Unfortunately, we expect this to continue simply because the systems practices have today are actually holding back their growth and development.

Systems can grow practices or *keep them* from growing. Simply think about Dr. Roger Bannister and the four-minute mile. Until Dr. Bannister broke the four-minute mile, no human being had ever run a mile in under four minutes. Soon after he broke it, 10 or 11 other runners broke the same barrier and within a few years by six full seconds. What happened? Up until that point, everyone believed you couldn't run under a four-minute mile, so they trained within a system to run as close to the four-minute mark but not below it. When Dr. Bannister broke the four-minute mile, it showed everyone that it was possible. Then runners changed their systems of training and pacing, and tons of runners broke the record. Even today, no one talks about the limits of how fast a human being could run a mile and we will probably see another record set again in the future.

Okay, enough about track and field. The point is that the systems that were used for years held runners back, and many of the systems in your practice today, could be holding your practice back as well. Therefore, you need documented, proven, step-by-step systems to help solve some of your staffing crisis.

## Systems and the staffing crisis

Here's a statement that I have made so often at seminars that I now actually consider it a fact. The easiest way to train your team is by having documented, proven, step-by-step systems that function as a training and instruction manual for the team. The best opportunity to have all team members on the same page and operating at the highest level of performance is having these systems implemented into the practice with key measurements. When a team member falls below a measurement, it's a warning to go back and review the systems. This is how many of the best practices are built and stay extraordinarily successful.

The shortage of dental staff has many practices working hard to replace team members. Unfortunately, the trauma of recruiting and hiring is only the first part of the challenge of bringing a new team member on board. We have observed that many new hires don't have the same experience as dental staff in the past, training is going slower, and some new hires do not make it. This can be changed by having documented, proven, step-by-step systems. Levin Group has demonstrated that you can train new team members 100% faster if systems are in place with the associated scripting.

You may resent the fact that you must do all this training, but part of business today is providing the training and education to help employees keep up, master new skills and technologies, and grow. Businesses realize that if they don't do this, they will stagnate and decline.

The problem is that dental practices are busy and don't have a lot of time available for training. Unfortunately, watching a webinar or signing up for a bunch of online courses that are unlikely to ever be watched or watched carefully, are not good solutions. What works is having clear systems in the practice for team members to use as instruction manuals.

Remember, as mentioned above, it's critical to have measurements associated with each system when

possible. Any time you can apply a measurement to parts, or all of the system, you help team members know what the target is and how they are doing. Keep in mind to be careful not to make this negative or punitive. It's about using measurements to improve performance by working together and following the systems. Systems are one of the key factors in team success today and we have never had a more challenging time.

As a final thought on systems and the staffing crisis, systems are designed to maximize practice efficiency, which means an automatic lowering of practice stress. Many practices don't realize that they are fatiguing and burning out their current staff, which is resulting in some staff members deciding to leave the practice. Taking the steps needed to retain your current team is one of the 17 principles of success that was found in our 30-year ongoing study of top 10% practices.

## Documented, proven, step-by-step

I have repeated several times the three key factors of designing a system. Let's break it down:

- 1. Documented.** If your systems aren't documented, they are only in the heads of the team members. This means that when a team member leaves, all that knowledge leaves with that individual. After certain team members leave, we've seen practices that have had to scramble to figure out how to manage insurance, collect money, or even schedule patients. When your systems are documented, the information can be accessed by anyone for study and review. Do you want to improve the performance of your current team and increase the speed of training time of new team members? The only way you can achieve this is by having documented systems. Documentation of systems is one of the key elements for increasing revenue every year.
- 2. Proven.** When it comes to systems, you can't afford to waste years on trial and error when a lot of it will be error. You need to know that the systems you're about to implement exist somewhere and have been proven

to be successful. If not, you'll be reinventing the wheel and sometimes that wheel comes out square. It's also demoralizing for the team to work with a system that will inherently lead to poor results. Systems that are achieving results in other practices will also achieve results in yours.

- 3. Step-by-step.** Step-by-step means that you turn your systems into a training and instruction manual. Practices are not necessarily built with a team of superstar performers with incredible natural talent. However, you can create superstar performer if people know exactly what they are supposed to do by following steps. This is how great teams are built. Most of us are not superstars but have the capability of performing like one if we follow good instructions. Step-by-step systems are also essential for new team members. Every practice is different, and you want the new people joining your practice to be

indoctrinated into the systems that you have put in place. If they can follow the systems step-by-step, they will train faster and perform at a much higher level. This all contributes to better practice results and higher staff longevity.

## Summary

Systems are the key to real success in dental practices. Without systems, even excellent marketing will eventually fail to deliver the results because the foundation is not in place. To perform at the highest level, every practice must address the major systems around scheduling, finance, the new patient experience, case presentation, general productivity, and customer service. If these systems have the three components of being documented, proven, and step-by-step, the practice is virtually guaranteed to improve dramatically.

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