Practical attitude and enthusiasm

by Dennis J. Tartakow, DMD, MEd, EdD, PhD

When I began practicing orthodontics in 1975, advertising was virtually verboten. As time passed, more and more dentists and physicians began placing ads in newspapers, flyers, etc., to allure new patients into their practices. I believed that advertising should only be considered by word of mouth from happy patients.

In time, my views on advertising gradually changed, even though I never used any media sources. Regardless of choosing to advertise or not, it all begins with our own attitude. Patients will notice whether or not a practice is too busy, understaffed, always behind in scheduling, full of doctor-staff disagreements, preoccupied with staff members blaming or griping among themselves, etc. When trouble exist in our homes, that too can creep into our practices; the doctor (or staff) will show it and the patient will notice it.

The greatest marketing strategy executed inefficiently will be fulfilled worse than a bad plan performed with lots of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is contagious. When we make others, especially our patients, enthusiastic about what we are doing, those patients will be on our side.

None of us is perfect. The world is not perfect. However, paying attention to details and working as a team will make our practices become a desired venue for attracting new patients, which is the life-line of our careers. James Joyce (Irish novelist, 1882–1841) stated it perfectly: “A man of genius makes no mistakes; his errors are volition- and are the portals of discovery.”

Success begins from out of the office first and foremost — and it begins with our attitude about ourselves.

As Friedrich Nietzsche (German scholar, philosopher and critic of culture, 1844–1900) stated: “You have your way. I have my way. As for the right way, the correct way, and only the correct way, it does not exist.”

Professional advertising has come a long way in the past 40 years. It has emerged from a sneered-at and costly thing for early “advertisers.” It has emerged from a sneered-at and interwoven into our society that professional advertising is still the old-fashioned way: by direct communication and taking excellent care of the patient. Otherwise, it very doesn’t matter how much time, money or effort is spent on advertising — patient satisfaction is what keeps them coming in!

“Orthodontists, and indeed all of dentistry if it is to survive as a profession, must continually reexamine its history and find relevant and significant ideas to meet the crisis of today” (Asbell, p. 211).

References


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