Do you dream about success or have nightmares about failure? asks Seema Sharma

Are you feeling FAB? Are you one of these eternally positive people who knows that as long as people have teeth, you know you have a product people need or want? Even when you think about those who don't have teeth, you may be upbeat if you are unique, special and different and one of your many niches is dentures and implants? If you use a FAB marketing campaign (less about the Features, more about the Advantages and Benefits of coming to your practice) you are already ahead of the game. If you have to make some tweaks to prepare for the changing environment, perhaps you see this as simply adding to your repertoire of benefits to promote to your patients.

Or are you feeling SAD? Are you worrying about the future of your practice? Is the economic downturn starting to bite? Are you fretting about CQC? Does it feel like the PCT is on a different page to you, your patients are on a different page to you – worse still all three? Does reading the white paper make feel like you will soon die of change fatigue? Are you at the bare bones of costs already, and struggling with how else to cut spiralling costs? Could you do with a PEP talk or better still with pepping up your practice? Soldiering on and hoping it will all go away could be a formula for failure whereas taking on this responsibility. Are you fretting about the future of your practice? Is the registration is just a few months away, the lack of leadership will show quickly in the plumping mo- bile of the team. Authority and re- sponsibility can be delegated but never accountability. Action with- out vision is a nightmare.

Futureproof your practice. Leadership is less about power and more about empowerment, and there is nothing more dy- namic than an empowered team. A good leader will put a full repertoire of skills into action by defining where the practice is going (vision), advising the team what is not working and why a new strategy is required (auto- cratic), arranging a meeting for

One size does not fit all, so flexibility is key. For your practice to succeed in a chang- ing environment, and in difficult financial times, a number of strat- egies are often able to give the prac- tice manager freedom to run the practice whilst they concentrate on dentistry, self-development or something else. (In my case my charity and my practice manage- ment courses!). This is a huge compliment to managers who have the training, vision and lead- ership skills themselves to be able to take on this responsibility.

What about the converse – where the team do what they think is best but have never under- stood the overarching vision? When the diary is full of new patients to meet an NHS access driver but no slots were left free for treatments, or when no clini- cal governance meetings have been planned even though CQC ideas (participative) and decid- ing who is going to take on which tasks to implement the new strategy (delegation).

Don't sweat the small stuff. There are 3 kinds of people in this world – people who make things happen, people who watch things happen and people who wonder what happened! Are you a leader, a follower or an ostrich? The deci- sion is yours.

Email me at seema.sharma@dentabyte.co.uk to find out the two outcomes that CQC expects from leaders and managers, and how Dentabyte can help.