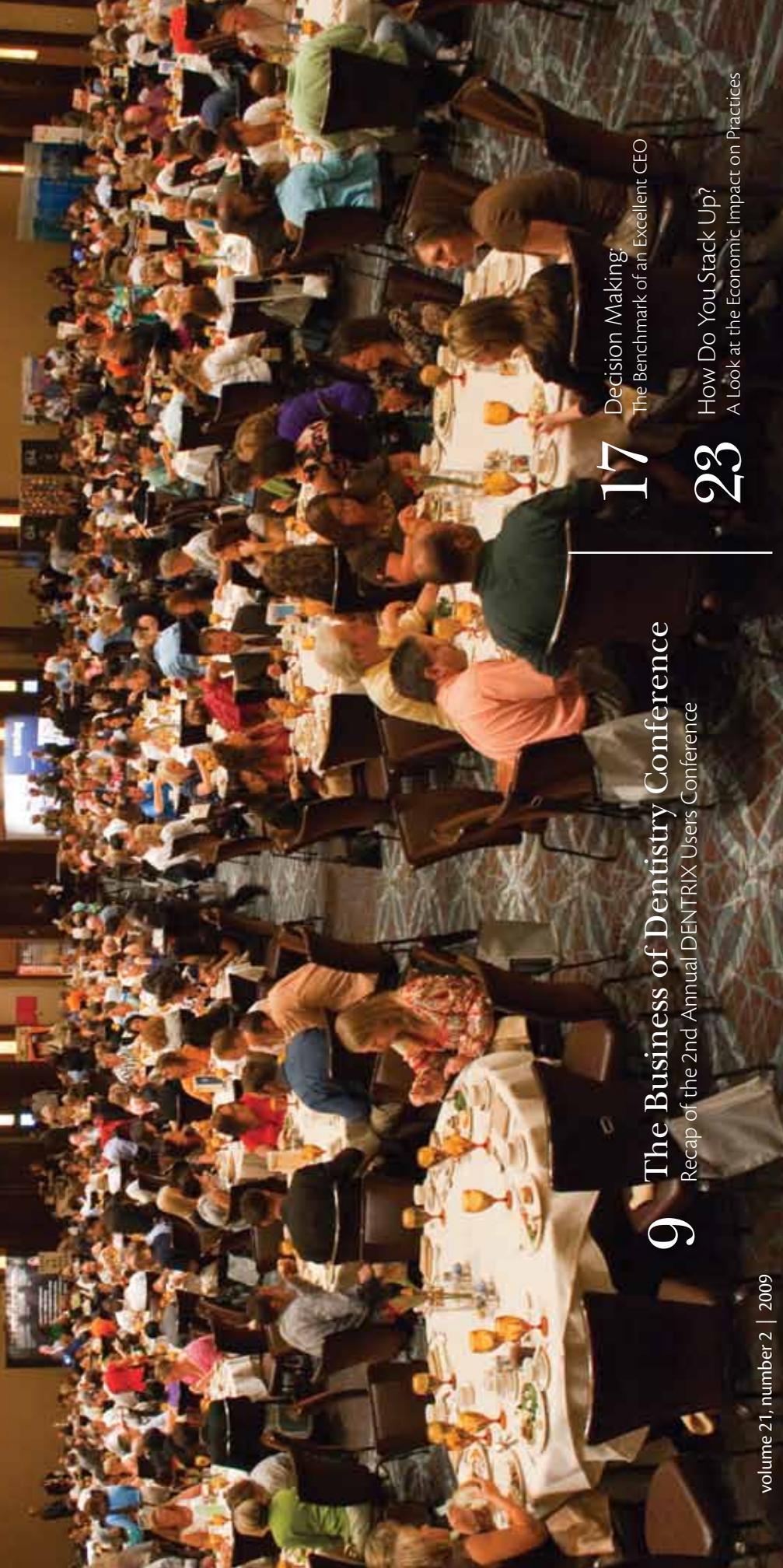


THE COMPUTERIZED dentist

the official newsletter
for the DENTRIX practice



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 **HENRY SCHEIN®**
PRACTICE SOLUTIONS

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we'd love to hear from you:

If you have anything you'd like to tell us, story ideas or suggestions, e-mail us at tcd@henryschein.com

PATIENT INFORMATION

NAME: _____ Birthday: _____ fill out

NOTE: Please provide information about your family and if they will be visiting Dr. Smith in the future. Please return this form on the back of this sheet and give it to one of the receptionists.

Household Information

Family Member:

Family Member:

Other Family Member:

Name: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Other Family Member:

Name: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Other Family Member:

Name: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

A Straightforward Account of Electronic Questionnaire Implementation

**saying
goodbye
to the
clipboards**

Dr. Marc Wallach is a general dentist practicing in a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri. As a DENTRIX user since 1998, Dr. Wallach has a history of embracing technology in the interest of improving productivity. Such was the case when the highly-demanded Questionnaires feature in DENTRIX G3 created a new bridge between DENTRIX and Dr. Wallach's eCentral Web site.

Like most dental practices, Dr. Wallach's office used a time-consuming manual process for inputting patient questionnaire information. Patients entering the practice would be handed a clipboard with multiple forms to complete. Completing the forms would take 10 to 15 minutes before being returned to the office staff. Then the information would need to be manually entered into the patient's file.

Dr. Wallach described the process as "...a big waste of time due to duplication. I would then have to wait until all the information was entered before I could begin the patient treatment". The process was improved somewhat by allowing new patients to download and print forms from the Web site prior to the appointment. However, it still required his staff to manually enter the information.

The process of entering new patients into the system wasn't the only inefficiency in regards to patient information.

Updating information for existing patients was also done manually, and it was inconsistent. "Sometimes patients updated their information when it changed, but more often they did not".

