the practice by streamlining your schedule or increasing your case acceptance rate for larger cases. Perhaps hiring a practice management consultant to update the systems within your practice could be another of your short-term goals. Whatever they may be, review your goals daily. Doing so will keep your objectives clear and will motivate you to achieve them. Once you begin achieving these shorter-term goals, the excitement will motivate you to work on longer-term goals.

**Long-term goals**

Long-term goals help define your Life Plan, in both your professional and personal life, including your retirement. The following are examples of long-term goals dentists have shared with us at Levin Group while we worked with them on their Life Plan:

- Make cosmetic procedures 50% or more of their total production.
- Build a college tuition fund for their children.
- Achieve a net worth of $4.5 million through practice production and investment.

**Setting a life plan into motion**

A visual depiction of your goals in the form of a flowchart or outline will be extremely helpful in putting your plan into action, especially if it includes a timeline for achieving your objectives. This can serve as a quick reference and help reinforce those goals when other matters occupy your time.

Evaluate your goals weekly or monthly. Pick a time (preferably the same time each week or month) when you can gauge your progress, keeping in mind that you will not achieve any of your goals overnight. It may be helpful to jot down some notes about your progress for each goal as you review them. Also, you can study past notes to see how you have progressed. Keep track of where you have been and an eye on where you are headed.

**Conclusion**

When you take a trip, it’s usually best to know where you are going. Your life is a journey too. At first, Dr. Brown was operating without a life course, and you can see where that got him. He felt overworked and stressed. He’d let the economy dictate the growth of his practice rather than use the resources for practice management that were at his disposal. Once he took the time to ask himself the big questions, he saw how much potential he had for both personal and professional growth.

Writing down what you want, working toward your goals and monitoring your progress along the way are your keys to accomplishment. This is true no matter how you define a great life. Start developing your vision for the future and start planning for total practice success!

Getting your practice systems in order is usually the first step in creating the practice and life you envisioned for yourself. Dr. Levin’s upcoming Total Practice Success™ seminar in Nashville on May 28–29, 2009 is a great step toward that goal. Dental Tribune readers are entitled to receive a 20 percent courtesy on this seminar. To register and receive your discount, call (888) 973-0000 and mention “Dental Tribune” or e-mail customerservice@levingroup.com with “Dental Tribune” in the subject line. Readers can also visit www.levingroupgp.com for more information.

*Based on Levin Group client information.

**About the author**

Dr. Roger P. Levin is founder and CEO of Levin Group, a leading dental practice management consulting firm that provides a comprehensive suite of lifetime services to its clients and partners. Since 1985, Levin Group has embraced one single mission — to improve the lives of dentists. For more than 20 years, Levin Group has helped thousands of general dentists and specialists increase their satisfaction with practicing dentistry. Levin Group may be reached at (888) 973-0000 or at customerservice@levingroup.com.