



5 STEPS TO DENTAL PRACTICE SUCCESS

A Practical Guide for Achieving Your Goals

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Introduction

Are you a dentist who works hard without seeing growth in your practice or personal income? Spending too much time on non-revenue generating areas you're not passionate about? Feel like you are going it all alone, and no one else really seems to care about the practice as you do? Want to reach new heights for yourself and your practice by eliminating confusion and running more smoothly?

Does any of this sound remotely familiar? If so, then you are not alone. In school, dentists learn how to be dentists, and not small business owners. However, when they graduate and start practicing, many of them find themselves being just that. You don't know what you don't know, and THAT is where our knowledge and experience can help you.

Our SparkPlug Dental Practice Management System™ is a unique approach that walks you through a series of steps designed to create a system for running and growing your dental practice.

We will show you by:

- ▶ Taking the Pulse of the Practice
- ▶ Hiring and Developing Rock-Star Team Members
- ▶ Creating Systems and Standard Operating Procedures
- ▶ Utilizing Technology and Opportunities
- ▶ Making Marketing a System

Running your dental practice can be less complicated and convoluted, It's really not that hard if you...

- ▶ Get out of the day-to-day and see the big picture
- ▶ Approach your dental practice logically, practically and systematically
- ▶ Assemble and develop a fully engaged team that cares as much as you do
- ▶ Implement clear processes that everyone understands and follows
- ▶ Get very clear about spotting an ideal patient
- ▶ Understand what differentiates your practice

If you install a proven approach to dental practice management you will be well on your way to achieving your goals!

By getting a little help, learning what you are not aware of, and going through these five steps, your dental practice will improve by leaps and bounds. These 5-steps will take your practice to the next level or to turn it completely around. We will share case studies throughout this eBook so you can see the results for yourself.

We work with dentists in Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois to help their business grow. However, we don't just work with anyone. We select clients who meet our criteria.

- ▶ Ready for CHANGE!
- ▶ Tired of going it alone
- ▶ Want to love doing dentistry again
- ▶ Seeking a secure future
- ▶ 100% open to accepting help
- ▶ Your focus is on results



CASE STUDY:

Dr. Robertson, contacted SPS June of 2012. He was frustrated with his practice and felt as if the entire practice fell on his shoulders. He looked tired and shared his fears of getting older and not being able to keep up the pace, not being able to take a vacation because most of the revenue generated was from his schedule and concerns of his retirement. When asked why he was feeling this way, he was not able to validate it with concrete facts. This is something we find a lot with dental practice owners. Each owner gauges how the practice is doing by a specific item they are watching; such as collections as it compares to the previous year, openings in the schedule, or monthly production. While this can prove helpful, it does not help the dentist/owner identify why they are not growing each year and often places the practice in a vulnerable state if negative trends are not identified early and turned around.

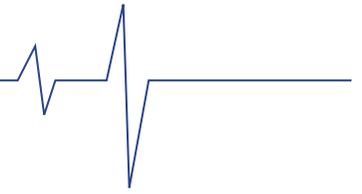
SPS conducted a free practice analysis to identify the pulse of the practice. Within a few weeks, we were able to quickly validate his feelings. In addition, we provided him with the reasons and solutions to quickly turn things around. In our evaluation the practice had quite a few hidden potentials posted below; placing focus on these areas would generate substantial amount of revenue without any additional marketing efforts or work hours from Dr. Robertson.

- ▶ Dr. Robertson's hygiene department was underperforming and just breaking even.
- ▶ The practice was growing; however, this was masked by the fact the dental facility could not accommodate additional hygiene appointments. The schedule was full and Dr. Robertson did not realize he had a ton of patients in the recall system that could not get appointments.
- ▶ The practice's business team was understaffed.
- ▶ Case acceptance was below 25%, we usually like to see case acceptance for small cases at 80%, medium size cases at 65%, and large size cases at 40%.