Despite the need for improvement, Dr. Wallach had some

initial concerns with adopting electronic questionnaires. Would the information be secure and would patients feel comfortable completing forms online? Would the information accurately and efficiently import into DENTRIX?

To begin using the new functionality, Dr. Wallach's office installed a patient kiosk at the front desk and began exposing patients to the system. The "soft opening" gave patients the ability to try the system and ask questions as the staff was becoming more familiar with it.

Dr. Wallach believes that since people are accustomed to using various types of computers for just about everything, there isn't much shock or resistance to a kiosk for patient check in. "As soon as we put the kiosk in the reception area, patients seemed to intuitively walk up to it and begin the login process".

To help patients that aren't as familiar with computers, Dr. Wallach installed an extra monitor that mirrors the check-in screen. The staff can watch as the patient completes the form and assist as necessary.

"I think everyone in my practice sees the benefits of going paperless. Again, with any new technology, it took quite a bit of patience to get to a comfortable place. In terms of time, I would say we have been working out the kinks for at least 2 months".

Now all of Dr. Wallach's new patients are directed to the practice Web site where they can access all the necessary forms. Patients complete the forms prior to their appointments. Then, after the sync with the DENTRIX server, Family File information can be imported directly into the patients' files. Copies of the completed forms are kept in the Questionnaires module for history and reference purposes.

New patients that don't have Internet access can complete the forms using the check-in kiosk.

"Patients are impressed with technology and rightfully assume that an office that invests in technology is also interested in investing in their dental health", says Dr. Wallach. He is now writing a newsletter to his patients, explaining the new questionnaire process in greater detail.

Dr. Wallach has been using the eCentral Web Site Manager since its inception. "My experience has been mostly positive, but with all new technologies there have been bumps along the way. It continues to evolve into a better product all the

time", said Dr. Wallach.

The same was true for the questionnaire enhancement. The initial setup was time-consuming for Dr. Wallach's practice and there are a few features that he would like

"As soon as we put the kiosk in the reception area, patients seemed to intuitively walk up to it and begin the login process".

-Dr. Marc Wallach

to see changed. But, not having to manually enter all the information has saved a great deal of time.

While most of Dr. Wallach's early concerns were quickly mitigated, the syncing process, specifically the efficient importing of information, remained an area in need of improvement. That all changed recently with the latest release of eSync.

"The eSync is hands down the best application of this whole questionnaire process. It does a lot of things that improve work flow." eSync eliminates timed or manually-initiated syncs that were often slow. Now when the patient submits a completed questionnaire, the information is imported instantly. Dr. Wallach is able to access the patient's medical history immediately and see the patient without delay.

It's too early to know what the total impact is to the practice's profitability, but electronic questionnaires has allowed the staff to concentrate on more productive tasks that do positively affect the bottom line.

Dr. Wallach tells other DENTRIX practices in regards to the new questionnaire feature, "Although it might be a struggle at first, the rewards will be worth it!"

Thanks in part to Dr. Wallach's efforts, the implementation and use of a patient check-in kiosk in your office will be much smoother and faster. Read the next edition of The Computerized Dentist for details on a new kiosk solution that allows DENTRIX customers to better use the questionnaire functionality.



connecting
our service
to your office

Remote Access Provides a New Level of Service

At DENTRIX, we believe it is important that we keep up with the growing demands of both technology and our customers' needs for support services. With this in mind, Dentrix Support is happy to announce that we recently added BOMGAR™, a remote access program, to our arsenal of support tools and resources. BOMGAR gives representatives the ability to create a secure connection to a customer's computer, allowing them to see and access the customer's system as if sitting next to them in the office. It's the next best thing to being there!

Dentrix currently supports approximately 16,000 BOMGAR sessions per month. Recent surveys of over 3,500 customers showed a whopping 4.76 out of 5 average satisfaction rating! Customers love how easy and stress-free support can be with this new system, especially on complex issues. In addition, they like the "hands on" training experience as representatives guide them through various product functions online.

Some of the benefits of using the BOMGAR remote access program are:

- Sensitive information (such as PHI) remains secure during the process and meets HIPAA standards. The server is on-site with us, meaning your data is never exposed to third parties.
- Support representatives can quickly view, troubleshoot and resolve problems. After a few questions to determine the nature of the software issue, the support representative can log into the system and quickly resolve the issue.

- Staff members that are less computer-savvy can call into support and have issues addressed in a timely manner. No more wasted time and frustration over trying to help staff members navigate through unfamiliar territory on the computer or network!
- Support representatives can show customers how to resolve issues and where to find solutions in a "hands on" environment. Showing customers how they can resolve questions and where to find valuable information online results in fewer calls made to Support.
- Customer satisfaction is improved – quicker calls and solutions mean more time for dentistry!

But you don't have to take our word for it. Listen to what our customers are saying! These are actual comments from users after a BOMGAR session:

- "This service is AMAZING!"
- "BOMGAR rocks!"
- "Quick and painless!"
- "Love the new [remote] system! Now I don't have to panic every time I need help!"
- "Great for us old dogs who don't know much about this stuff!"

We are happy to have this wonderful tool available to offer our customers a new level of service!

tips AND tricks

Success with eClaims: Sending claims electronically through Dentrix is easy and claim tracking is a snap with these simple tools.

eTrans Reports

Your eTrans reports offer valuable feedback throughout the processing of your claims. The Validation Report allows you to review your claims prior to transmission; An "Error" on this report indicates a correction is required. A "Warning" is a "heads up" that allows you to make corrections if applicable before sending your claims. The eTrans Error Report alerts you to issues requiring your immediate attention and your eTrans Transmission Report, comprised of the Confirmation, Payer/Clearinghouse, Passthrough, and other reports, keep you informed of the status of your claims along the way.

eCentral

You will never lose track of another eTrans report when you use eCentral's Reports Manager. Within eCentral's Insurance Manager, the Reports Manager, Claims Manager and Claim Statistics work together to keep you on top and informed as your claims process.

