

Eleven tips for success in your dental clinic

Part I: SWOT analysis and loyal patients



By Dr. Anna Maria Yiannikos, Germany & Cyprus

During this journey towards business growth and educational development with this new series on tips for success in your dental clinic, I am going to explore various factors of our success and professional development as dental practitioners. I will share with you the knowledge I have gained within the past 24 years of managing and evolving my clinic,

so you can be one step ahead and avoid the mistakes I made, starting with the first tip: know yourself, which entails acknowledging your mistakes. It is an extremely useful and sometimes painful process.

How can we really learn the areas in which we need to improve ourselves (clinics) and in which we are advanced?

The answer is through the use of an essential tool we ought to use every

six to 12 months, SWOT analysis. With this tool, we will be able to discover and recognise our strengths and weaknesses as both dentists and individuals, as well as identify opportunities for and threats to our clinics. Let us analyse this a little bit further.

Strengths

What do you consider as strengths, as your competitive advantages in your dental clinic?

Do you offer a large variety of services that fulfil your patients' needs?

Can your patients find you and book an appointment easily with your clinic? Is your clinic characterised by high-technology and do your patients appreciate this?

Is your dental clinic in a convenient location, allowing your patients to find you and reach you with ease?

Weaknesses

What are the areas that need improvement at your dental clinic?

Are your payment options inflexible? Do patients have to wait for more than 5 minutes for their appointment in the waiting area? Is the clinic decoration old and out of fashion? Should you change it?

Opportunities

What are current social, financial or other trends that you could benefit from? For example, the demand for invisible braces for adults could be useful for an orthodontist to explore. The general dentist could consider including an aesthetic treatment based on the latest trends, such as whitening or restoration with white aesthetic material.

Threats

Is there anything happening in your environment that could be detrimental to your clinic? For example, a larger and newer clinic is to be opened in the neighbourhood or an existing competitor clinic is installing better technological equipment than that in your clinic. Other threats include political and environmental ones, such as an unstable political situation.

As a conclusion, it is evident that performing a SWOT analysis for your dental clinic will allow you to be proactive in your marketing strategies, since you will have the information necessary to develop effective strategies for the promotion of your clinic.

The second tip of this article is realising the importance of having patients who are not just satisfied but loyal. In order to understand the significance of this, let us explore the major difference between these two categories.

Satisfied patient

A satisfied patient is one who comes to the clinic for treatment and is not unhappy with the treatment or the service provided, but when a friend, a relative or a colleague proposes that he or she visit another dentist would do so. Such a patient too would not refer the clinic to others or tell others about your good treatment.

Loyal patient

A loyal patient, however, is one who will spread through word of mouth what a wonderful dentist you are, and what a brilliant scientist, advising others to visit your clinic and promoting your well-being. This is a patient who comes to your clinic regularly, is appreciative of your treatment and demonstrates this.

It is important to understand that we do not deliver a service in isolation, but as part of a culture, the cul-

ture of our clinics through the experience that our patients receive. They do not expect us to be the best just in our health care industry. We have to be the best, period. Our patients will not compare us only with other dentists but with all the services they receive and have experienced, such as in a hotel or a restaurant. Our competitors are anyone with whom our patients can compare us. People have expectations regarding how they should and want to be treated and these become the standard by which they judge their experiences.

When nothing in particular about an experience stands out, this indicates that one was merely satisfied.

It takes something memorable to turn an ordinary experience into something special. Dissatisfaction comes from something bad that one experienced and remembers; loyalty is created through memorable things that happened that one did not expect. If our treatment is not memorable, why would patients continue coming to us?

Another essential question is how do we establish the areas in which we are lacking and in which we should improve our clinics to increase the group of loyal patients? The answer of course is nothing but obvious: by asking. We can obtain patients' opinions through satisfaction surveys.

Several studies have highlighted the growing impact of patient satisfaction on the business success of dental clinics. In a more recent study, those patients surveyed cited being unhappy with their dentist as being their main reason for changing dentists.

Our goal is to discover what the most important factors for patients are in order to foster their loyalty, as well as determine the areas in which we are underperforming in order to improve ourselves and the treatment we offer our patients.

The two tips provided in this article are a good start for all dentists in order to begin the improvement and evolution of our clinics, as well as ourselves. In the next part, I will offer two new tips that will reveal opportunities and potential of your dental clinic. Until then, remember that you are not only the dentist in your clinic, but also the manager and the leader.

Editorial note: This article is the first one from the two parts series. Part II will appear in the next edition of Dental Tribune MEA DT

Jordan Expert Clean

Proven effective clean

GumCare™ bristles
-Gentle and effective gum clean



ActiveTip
-Effective reach of back molars





Different heights



Criss-cross angled bristles



PROVEN EFFECTIVE
Distribution of Relative Cleaning Efficacy for Each Toothbrush



Brush Type	Relative Cleaning Efficacy (Mean)	Significance
Individual Reach (A)	~65	No significant difference
Competitor (B)	~65	
Jordan Expert Clean (C)	~75	Significant better cleaning efficacy

* Taber Rootedness Test: Relative Cleaning Efficacy (Independent Laboratory test, 2014)

Expert Clean,

the best from Jordan

For more information
www.jordan.no
jordndub@emirates.net.ae
 Tel no.: 04-8871050

Jordan*
 *Love your teeth



Dr Anna Maria Yiannikos, Adjunct Faculty
 Member of AALZ at
 RWTH
 Aachen University
 Campus, Germany
 DDS, LSO, MSc, MBA

dba@yiannikosdental.com
www.dbamastership.com