

THE #1 THING YOUR TEAM WANTS MORE OF!

by Steven J. Anderson¹

Just last weekend our Total Patient Service "Total Immersion" course included a woman who attended one of our courses 18 years ago. In the session, I brought up a very simple but effective way to show appreciation and gratitude to a teammate that we've taught for years, the I Appreciate Note. We make writing such notes an absolute no-brainer by giving out pads of pages with blanks to fill in:

I appreciate Jane Smith
because she stayed late to help finish a case.
Thanks Dr. Rivera

So simple, and yet so significant. The woman from years back said she still had everyone of the I Appreciates teammates gave her when they first got their pads 18 years ago. The messages had meaning she treasured. This story shows how precious just a little bit of appreciation from others can be. This is true for two main reasons:

1. This is a fundamental psychological need.
2. People are absolutely starved for it, particularly in workplace settings.

Sitting in that same room was another team member who privately commented that her dentist never showed any appreciation for the team. They were starved for it.

Speaking a few words of appreciation takes no time and costs nothing. People work, first and foremost, to be recognized for their efforts. We crave significance and need to know that we matter and make a difference for others - which we can't know until others give us recognition.

After recognition, the number-two motivator in the workplace is challenge. People want to feel like winners. Personal growth through work is number three.

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Money comes in fourth. If this surprises you, you have a lot of company.

Money rises in importance only when it's in critically short supply. But when financial compensation is reasonable, it stays low on the list.

When it comes to money, most dentists want to know if they should implement some kind of bonus system. Or if they have one, whether it is effective. The first answer is to understand the difference between appreciation and recognition. They are different and we all want both.

APPRECIATE: to value and acknowledge the worth of a person. We all want to know that we matter and that our existence is valued. Appreciation has to do with intrinsic things like self-worth, significance, and a feeling of importance. We all want to know that we matter to others and appreciation is the evidence we look for.

RECOGNIZE: to acknowledge and reward a person for his or her contribution, actions and results. Recognition has to do with extrinsic things. It is the acknowledgement of accomplishment and contribution to the goal. If we strive for something and we reach it, we want evidence that we did it.

Too often we get appreciation and recognition confused. One is not the other. Just because a team member gets a bonus, does not mean he or she will feel appreciated. "All the doctor cares about is money. It is the only thing we talk about." Just because you show appreciation does not mean a team member will feel recognized. "All the doctor cares about is his money. The doctor keeps it all and does not share with the team!" Appreciation without recognition can create as many problems as recognition without appreciation! You need both.

Initiate an effort to do both. Here are a few suggestions in each category:

APPRECIATION:

- Use "I Appreciate" notes with your team. Use them yourself and encourage your team to do the same with each other. Create a culture of appreciation.
- Acknowledge each team member on birthdays and other special occasions.
- A simple "Thank you" at the end or throughout the day goes a long way.

RECOGNITION:

- Establish an "Eagle" award that gets passed around as recognition for a significant work contribution

during the week. Whomever receives the award this week gets to award it next week to another team member.

- Schedule regular team member reviews where job performance is discussed.
- Create a "game" around simple goals where the team receives some type of reward when the goal is reached. For example, each team member might get a gift card when the practice does a certain number of teeth whitening procedures in a week or a month.
- Keep score around significant and meaningful metrics that have to do with patient care. Celebrate significant accomplishments around a "winning" score.

While they are related, appreciation and recognition are not the same. If you have never differentiated between the two, start today by looking at the things you can do to show appreciation. We all want to know that we matter. We want our worth to be acknowledged. A close colleague of mine confided to me regarding the behavior of a mutual acquaintance who used to be his boss. "If he looked at you as you passed him in the hall, that was the sign that maybe you were doing an OK job." Don't be that boss.

Once you have some appreciation in place, you can go to work on recognition... in that order. Too many jump straight to recognition thinking that it will do the trick. Appreciation and recognition are different. Make sure you don't confuse them.

When my dad faced mandatory retirement from the advertising agency he ran for so many years, he was honored on the cover of the industry magazine. While the article enumerated his many career accomplishments, the overall message was one of appreciation. In other words, it was a kind gesture by his colleagues to say, "You matter to us. Thanks for all you do." He accomplished a lot in his career, and that was recognized. The act of appreciation for just being him was what he valued most.

Appreciation and recognition. We all want both. Be the leader that provides both for your team.

