I n a recent speech, a Fortune 500 CEO said that most strate-
gic plans fail because the top decision-makers do not start in
the right place. They are unable to answer the question, “Where
are we now?” Without this information, business leaders cannot choose the right
path to move forward.

The same principle applies to ortho-
dontists. For doctors to make the best
business decisions, they must be in pos-
session of accurate business data about
their practices.

The most effective method for doc-
tors to acquire the correct information
about their practices is through a per-
formance analysis.

During the last five years, 75 percent of
orthodontic practices have suffered pro-
duction declines, according to the Levin
Group Data Center™. Today, as more or-
tho practices struggle to gain new pa-
tients, the business of orthodontics has
been on far greater importance than in
the past.

Prior to the great recession, nearly
all ortho practices grew steadily year
to year. There was an abundance of pa-
tients, and competition wasn’t as fierce.
Success came naturally.

Since then, the economic landscape
has changed. To operate a financially
successful practice, orthodontists need
a higher level of business knowledge and
skill than in the past. The best source for
gaining such knowledge is the prudent
use of outside business experts.

Just as parents and patients rely on an
expert (i.e., the orthodontist) for diag-
nosing orthodontic problems, doctors
should do the same when it comes to the
business side of their practices. An ac-
curate diagnosis — both in orthodontics
and business — is the first step to de-
signing an appropriate treatment plan.

One option that many orthodontists
have turned to is Levin Group’s “Practice
Performance Analysis™.”

This evaluation is conducted by a cer-
tified practice analyst, who observes the
practice first-hand, reviewing critical
practice data, interviewing the doctor and
key staff members and, ultimately,
uncovering the root causes of produc-
tion declines and poor performance.

When you look at your practice today,
what do you see? Levin Group’s certi-
fied practice analysts — who are highly
trained and experienced in evaluating
orthodontic practices — are adept at zeroing
in on key performance figures. What
they see for nearly every practice is the
potential to increase production signifi-
cantly.

Equally important, our expert analysts
pinpoint exactly why that potential has
not yet been actualized by the practice.
“Every practice is analyzed against the ‘9
Areas of Expertise,’ which are critical to
ortho practice success in the new dental
economy. These are:

• Production
• Collections
• Team building
• Scripting
• Case acceptance
• New patient experience
• Treatment coordinator
• Scheduling
• Marketing

In addition, the evaluation includes a
SWOT analysis, which defines Strengths,
Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
Wide ly used by companies of all types,
this powerful analytical tool provides
an excellent picture of a practice’s sta-
tus, broken down into these four catego-
ries:

• Strengths — Positive factors inside the
  practice, e.g., well-liked staff, supe-
 rior technology, strong referral network
• Weaknesses — Areas that need to be
  improved in the practice, such as chaot-
  ic schedule, excessive overdue debonds,
  unattractive office décor
• Opportunities — External situations
  that the practice can take advantage of,
  like office space available in an excellent
  location, new potential referral sources,
specialized training
• Threats — Conditions in the market
  that are or could be hurting the prac-
tice’s business, e.g., new practice open-
ing down the street, fewer referrals from
DPL, etc.

Orthodontists typically don’t have
key advisors to talk to and work with
who understand ortho practices and the
business of orthodontics in great depth.
Having a business expert in your corner
can help you break out of a production
slump and start the process of growing
your ortho practice once again.

By Roger P. Levin, DDS

3 online tips to increase new appointments

By Diana P. Friedman, President, CEO
Sesame Communications

In today’s connected world, your
future patients depend on the
Internet to manage almost every
aspect of their lives. However,
the tremendous expansion of the
Internet makes reaching and en-
gaging with them a constant challenge.

According to business intelligence
firm Domo, every minute 571 new websites
are created, more than 100,000 tweets are
sent, and Facebook users share 684,478
pieces of content.

Here are three ways to ensure your
practice rises above the persistent noise
to connect with prospective patients and
convert them into new patient appoint-
ments.

1. Tailor your website for an amazing
patient experience. In the connected
world, prospective patients will form an
immediate opinion of you and your ser-
vice based on what they see and experi-
ence online. To ensure your website will
drive new patients to choose your prac-
tice, ask yourself the following questions:

• Do I have a functional website? If not,
your practice is invisible to the connect-
ed world.

• Does my website appeal to patients?
Make sure your website reflects the vi-
sion of a developer who has taken a re-
search-based approach to designing sites
with prospective dental patients in mind.

• Is my website optimized for mobile
devices? As of January 2014, 87 percent
of smartphone users accessed the Inter-
net using their phones. If your website
does not automatically optimize, your
prospective patients will likely head to a
competitor.

One last piece of advice — dental prac-
tices are unique businesses. If you decide
it’s time to work on your website, use a re-
putable vendor with deep roots in de-
signing sites specifically for the dental
industry.

2. Make SEO a priority. Once you have
your website in order, you need to
make sure prospective patients can find
it. Eighty percent of traffic to a website
begins with a search query, and 61 per-
cent of searchers consider local results
to be more relevant than standard search
results. This makes search engine opti-
mization (SEO) efforts a must. A key here
is to use a firm well versed in local SEO
strategies within the dental industry to
achieve lasting results.

3. Energize your social media efforts:
According to a recent study, Internet us-
ers spend more time on social media than
any other Internet activity. Embracing a
social media presence enables you to
spend time effectively forging genuine
relationships with prospective patients.

In terms of where to invest in social me-
dia, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn are
three places where you should focus your
efforts. If your practice wants to attract
more new patients, it is important that
you be active and engaged on these three
social media channels.

About the author
DIANA P. FREIDMAN, MA, MBA,
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IT'S THE MOMENT YOU REALIZE LEVIN GROUP HAS THE ANSWERS THAT YOU NEED FOR INCREASING YOUR INCOME.

At your ortho office, while you and your staff see patients, a Levin Group Certified Practice Analyst reviews your performance metrics. Scopes out your systems. And uncovers your true potential.

Later that day, the analyst tells you things even you didn't know about your own practice. Things that will make all the difference between decline and success. And that's when you say, “Aha!”

This is the turning point—one already experienced by thousands of orthodontists.

So, do you want to keep doing whatever you've been doing and getting the same disappointing results? Or are you ready for your “Aha!” moment?

While you’re thinking about your answer, download our FREE Whitepaper that explains “How To Increase The Income From Your Practice,” at www.levingroup.com/income9 or call 866.591.7802 for more information.

LEVIN GROUP PRACTICE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS™ YOUR “AHA!” MOMENT IS WAITING.