It is not all about mouths you know

Mhari Coxon discusses a new perspective to consider on the business of dentistry

I have always attended CPD courses ever since I qualified as a hygienist. I often worked as the only hygienist, and enjoyed the interaction with my peers initially, using it as a reunion with my college buddies. Clinically I felt it refreshed my basic skills, added new thinking and research into my work ethos and allowed me to attempt to keep my patient care at a consistently good standard. Recently, I have been looking at trying to improve my customer care and business sense to help with my practice life and my role as director at CPD for DCPs.

I have just attended my first totally non-clinical dental conference. Run by the uniquely named Marketing Pirates of Dentistry; I was privileged enough to be one of their guest speakers. This was with the promise, by me, of not going all clinical. That was a lot tougher than I thought.

To name but a few there was a blend of speakers; the brilliant and “not vanilla” Tony Gedge on the marketing strategy used in dental practice; Paul Howe on selling, which was extremely useful, and a superb motivational speaker called Clive Gott. I was sad to miss hearing Nadin Majid talking on website development for the dental practice. But, being technically minded, he has recorded it so I can watch it at my leisure.

From this event, I have a full mind that keeps throwing up ideas, about 12 pages of notes to write up, and a very new perspective on the business of dentistry. I am still mainly a clinician in my job, and was trained to do just that. I then spent a lot of years attending lectures and courses on how to develop and hone those clinical skills. Now I can see the importance of the team understanding the business of dentistry, understanding the forecasts and targets and knowing what a HNW patient is and how to recognise one.

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What impressed me most was the number of teams that were attending this event. There were only two principals that had attended on their own. I can understand how they feel. As principal and sole owner, they feel the running of the business is down to them. And in a way it is. It is how I felt for a long time about my little training business. But if the team can’t see what your vision is how can they begin to implement the changes you want? Also, after attending experience has shown me, you can take the horse to the water but they have to be thirsty, no doubt it is important that this will give the best result. In this situation the principal is instigating the change and development in the team and therefore you are part of something ready to action change.

Route two is you feel that you would like more business training and your principal may not be seeing the value just at this moment. There are many courses you can attend independently and perhaps your principal will see the benefit of a work based qualification, such as an NVQ. It is also a good way to know your skills independently, without the support of your principal.

I remember saying in a column last January that we needed to work together to keep our businesses fresh at the beginning of 2010. Well 2011 will be another year of finding solutions and building service to keep your businesses improving and succeeding.

It could be really beneficial for teams to define their roles, do a swot analysis and make a training plan purely based on their business skills. Once you have decided who needs to improve what then you can implement a training programme with a definite “done by” date.

I will be the one in the front row for all DCPs. To contact her, email mhari.coxon@yorkshire.dh.sport.co.uk

About the author

Mhari Coxon is a dental hygienist and therapist, and is attending dental conference, she has been a dental hygienist in practice for 15 years, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice, she is a dental hygienist in practice.