The Insurance Aging Report

The Insurance Aging Report, ran regularly by your office, offers additional checks and balances for claim tracking. Running this report "over zero days" gives you a complete listing of all outstanding claims and will help you avoid non-payment due to untimely filing.

Working With the Insurance Company

When calling an insurance company, it is recommended that you verify the provider, subscriber and patient information on the claim matches the carrier's information

exactly. If errors appear on your claims, or if claim information does not match the information in the carrier's records, the claim will not be entered into the carrier's adjudication system and a claim ID (DCN) will not be assigned. In these cases, the insurance company may report they did not receive the claim.

With the carrier on the line, now is a good time to verify an exact match between the information submitted on the claim and the information the carrier has on file. In addition, check the procedure codes and other information on the claim to make sure the carrier accepts this information. If you are very close to the timely filing deadline, ask the representative if you can FAX them a corrected claim for their review and then see if they will go ahead and process the claim.

Helpful information when tracking claims

- Provider Information
- Doctor's TaxID
- Organizational and Individual NPI numbers
- Organization Name
- Doctor's name
- Treating doctor's State License Number
- Provider Legacy ID number and Group number if you are calling about government claims
- Office Phone Number

If you still need assistance after following the suggestions above, please

Patient Information

- Subscriber name and date of birth
- Insured ID number
- Patient name and date of birth
- Group policy number
- Dates of Service

Claim Information

- Insurance Company name and Payer ID
- Billed amount of claim
- Procedure codes submitted
- Place of Service
- Student Status
- All Non-Standard claim information including NEA number for attachments
- Claim sent date

Keep in Mind

Carriers make payment based on how their system recognizes the doctor or organization. In many cases, carriers will ignore the "Pay To" information on a claim and will make payment based on the address they have on record. Carriers sometimes differ in how they recognize providers on eClaims,

some factors are; provider name, organization name, TaxID, NPI and and State License number.

Many carriers, particularly with regard to offices who have multiple providers, require two NPI numbers. In these situations, insurance companies often expect a type II NPI number for the Billing and Pay To Provider and a Type I NPI number for the treating doctor on each claim.

Payments from insurance should be expected in one to thirty days. If payment is not received in twenty-one to thirty days, please follow up to verify there are no issues.

Although eServices provides a mechanism for detailed claim reporting, not all insurance companies take advantage of this service and after an initial "acknowledgement of receipt" of a claim file, these carriers will only report claim status on the EOBs they mail to the dental practice.

Calling eServices Support

If you still need assistance after following the suggestions above, please call eServices Support at (800) 734-5561.

Please have your customer ID handy along with the claim number if possible. If you have spoken with the insurance carrier prior to calling eServices, have the carrier phone number and the name of the person you spoke with on hand.

eServices is a toll free call and our customer service team is always happy to offer assistance.

■ James Browning



THE VENUE: Red Rock Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, NV

Photos by Ian Wambold

what happened in Vegas...

THE CONFERENCE:

The 2009 Business of Dentistry Conference

The sun wasn't the only thing that was hot in Vegas, June 11-13. The second annual Business of Dentistry and DENTRIX Users' Conference was a huge success, tripling the number of attendees from last year and sharing conference space and services with the '09 Camlog Congress.





The panel of expert speakers heated up the classrooms lecturing on topics such as practicing paperless, practice optimization, developing leadership, patient retention, personal time management, treatment plan presentation and schedule optimization, just to name a few. Classroom topics covered a wide range of material, giving the whole office staff an opportunity to further develop their skills.

Attendees learned the secrets of winning in a challenging economy from 21 of the profession's experts and sharpened their DENTRIX skills with two full days of one-on-one interaction with trainers focusing on tips, tricks and insider knowledge. Dr. Michael Schuster offered the keynote address and focused on balancing practices to react to natural changes in the economy.



THE CLASSES: Included sessions on schedule optimization, practicing paperless, patient retention, managing the practice, office etiquette, DENTRIX tips and more!

THE SPEAKERS: Dr. Larry Emmott, Cathy Jameson, Kerry Straine, Joan Forrest, Dr. Don Lewis and more!



Dr. Larry Emmott, a presenter at the conference, commented, "What I like about this conference is the energy: the energy of a like-minded group of people together that are here sharing a common vision and a common goal. It's different than other kinds of meetings that I go to where there are people from all different walks of dentistry using all different kinds of technology. Here, it's people that are already committed DENTRIX users, and you can feel their excitement and commitment and their energy—they want to get better and it's exciting."

Sara Campbell, an attendee from Arizona said, "We enjoyed the seminar and learned how to utilize the

Appointment Book to look at future openings, fill in for high production and help with production goals for providers."

Dr. Bob Saunders of Rapid City, SD raved, "Today has been great! All of the speakers have been excellent and the venue is fantastic."

The eServices Beer and Bowling night was a hit with dentists and staff alike. Set in the Red Rock VIP Lanes, conference attendees rolled the rock late into the night on the first day of the conference. Prizes were awarded for strikes, spares and combinations, and the red super hero capes that participants wore were seen around craps and blackjack tables into the wee hours of the morning.



THE EVENTS: eServices Beer and Bowling, keynote address by Dr. Michael Schuster, customer support area and everything else that happens in Vegas...





The Winners

The Business of Dentistry Conference was also full of fun opportunities for winning prizes. There were three specific times during the Conference attendees could enter to win different prizes.

