As we approach the New Year, it’s important to take the time to evaluate where you currently are as a business, where you want to be as a business and how you plan on achieving these goals. In order for your orthodontic practice to be successful, you have to have a clear mission that informs the general public about why it would be beneficial to do business with you. Having a mission statement is essential, as it will represent your vision of how you would like to be seen by your patients.

Although a mission statement and a company description are separate concepts, they often are combined. Why? Because your mission statement expresses your philosophy, motivation and goals with regard to your business. Your company description, in contrast, presents your ideas and concepts. They are equally important.

In addition, an ideal mission statement should be inspiring to employees. The statement brings a certain focus to the staff members as the purpose of their work becomes clearer and they are able to see the value of their contribution. Few things in life are as fulfilling as the knowledge that you are contributing something greater than yourself. The mission statement should allow each employee to see his or her own personal role in the orthodontic practice.

Patients will be reassured when they are exposed to the mission statement as they will be able to see the practice is committed to their purpose. Patients can also sometimes form a connection with the practice if the values outlined are ones they share. People like to work with others who they like and agree with; it’s a natural human instinct.

When you sit down to write your mission statement, there are several things you should keep in mind. First, who are your patients and what are their needs and desires? Second, how do you fulfill those needs and desires? What values do you currently have? What values do you want to have? Are you all working together with a similar purpose or are employees of the practice constantly veering off course?

A mission statement is best written in collaboration. All staff members should sit down and talk about their thoughts and how they want to represent the practice to the public. Ideas should be brainstormed among everyone and then voted on.

Most companies display their mission statements on their Web sites; some have their mission statements incorporated into their logos, ads and stationery. You may want to visit a variety of Web sites and read the mission statements of different companies, particularly those in the orthodontic field.

After you’ve brainstormed all your ideas, write them on a chalkboard and play with them. Combine and try out different phrases. Say them out loud. When working in a group, maintain the guideline of accepting, not rejecting, all suggestions. After all the suggestions have been noted, take a break.

The final refinement of your mission statement may not be achieved immediately. Give yourself time to contemplate a few ideas before you finalize it. And remember, your mission statement need not and should not be regarded as forever final. Depending on changes in your business, trends and any unexpected shifts in the economy, you may want to modify your mission statement at some point in your career.

To learn more regarding mission statements or other management-related topics, register for an upcoming Webinar at orthoconsulting.com. Registration can be found under events and seminars.

About the author
Scarlett Thomas is an orthodontic practice consultant who has been in the field for more than 23 years, specializing in case acceptance, team building, office management and marketing. As a speaker and practice consultant, she has an exceptional talent to inform, motivate and excite.

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