

VIEW FROM THE PRACTICE

POSITIVITY IN PRACTICE

Rahul Doshi explores the effects of thinking and acting positive in the workplace, and how it can benefit the whole team whilst also maximising profits

Scientists have been studying the brain and how to achieve optimal function for some time now with some amazing results. However, it is only more recently that business leaders have begun incorporating such basic philosophies into business and team management protocols to ensure successful entrepreneurship. For instance the term 'positivity' has been around for many years and encouraged by social psychologists, but only now is it being engaged to create positive emotions at work to realise high performance.

This is especially important for team motivation and team leadership. In fact it has been shown that managing directors can increase their productivity by 15% and managers can boost customer satisfaction by 42% by simply taking on the principles involved in positivity. This is no small outcome, and hence positivity should be a tool that we as premium practice owners use to achieve our full potential in our businesses. Indeed, in my personal experience with coaching clients, I have seen the stigma attached to the concepts of positive thinking and how once they have been overcome these practices flourish with minimal effort.

POSITIVE THINKING

Positivity or positive thinking involves:

Building a positive mindset. This is not just about giving in or being nice or even suppressing your negative thoughts. In fact, in order to transcend from average to flourishing in your business you need to have a ratio

of being three times as positive as you are negative. Negative thinking helps to clarify the positive by keeping you realistic and grounded. But the ratio needs to be right.

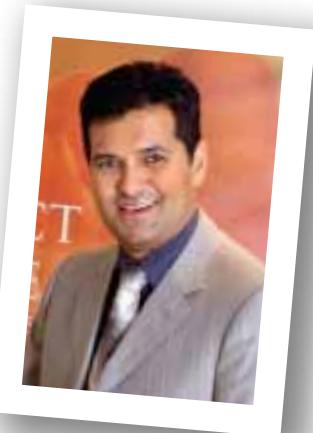
Buffering against negative outcomes. Here you need to learn or re-learn to protect yourself against any results in your business that are less than what you should be achieving. A simple way to do this is to view business decisions objectively and to be as fair as you possibly can. Good leadership skills can help you to communicate better with your team and hence not only buffer against negative outcomes, but also put systems into place that prevent such outcomes from occurring again.

Being solution orientated. This is a great one for leaders. Problems occur in a business all the time and most dentists find that they are constantly firefighting these obstacles to growth. One way of eliminating negative emotions and nurturing positivity is by teaching your team to be solution orientated. This means for every problem they face in practice your team needs to come up with a minimum of three solutions per problem. This helps to develop an objective mindset and steer the focus onto positive outcomes instead.

Developing positive emotions. This involves changing your mindset and how you perceive problems. It takes time to learn this but it can be learnt. A good tip is to start off with perhaps one aspect and continue until it has become second nature before you commence onto another. Some suggestions are:

- Envision the best possible outcome for each day
- Practice positive feedback – catching people doing the right things
- Look back on your day with gratitude for the things that went well
- Look to the future with how you are going to improve
- Enjoy the journey by doing work you are passionate about.

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POSITIVE RESULTS

Incorporating positivity into everyday practice can lead to some outstanding results, including better:

- Team focus, since they are solution orientated
- Teamwork, as the team starts to feel good and hence work better with each other
- Decisions, since positive thinking encourages more objective thinking and hence becoming a problem solver
- Negotiating skills and hence patient communication
- Social relationships and hence better communication skills
- Productivity, since the team feels good, are healthier and happier.

Positivity and eliciting positive emotions encourages thinking outside the box as it alleviates stress. This in itself has a positive effect on everyday practice and, therefore, productivity. It broadens our awareness and encourages novel, varied and exploratory thoughts and actions. Over time, this expanded behavioural repertoire helps us build skills and resources, which is the key to team inspiration and motivation and practice success. Positivity is not just an emotion, it is a mindset for business success.

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