First: during the Conference, attendees had the chance to visit with vendors from the dental industry. If the attendees visited all of the vendors' booths, filled out the Bingo punch card and turned it in, they were entered into a drawing.

Second: at the end of the Conference, if attendees filled out the Conference Survey and turned it in, they were entered to win a Bose Headset.

Third: Each night, the Red Rock delivered bags with information about the Business of Dentistry sponsors to each of the rooms. One night, inside the bags was a card about eServices. If attendees filled out the card and dropped it by the eServices booth, they were entered into a drawing to win the iPod Touch that was supplying the music for Beer and Bowling, along with all the songs heard during the evening.

The Winners are:

Conference Survey

Bose Headset—Danielle Soble

Vendor Bingo Card Game

Sirius Satellite Radio—Arnold Weiss

iPod Nano—Barbara Ashley

\$50 Visa Gift card—Kathy Pauze

eServices Bag Drop

iPod Touch—Millie Mercado

Thank you to everyone who came and participated in The Business of Dentistry Conference. We hope to see you again next year!

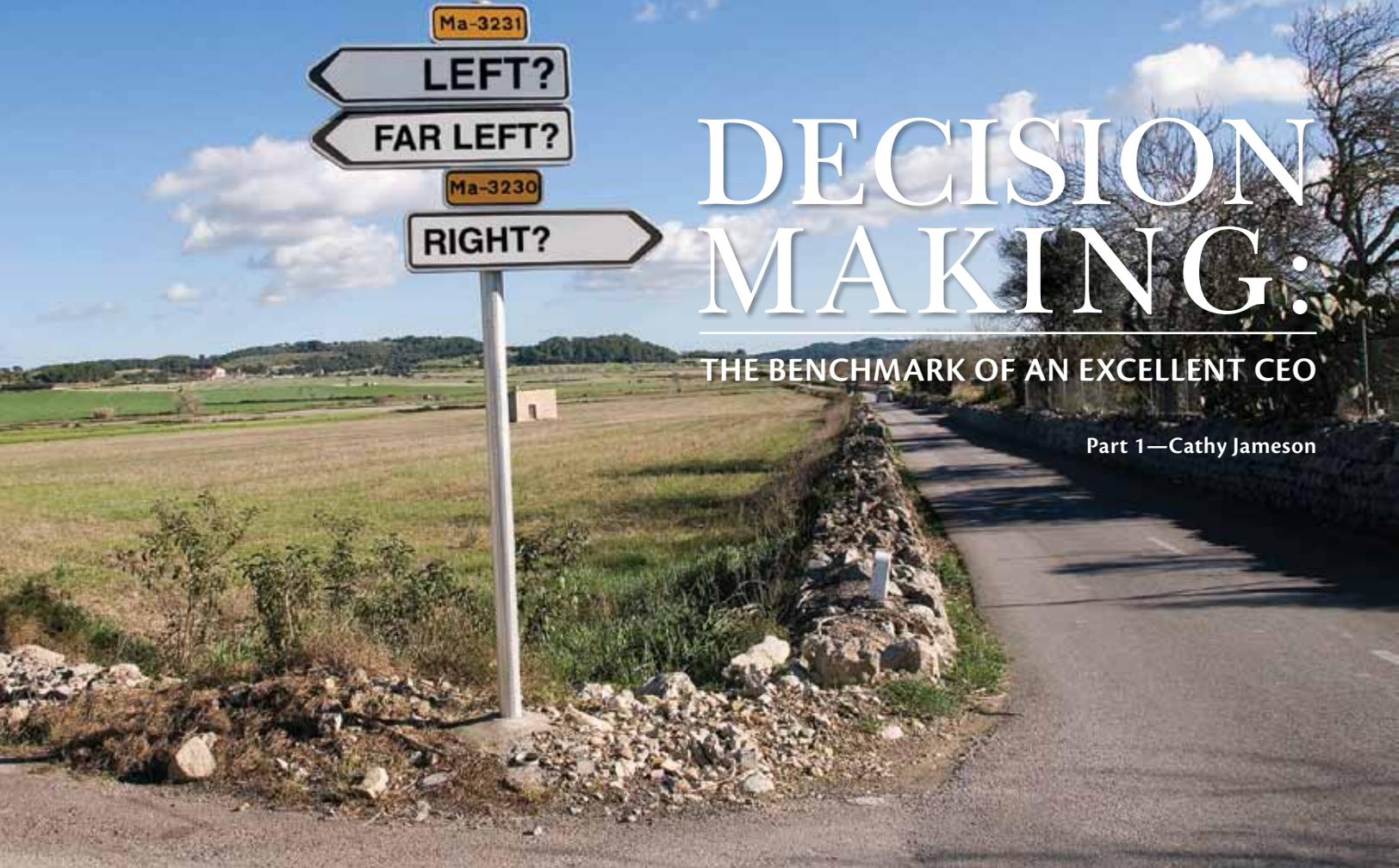
Join us for the 2010 Business of Dentistry Conference. For more information visit: www.BusinessOfDentistry.com



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DECISION MAKING:

THE BENCHMARK OF AN EXCELLENT CEO

Part 1—Cathy Jameson

*“Look it up,
size it up,
but don’t postpone
your life
just because
you can’t make up
your mind.”*

—unknown

Decision-making may be one of the most difficult responsibilities of a CEO—or for anyone—and you, Doctor, are the CEO of your organization. In both the professional and personal life of people, decisions need to be made on a regular basis.

Not making decisions in a timely fashion or avoiding the decision altogether are major reasons for failure on the part of a CEO. The main reasons why a CEO fails, according to Ram Charan and Geoffrey Colvin in their Fortune magazine article, Why CEOs Fail (June 21, 1999) are the following:

- Poor execution
- Not getting things done
- Being indecisive
- Not delivering on commitments

Challenging “side effects” of not making decisions are:

- Lost time
- Increased stress
- Loss of productivity

There are numerous reasons why people avoid making decisions. You may recognize yourself in these reasons.

