Rules of attraction

To bring in more business and increase your income, you need to either become a rainmaker or acquire one. Dr Bhavna Doshi explains...

A rainmaker is someone who brings more business to any organisation and provides the opportunity to increase their income. They come in many guises including the principal, the manager, and the nurse and even better the entire team. And be under no misconception that it is impossible to have the entire team be rainmakers. It is a tried-and-tested fact that using certain motivational strategies can convert all your team into rainmakers. In reality, it should be the responsibility of any person within the business who comes into contact with potential patients, attract and keep the patients.

A shared concept

In his book How to Become a Rainmaker, Jeffrey Fox discusses at great length how people in business can grow at substantial rates by using these sound principles effectively. Dental practice owners can also benefit from this shared concept since they too are business owners and need to develop these skills. Creating rainmakers is a formidable task, which will directly help to take the business forward.

We would have no business, if we were not able to attract patients. We would not even have the opportunity to provide the kind of care we wished to, be that cosmetic dentistry or any other differential care. Keeping this in mind, you may say that your advertisement is hidden by the cosmetic appeal of the piece; your message is cluttered up by too much competition or the target audience is diluted. Considerable forethought needs to be applied to this concept. You need to make sure you are actually sending your message and that you are not obscured from patient visibility. Take a look at a directory and look up for example plumbers. Which one would you choose and why? The exact same principles would apply to your business. So set yourself up with dynamic criteria for advertising. For example, is your advertisement an eye-catcher?

Explore other avenues to put your message or your USP (Unique Selling Proposition) in. This is your unique services which would compel patients to come to you over other businesses in the same industry as you i.e. other dentists. Why should they come to you? Once you have discovered your USP you can then decide what methods or what marketing activities best suit your target audience. These can include social networking, direct mail, media or even participatory efforts, one good idea is to simply STOP for a moment and take a step back and re-view your situation. Sometimes when we are so focused on achieving something, we become very tunnel-visioned and subsequently miss opportunities which lie under our very noses. So sometimes it is better to simply reevaluate your action plan.

5. Once you have given direction to your entire force into acquiring new patients it is extremely crucial to monitor your efforts. Otherwise you may find you are running around in circles not actually getting anywhere.

6. Once you attract a new patient then you need the rainmaker to communicate correctly to that potential patient and invite that patient to stay and become a patient of the practice.

Often new patients make up their minds within the first three minutes of meeting you whether you are the practice for them. For this reason, the first contact any new patient has with your practice should be with a rainmaker, especially since currently most new patients are also window shoppers, often with no idea what they are looking for! With the correct communication skills, the rainmaker can convert a potential patient to an actual patient booked in your diary.

Another facet of this skill is to have someone with excellent communication skills, correctly trigger the telephone when new inquiring patients call. Do not underestimate the power of an initial telephone conversation.

7. Time spent training and gear ing up the entire team to meet with patient expectations is definitely not wasted effort. It will save you a lot of money in the long run, because you can make sure your marketing plan is actually being met at the end of the line.

8. Build yourself up with a good reputation. This can be for your expertise and knowledge and skill of work or it can be for providing an exceptional experience for your patients. Create talking points for your patients so that they can use you away and rave about you to other people—other potential patients. A referral by word-of-mouth is often the best kind of marketing strategy you can invest in—it is more likely to work and is very cheap!

9. Patients often have no real idea of how good you may be as a dentist. When they come to see you and agree to be seen by you, often they only understand how your good marketing has been. This is what they use to build an expectation level in their minds. For this reason you not only must deliver what you have promised in your marketing, but also so if you exceed that expectation level then you will really create raving fans of your patients and they will refer their family and friends. Hence new patients will rain on you!

10. Finally take note of how many of these new patients are actually going ahead with treatment or are they leaving after they have had time to consider what your practice is all about. If the number of new patients leaving, to those going ahead with care is significantly differ-