Dear Reader,

_With your practice, you manage an enterprise on a daily basis. You are responsible for its financial outcome like every other businessperson. According to the latest financial forecasts, the global economy is declining, forcing many governments to revise their budgets and spending drastically.

You may wonder how we as dental specialists might be affected. Unlike many other business enterprises, our small- to medium-sized firms do not depend principally on the general economic situation. However, because of the sheer scale of the global financial and economic crisis, it will affect us too. Despite the crisis, we as employers are responsible for the cost-effectiveness and profitability of our practices. Our staff and suppliers expect to receive their salaries and payments every month. When the patients—our customers—stay away, we certainly have to react.

Every crisis presents a challenge. In tough economic times, we need a long-term vision, in order to brace ourselves for negative surprises. We have to develop our own strategies, just like politicians, managers or anyone bearing responsibility or aiming to achieve financial stability and success.

Your optimism and a high degree of flexibility are absolutely essential. A positive perspective and good prospects through innovations or new treatment concepts will ensure continued or even further growth of your practice. Give your practice a chance through fresh impetus! With your team, look for new strategies and develop an optimistic view on the future.

However, figures from the IDS 2009 in Cologne make me wonder whether the crisis has not yet affected the dental industry or rather whether dentists have already been acting as responsible businesspeople. In an area of 138,000 m², 1,820 exhibitors from all over the world presented over 1,100 product innovations. More than 100,000 visitors came to Cologne and placed a volume of orders that exceeded everyone’s expectations.

I invite you to inform us how your practice is being affected by the current crisis and, more importantly, how you are managing the crisis with regard to your practice.

Good luck to you!

Sincerely yours,

Dr Karl Behr
Editor-in-Chief