FEAR OF FAILURE

Fear of failure can be either a conscious or a subconscious filter that hampers your own personal progress. Fear of failure is the main reason people do not write goals. This strong inhibitor also ranks as a major barrier to decision making.

Many people take so long to make decisions that the moment of magic, in which a decision could have made a constructive difference, is lost. Zig Ziglar says that many people have “paralysis by analysis”. The fear of failure is so dominant that not taking that step out into the unknown is easier, seems to make more sense, and is less risky. It may be easier to avoid a decision than to make one. Then, if things don’t work out the way you think they should, you won’t have to say to yourself—or hear anyone else say, “I told you so!!”

No matter how much analysis goes into a decision, sitting back and not making the decision is—more often than not—worse than doing nothing. Oftentimes the results you get may be different than what you expected—but those results might also be better than you expected!! That can’t be all bad!!

ATTITUDE

Attitude plays a major part in how you approach decision making. If you make a decision and you do not get the results you had hoped, then step back and evaluate what has happened. Has your goal changed? Did the plan of action have some weaknesses that need to be strengthened? Did you need resources, mentors, coaches, etc. to help you along the path? Or did you think that you had to “go it alone”?

Stop thinking that you have to know everything and that you have to be a master of all things. In this complicated and sophisticated world in which we live and work, no one can know everything.

I have a corporate consultant that works with us here at Jameson Management, Inc. There is no way I can know everything or that I can see everything clearly at all times. Sometimes I am too close to a situation to analyze it quickly enough and without too much “baggage”. In addition, there is always someone who has more experience and knows more than I do, so I turn to those experts to “coach” our team to be better and better at all times. I honestly believe

that the day we think we know it all or the day that we think we cannot get any better is the day we need to close our doors. We must be on a continuous path of improvement.

You have the same commission: to constantly be improving. The only way to constantly improve is to step out of your comfort zone and stretch to new horizons. That means that you must risk. No one has ever achieved ultimate success without being willing to take some risk. When you take a risk, you might not get things right the first time—you might make some mistakes.

However, instead of looking at a mistake as a failure—step back and look at your progress. What did you do well? Do more of that. What didn’t go so well? Change it. But don’t let yourself wallow in a state of self defamation, self defeat, or loss of impetus. Alter what needs to be altered and take another shot at the project. Learn from those mistakes. You will be better and stronger on the other side.

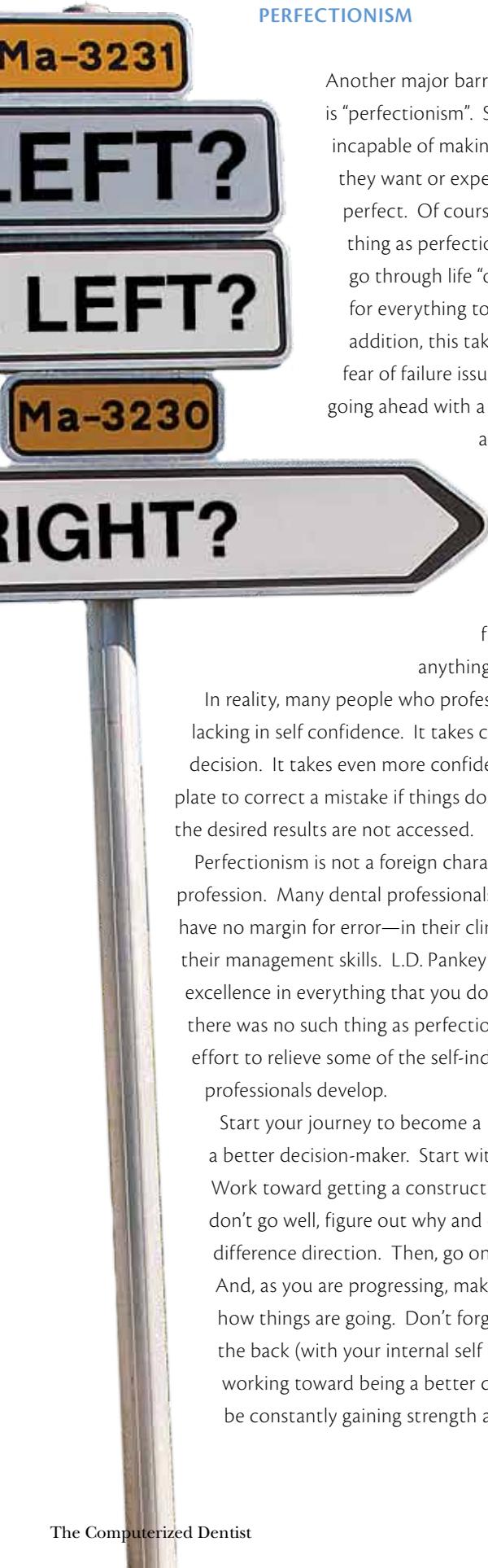
I am sure you will agree with me that in your personal life and in your career, there have been times when you have taken a long time to make a difficult decision. However, once you made the decision and took the steps necessary to move that decision into action, there was a sense of relief or a sense of accomplishment. Know that carrying around the mire of thoughts in your head—knowing that a decision needs to be made can be stressful.

Write out your thoughts. Get these thoughts organized.

Do the classic “Ben Franklin”. Write the words PRO AND CON across the top of a page. Write out a statement about the decision you need to make.

