

VIEW FROM THE PRACTICE

PPD's Clinical Editor Rahul Doshi on working to your strengths



In the dental world, now that the concept of business management has somewhat taken seed, the term 'leadership' is one that is very easily misunderstood and often used to shift responsibility to someone else. Leadership in a dental practice is simply a proactive mindset. It should be present in everyone who is part of the team in his or her respective roles.

One very important and often overlooked aspect of leadership is working on your strengths (strength of a business as a whole) and working out a strategy/plan to help overcome challenges and obstacles to success.

A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) is commonly used for business analysis and assessment. The truth is very few dentists, who also have to assess, diagnose, treatment plan, present advice AND do the treatment for their patients, have the time or inclination to do a SWOT analysis correctly, despite its importance.

I have one technique that is directly proportional to the success of your dental business at any given time: change your focus and direct it towards your strengths, then strategise on how to use them. So many of us spend a considerable amount of our lives trying to improve our weaknesses. The truth is you will only ever marginally improve your weakness or it will take an immense amount of effort to do so. On the other hand by focusing on your strengths you will improve considerably.

Why? Because your strengths are something you are good at and they come naturally to you. Also, you have already achieved them.

Here are my top tips on how to manage your strengths and weaknesses:

- Are your weaknesses a weakness because you never really spent time to nurture them or are they true weaknesses?
- If they are a weakness because you have not given that aspect any time and effort? You may need to work at them, depending on the importance to your practice
- Alternatively, you may consider your weakness a true weakness and you simply do not enjoy that aspect of a dental business. Also, you may decide that it is not a true weakness but you simply choose

PERCEIVED POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES
Perfect team
A good treatment coordinator
Excellent clinical skills
Aesthetic practice environment
Innovative technology
Customer service

PERCEIVED NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES
Not good at marketing
Practice needs cosmetic improvement
Team needs management
No practice manager
Stagnant clinical skills
No business acumen

not to master it. In these circumstances the best course of action is one of the following:

- Source from within - get your team to excel at any aspects of your practice which you either cannot or choose not to work in
- Outsource to other companies - they can help you to overcome your weaker aspects of your business.

My idea is to discover your strengths as a business, then work with them to propel you forward. Draw up a game plan on how you can best use your strengths. This can easily be done in a single practice team meeting. Fuelling your strengths with focus and attention will only make things easier for you and work to your advantage with very little effort. This is better than beating yourself up about over not being as good at something as a competitor.

Leadership should be directing the business based upon its strengths. One person's weakness can be another's strength. Focusing and working more with your strengths is firstly easier to do as a dentist and secondly, will provide results quicker.

So what strengths does your business have?

Have your say on Rahul's views: email us at comments@ppdentistry.com

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