Getting ahead

It’s too easy to get stuck in a rut and lose the direction of your practice, says Jonathan Wood, who offers some simple solutions to help you move forward.

THE SOLUTION
Continu Alcohol Free Disinfectant for Dental Unit Water Lines has been specifically designed to strip away biofilm. What’s more, with a kill rate of 99.9998%, it prevents colonies reforming and, with its residual decontamination effect, it continues working for several days after application.

THE RESULTS
Case studies often show high levels of microbial presence particularly in water bottles, tubing and hand pieces, which are eliminated after applying Continu. Readings remain below recommended levels for up to 10 days even without further treatment, and a weekly disinfection regime with Continu maintains the DUWL above required standards.

MICROBIOLOGICAL MONITORING
By using an ATP meter that accurately measures the presence of micro-organisms, Nuview is able to provide a quick and verifiable assessment of cleanliness, along with a set of results that can be used to establish trends over a period of time.

Continu – the next generation of ultra-effective, ultra-safe and environmentally friendly HTM 01-05 compliant anti-microbial disinfectants.

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The basic ingredients: Reviewing your leadership skills
One key aspect all highly successful businesses have in common is that they are fronted by people with outstanding leadership skills. Some people naturally have these qualities, while others do not. Either way, you have the opportunity to hone your existing abilities or focus on developing these skills; they are vital to running an outstanding practice. Without them you will only ever be running in reverse.

Understanding your practice values
Your patients need to be able to see, feel and identify your clinical and business values;

In some instances, these practitioners decide simply to accept that the turnover is as good as it can be and instead launch into an overhead cost-cutting exercise. Unfortunately, this is totally counter-productive. Not only does it generally reduce the likelihood of turnover increasing, it also lowers staff morale and therefore affects potential earnings.

Stuck in reverse
I often hear of a practice carrying on in this vein, while maintaining an enthusiastic, ethical approach. However, businesses like this are sadly never engaged in forward gear, but instead the profits are in reverse and making a slow steady decline. This said, there are some notable exceptions. Some practices have chosen to embark on major exercises whereby they seek to grow the understanding, skill set and team dynamics of the practice in order to keep up with 21st-century demands; this puts them firmly in forward gear even during a recession.

So, if you are unsure as to where exactly you are taking your practice, please read on.

You may be one of many practitioners whose practice is situated in an “out of the way” area of the country and who is currently thinking that there is nothing else you can do. This is a natural emotion and one that can be de-motivating and damaging for morale; I felt the same anxieties and emotions in my first practice in Maclesfield back in the 1980s.

However, while each practice and each individual part of the country will need a different approach, the basic ingredients remain the same. All over the British Isles there are some extremely experienced accountants, trainers and coaches who successfully tackle this sort of problem every day. There are no quick fixes, but by adhering to the model that successful businesses use and employ professional expertise to assist you in developing the skills that you and your team need, it is entirely possible to reignite your practice and deliver above and beyond your current expectations.

‘Your patients need to be able to see, feel and identify your clinical and business values;’

People I hear saying, ‘if only I’d been helped to do this at the start of my career!’

The whole team must have a clear understanding of the values and brand of your business and what the expected customer experience is. By having team meetings, your expectations can be laid out and staff members will have the opportunity to raise any issues or anxieties that they have with regards to the direction that the practice is moving in. Whenever I have done this in my own practice, outside assistance has always proved invaluable.

Your vision – your plan
To get the process started, ask yourself how, in an ideal world, would your practice be run? If you have difficulty, a professional coach can assist with this exercise, don’t be one of the many people I hear saying, ‘if only I’d been helped to do this at the start of my career!’

The well-known business consultant, John Harvey Jones once commented to an audience of dental professionals that there is no such thing as a neutral year in business. He stated that there were essentially only two gears; forward or reverse.

It is interesting to explain this concept to the many practice owners that I have met over the years, who are actively pouring all of their efforts into making their practice a success. Practitioners in today’s financial climate are often dealing with a double edged sword; on the one hand they are celebrating an upturn in turnover, and on the other, they are discovering that in reality, profit is no better than the year before. Sadly in some cases, a lot less.

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Understanding your practice values
Your patients need to be able to see, feel and identify your clinical and business values; in essence your brand. Branding is vital and you cannot escape it. Without a general consensus regarding clinical protocols and attitudes to patients, you won’t ever achieve a really powerful brand.

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