Then, write out the negative and the positive possibilities. What could go wrong? And, on the other side, what could go right? Then study your lists. If the pros outweigh the cons—go for it. You will have an immediate relief of stress. You will be on a path of action. You may make mistakes. But you will learn from them and you will be wiser and better for those mistakes—unless you let yourself wallow. You must refuse to let yourself say things like, “see I knew I shouldn’t have done that. I just should have stayed doing things exactly like I was before.” Another word for that kind of reaction is stifled!!! Or DEAD!!!

Do not let fear of failure stifle your life. Don’t develop “paralysis by analysis”. Be a leader—a leader who does a careful evaluation, then makes a decision. Studies have shown that one of the major factors that leads to the demise of a CEO is the inability to make a decision—and to make that decision quickly enough.



PERFECTIONISM

Another major barrier to decision making is “perfectionism”. Some people are incapable of making decisions because they want or expect things to be perfect. Of course, there is no such thing as perfection so these people go through life “on hold”—waiting for everything to be “just right”. In addition, this takes us back to the fear of failure issue. The fear that going ahead with a decision will provide

anything less than perfection deters many people from moving out of their comfort zone or from going ahead with anything.

In reality, many people who profess “perfectionism” are lacking in self confidence. It takes confidence to make a decision. It takes even more confidence to step up to the plate to correct a mistake if things don’t go as planned or if the desired results are not accessed.

Perfectionism is not a foreign characteristic in the dental profession. Many dental professionals think that they have no margin for error—in their clinical dentistry or in their management skills. L.D. Pankey professed striving for excellence in everything that you do, because he knew there was no such thing as perfection and was making effort to relieve some of the self-induced stress that many professionals develop.

Start your journey to become a better leader by being a better decision-maker. Start with a small decision. Work toward getting a constructive result. If things don’t go well, figure out why and come at it from a difference direction. Then, go on to the next decision. And, as you are progressing, make an internal note of how things are going. Don’t forget to “pat yourself” on the back (with your internal self talk) so that as you are working toward being a better decision maker, you will be constantly gaining strength and confidence.

FEAR OF HURTING SOMEONE

The heart of a dentist is so big that it won’t fit into his/her body—and that’s just the way we want you to stay. You have a level of compassion and caring that is rare among humankind. You know that many people perceive you as someone who “hurts them” –someone who “gives shots”, “cuts up their gums”, “drills holes in their teeth”—and so on. We have all heard that before. And, in reality, you don’t want to hurt anyone and go out of your way to make sure that you don’t. All members of the team are that way: the clinical assistant, the hygienist, and the business team.

None of you want to hurt patients: physically or emotionally. You may hesitate to tell a patient what they need out of fear that you will hurt their feelings. In addition, you do the same thing with team members. You sometimes don’t tell each other things that may be bothering you because you don’t want to hurt another team member’s feelings.

In fact, taken to an extreme situation, many doctors hesitate to release a team member who may not be working out very well or who may be causing problems in the practice because they don’t want to hurt that person’s feelings.

Research on the party of Mr. Charan indicates that CEOs who fail often fail to make decisions quickly enough.

LACK OF CONFIDENCE

Lack of confidence can relate to several different issues in connection with decision making. A person might hesitate in making a decision because of (a) inadequate skill level, (b) inadequate skill level of a colleague or team member, (c) insufficient preparation or training, (d) timid or non-assertive personality, (e) being “stuck” in the status quo, (f) poor leadership, and etc.

■ Cathy Jameson

See the Next Issue of *The Computerized Dentist* for Part 2 of Decision Making: The Benchmark of an Excellent CEO.

Visit www.JamesonManagement.com for more information about Cathy Jameson and Jameson Management.

SEMINARS

USE DENTRIX TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL

DENTRIX seminars are a smart investment in yourself, your staff and your practice. They will help you more fully utilize the features and tools in DENTRIX to benefit your practice. Staff members will learn ways to make their daily routines easier and more efficient. Doctors and office managers will learn tips, strategies and best practices to improve the bottom line. By attending a seminar, you will:

- Upgrade your skills and feel confident using the most important features introduced in recent DENTRIX releases
- Work smarter by getting the full benefit of what DENTRIX has to offer your practice
- Get tips to make your daily routines easier and more efficient
- Learn practical skills by discussing real-world scenarios
- Gain valuable insights by interacting with other DENTRIX users
- Enjoy hands-on training with no more than 2 students seated at each computer
- Earn up to 12 CE credits accepted by the AGD



ESSENTIALS SEMINAR

This 2-day seminar is designed for users in the front office who need to gain a solid understanding of the basics of DENTRIX G4 in order to make their daily routines easier and more effective. Participants will learn to be efficient contributors in their practices with a good command of the essential features of DENTRIX G4.

Topics will include:

- Appointment Book
- Family File
- Ledger
- Office Manager
- Continuing Care
- Insurance Management
- Practice Management Basics

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

This 2-day seminar is designed for experienced DENTRIX users in the front office with intermediate to advanced computer skills. Participants will learn how and why to use advanced features in DENTRIX G4, and will come away with tips and strategies to use DENTRIX to its full potential and improve the bottom line for their practices.

Topics will include:

- Schedule Optimization
- Lab Case Management
- Insurance Management
- Collections Management
- Going Paperless
- New Practice Management Features in DENTRIX G4

CLINICAL ADVANTAGE SEMINAR

This 1-day seminar is designed for all clinical DENTRIX users who want to focus on effectively using clinical features in DENTRIX G4. Participants will learn tips to increase case acceptance, effectively manage the many options in the Treatment Planner, and move towards a paperless practice in the back office.