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www.TheCultureOfSuccessBook.com*

GROW YOUR DENTAL PRACTICE:

Three Examples That Will Help by Joanne Bishop²

Here we share what three key clients did to amp up their practice growth trajectories. These dental offices weren't content to sit still. They were determined, they had clear stated goals and they had their teams to help them do it. Dentists and their teams can learn from these stories. By investing in the right systems, using the best-in-class strategies, your practice will become more successful and profitable.

CLIENT NO. 1:

Pennino Family Dentistry is truly a family office now that Dr. P's two sons have joined the practice. With the increase in available patient hours, they needed to create growth through new-patient acquisition and improve communications and follow through with existing patients.

The offer that helped them attract more patients was a \$99 cleaning special, and when patients call, they always ask if anyone else in the family needs an appointment. They listen to their new patient telephone calls and provide positive reviews to staff, as well as needs-improvement coaching. With a strategic focus on marketing for the practice, they increased web visits, doubled their new-patient flow, and significantly increased top line revenue. *Bonus - their hygiene team was thrilled with the full schedule.*

Putting a strategic plan in place, including a focus on what your team does at each touch point with a new patient, truly helps to ensure growth. We're at a time where adult dentistry is in decline, which means every new patient call is more valuable than ever. This also means that the long-term forecast for the dentist that does not invest in practice awareness and new patient on boarding processes could already be facing receding profits and security. It's not about the \$99 new patient special. Dentistry is a recurring revenue model. That patient has an average lifetime value potential of \$5,000 to a practice, before they refer their family and friends.

CLIENT NO. 2:

Eagle Falls Dentistry is a professional multi-specialty group practice that serves both insurance- and service driven patients. Their goal was to bring in new patients and retain existing patients. They had tried creating their own campaigns in house, but found it to be a lot of work.

Since insurance handling can be tricky, they found that using the word "work" with all insurance as opposed to "in network with" or "accept" has helped them, as has their complimentary benefit check. They have found that "free" consultations work best to get patients in the door - and recognize that it's their team's job to keep these people as patients. They keep the focus on referrals by offering a referral contest prize and had great results when they displayed the 60" TV in their lobby. Using these dental marketing techniques, they've been able to increase their top line revenue by one million dollars and more than double their patient referrals!

As an almost 25-year-old dental marketing company, we've seen the big-ticket item referral contest work well many, many times.

Some dentists are leery of the investment, but if you run the math, it always works. Let's say you spend \$1,000 for this great TV to dominate your lobby for 3 months but only 20 patients refer and only 10 of their referrals come in. Is this bad math? Not when you consider that ten patients will generate at least \$50,000 towards practice revenue, and if you ask Dr. P's new-patient appointment question (always ask if anyone else in the family needs an appointment), you win another few new patients right out of the gate.

CLIENT NO. 3:

Dreamy Draw Dental is a full-service general dental practice that needed growth after two flat years. Like Eagle Falls, they believe in the power of a free consultation to get a patient in their door. With the opportunity to make that personal connection, they can ensure patients are well-informed while building the patient relationship. They work to quickly get every new patient in the door by saving space in the schedule. This strategy has helped them to almost double their new-patient flow and increase top line revenue by 25%. Their motto is "no matter how busy you are, never turn a new patient away. Always accommodate their schedule." They understand that making a new patient wait is like redirecting them to a competitor.

Business growth doesn't just happen. It takes strategy, determination, and best practice processes. Successful dentists know they must have a detailed and strategic plan in place with specific measurable goals. And they need their dental team on board and in sync with their vision for growth. Without a plan, business owners risk stagnating, they risk making business decisions based on faulty assumptions, and/or not making taking any action at all while the market changes around them. Dentistry is changing at a very fast pace. Market conditions are changing, competition is getting tougher, and dental patients are becoming a little more savvy and a lot more demanding.

Know your market. Plan ahead. Train staff. Setup the right systems. Track and measure results.

Helping Dentists Stand Out & Grow... Joanne Bishop studied advertising at Centennial College and has always worked in fast-paced, growth-oriented sales and marketing environments. Joanne combined her passion for marketing with dentistry in 1998 when she joined trusted dental marketing company Patient News. Exclusively helping dentists for 25 years, the team at Patient News understands the responsibilities of entrepreneurship and how important great marketing is to client success. Schedule a free marketing consultation call 1-888-377-2404 or visit www.patientnews.com

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