Topics will include:

- Charting and Clinical Notes
- Treatment Planning
- Case Presentation
- Perio Charting

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Find out more about dates and locations and register online at:

www.dentrix.com/training/seminars.asp



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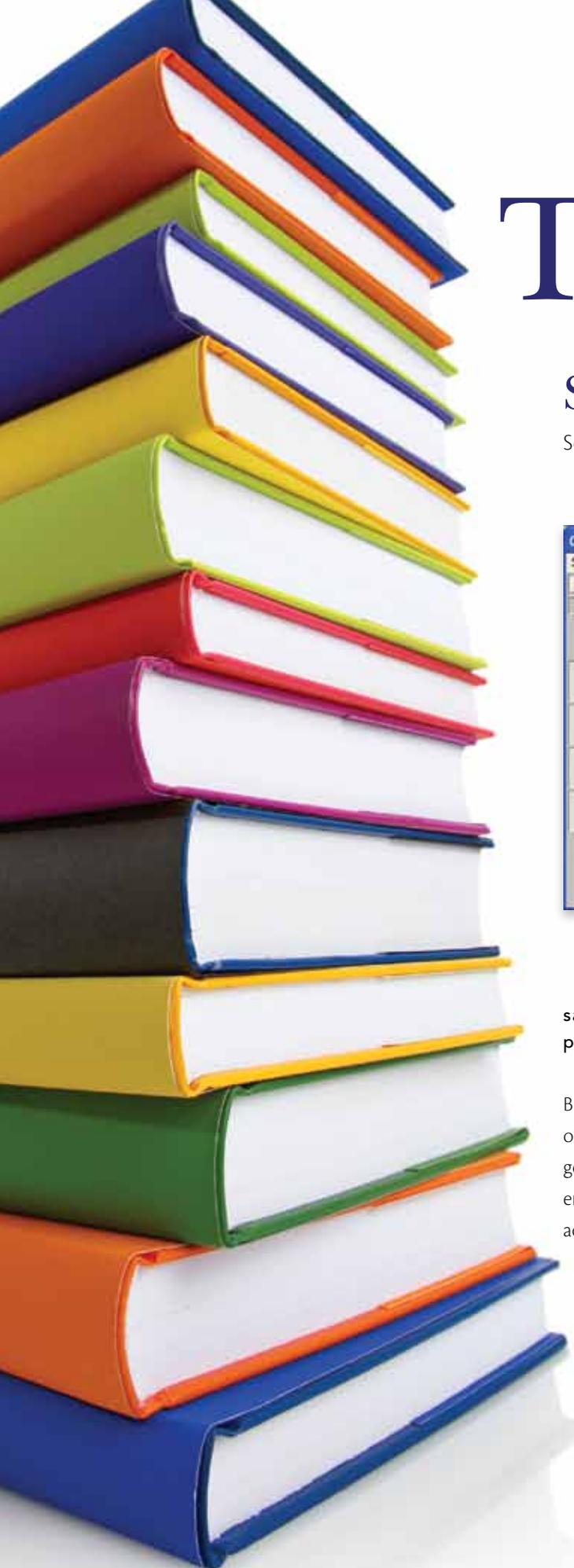
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Tales from the Trenches

Scheduling TRAINER | GINA MILLER

Scheduling Production in the Appointment Book

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0
6	7 198	8 3767	9 3039	10 3227	11 10716	12
13	14 0	15 0	16 0	17 0	18 0	19
20	21 0	22 0	23 0	24 0	25 0	26
27	28 0	29 0	30 0	31 0		

Scheduled: 20945
Month Goal: 20000
Variance: 945
Production: 0
MID New Patients: 0

OK Cancel

What did you train the office to do with this feature?

I helped an office set up goals and views for each provider in the Appointment Book. Then, the office used the appointment calendar to be reminded of daily production and see production vs. goal-to-date.

How did the feature help the office staff save time, save money, make money, reduce stress, or enhance their professional image?

This helped the office save time by having the Appointment Book automatically calculate production. This also helped the office make money by increasing awareness of production and goals on daily basis. The office reduced stress because this feature encourages and helps the office plan for more production by acknowledging and seeing the comparison of production vs. goals.

See all tips and ticks from "True Stories That Will Change Your Practice" at www.DENTRIX.com.



how does your practice STACK UP?



A Look at the Current Economic Impact on Dental Practices

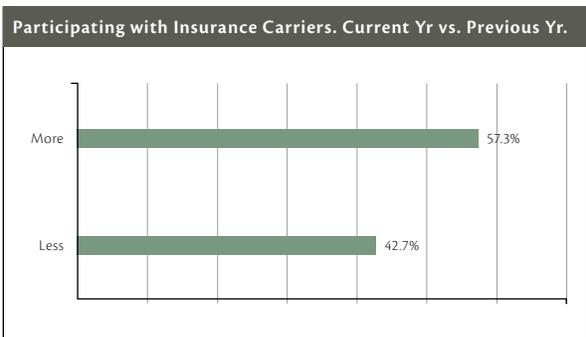
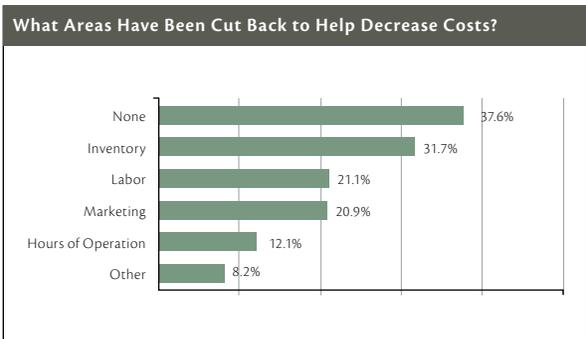
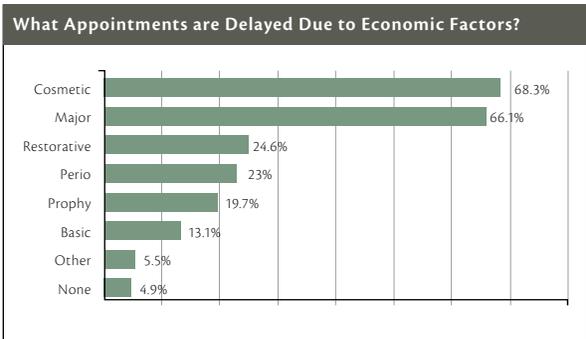
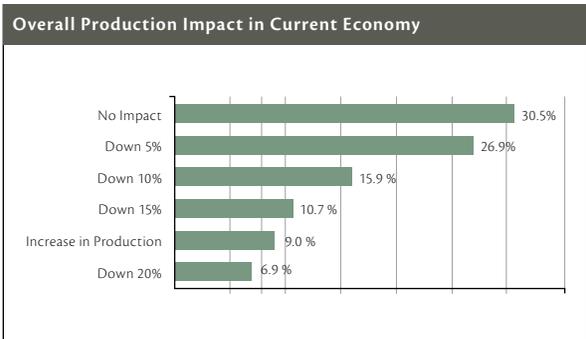
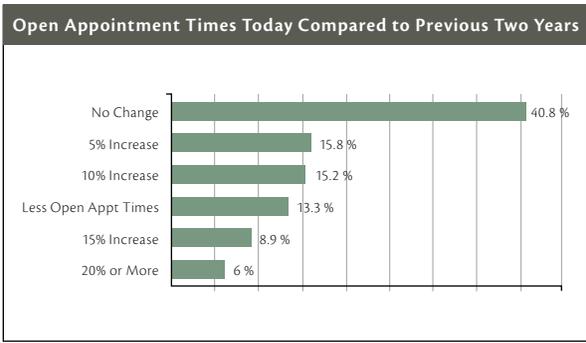
Whether you're watching the evening news, reading the newspaper or Internet, or simply having an everyday conversation in the grocery store, we are currently surrounded by negative media attention regarding the present state of the economy.

The dental industry is often regarded as one of the best recession resistant industries. Some say the dental industry is even more insulated than the healthcare industry because the dental industry has a unique recall system that helps keep patients coming back for care every six months. With today's economic challenges, are dental offices feeling the economic pinch along with the rest of the nation? Is the constant negative media attention about the economic environment leading to different buying decisions for patients?

Rather than speculate about answers, we decided to go straight to the source and asked dental practices about the current state of their business. Here are a few of our findings on what dental practices across the nation are experiencing.

"It's not the situation. . . .
It's your reaction to the situation."

Robert Conklin



Highlights of our Findings:

- Over half of dental practices are not experiencing a negative impact in their schedules as a result of the economy.
- Production has not been impacted in nearly 31% of practices and has actually increased in approximately 9% of those practices surveyed.
- When asked which expenses dental offices are cutting back on, nearly 38% of the time practices are not cutting back on any expenses. Inventory saw the greatest decline with practices reducing inventory 32% of the time.
- Over 57% of practices are accepting more insurance plans today than they were a year ago.
- Prophy, perio and basic appointments are having the least impact of patients cancelling their appointments.

Summary of our Findings:

According to our findings from 522 dental offices across the nation as well as discussions with several prominent dental consultants, some offices are having their best year ever and are not cutting back on expenses. Consultants say those offices having the greatest success in today's economy are synergistically focused on providing a superior patient experience, ensuring patients are active on their continuing care system, improving and expanding ways to increase case acceptance, optimizing their schedules, utilizing third party financing options and are not cutting back on their marketing expenses.

■ Tammy McHood

A large billboard stands in a desert landscape under a clear blue sky. The billboard is supported by a tall, white, cylindrical pillar. The billboard's surface is white and features the text "Who is Seeing Your Marketing?" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. The billboard is mounted on a metal frame with wooden planks underneath. The background shows a vast, arid desert with sparse, dry vegetation and a range of low mountains in the distance. A utility pole and power lines are visible in the mid-ground.

**Who is Seeing
Your Marketing?**

Successful marketing—It's all about principles

A principle is a fundamental truth that serves as a foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning. Principles are the driving force behind everything. They exist whether we know it or not, and they affect us whether we are aware of them or not. If we choose to understand principles and live in accordance with them, we will likely succeed, if we are oblivious to them, ignore them or fight against them, we will likely fail. When building an airplane, the better you understand the principle of aerodynamics, the more likely you are to fly. The more you fight against it, the less likely you are to leave the ground. What does this have to do with marketing you ask? Well, just like everything else in life, there are principles that drive purchase decisions and therefore regulate the rules behind smart, strategic marketing. The better we understand what is fundamentally driving patients to purchase our services, the more successful our marketing efforts will be.

Because of the importance of each of these principles, I will spend some time talking about them in the next few newsletters. Ultimately these principles should form the foundation of a proper brand definition that will drive all of your marketing decisions moving forward.

These principles are:

1. Needs and wants are based on perception.
2. Initial purchases are made on the perceived value of the purchase in relation to a perceived need or want.
3. Forming a perception requires information.
4. Knowledge must be given incrementally.
5. Knowledge of differences creates a platform for choice.
6. Trust is earned or lost through increased knowledge.
7. Purchase requires trust.
8. Rewarded trust leads to subsequent purchases, unrequited trust leads to lost opportunity.
9. Continually rewarded trust engenders loyalty.
10. Loyalty is necessary for the long term success of the business.

This and other marketing articles are available as white papers on the resources page of our Web site: www.dentalbranding.com
To learn more, speak with one of our consultants at: 1-866-375-5511, or visit: www.dentalbranding.com

■ Douglas Sligting, Dental Branding

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