Dr. Robertson, decided to try and work on these areas with the assistance of his office manager. It was not till October of 2013 that SPS was contacted by Dr. Robertson to engage in a Comprehensive Practice Analysis, some coaching services and Revenue Directed Hygiene training. His wishes were to approach this slowly so that he could adjust as the practice changes. With a conservative approach the practice went from an annual production of \$800,000 to \$1,200,000 within one year. The practice had so many areas of hidden potential that we were able to leverage a few to accomplish these results.



STEP 1: Take the Pulse of the Practice



One of the first things we do when we start working with a new or established dental practice is take its pulse. Where is the practice going? How is it trending? What is going right? Where can it improve? Where are the hidden potentials?

It is only by taking time to work ON the practice and truly evaluate the practice, that you can become less reactive and more proactive. In our research and experience we have found most dental practices are run reactively verses proactively. A reactively run practice runs pretty much status quo and only addresses issues as they appear or put out fires as they occur. Sometimes an idea will pop up, such as how to generate new patients, only to slowly disappear due to lack of planning and execution.

A proactively run practice is one that is action and result oriented in behavior instead of waiting for things to happen and then reacting to them. Proactive behavior aims to identify and explore opportunities and taking preemptive action against potential problems and threats, whereas reactive behavior focuses on fighting a fire or solving a problem after it occurs.

It only makes sense to become an office that is proactive, right? Yet we find more and more dental practices are reactive and dentists usually seek out help only when they absolutely have to or they are just frustrated enough where they can no longer go it alone.

In this eBook we will go over a five step process that all proactive offices follow providing you with some actionable items to explore and implement today or to entrust SPS to assist you with.

The benefits of a systematic approach to dental practice management provides the management team the ability to:

- ▶ Get out of the day-to-day and see the big picture
- ▶ Approach your dental practice logically, practically and systematically
- ▶ Assemble and develop a team that is fully engaged and cares as much as you do
- ▶ Implement clear processes that everyone can understand and follow
- ▶ Spot an ideal patient
- ▶ Better understand what differentiates your practice
- ▶ Become proactive vs. reactive



Strategic Practice Solutions will analyze your business, much like a dentist analyzes every tooth. By taking this up-close and personal look at your practice, we determine the strengths that are helping your office succeed and the elements inhibiting continued growth and profits.

A detailed analysis is provided, along with a list of interventions that the practice can execute on its own or can enlist Strategic Practice Solutions to coach the practice along.

A Practice Analysis determines:

- ▶ The practice's hidden potential
- ▶ Analysis of the fee schedule and insurances associated with the practice
- ▶ Factors inhibiting the growth of the practice to its fullest potential
- ▶ Demographic statistics of the practice's location and the target audience to market
- ▶ Efficiencies of various business systems and the cost associated with any inefficiency
- ▶ The tools that will set up employees for further success
- ▶ What is the practice's growth rate and identify trends
- ▶ What is the patient experience like
- ▶ The practice's attrition rate and what are the contributing factors
- ▶ Could the practice's cash flow increase and to what degree

You will gain a better understanding of your practice's current state and how to measure it against industry standards. The dental industry is seeing new technologies and new techniques introduced at an ever increasing rate. With the goal of increasing the practice's performance, the roadmap will have specific recommendations to assist you in implementing these new technologies and techniques to help you to achieve your revenue, reporting and performance goals.

This phase will identify and prioritize the procedures to maximize your practice's success. The analysis process is a very detailed and specific protocol typically lasting 25-30 business days. The 5 main steps of a practice analysis are:

Define the Performance Situation

The initial step is to create a baseline defining the current state of the office including the front office, back office and the billing department. An objective review of each position and the elements involved will be documented.

Financial Impact

Part of the process is to determine the financial impact the underperformance situation is having on your organization. It is very important to assign a monetary value to any areas that are underperforming so that we can balance the cost of living with it with the cost of correcting it. Also, the financial (and sometimes, non-financial) impact will assist you in establishing an idea of how much money to spend on correcting the situation.



Form Hypothesis

We begin the process by interviewing the doctor and/or office manager to understand their perceptions of the practice and areas they would like to see improvements. This helps us clarify if there are any areas to find resolutions to, and some potential causes of the situation. Based on our observations and knowledge, we also begin to form an idea about the current status of the practice.

At this point, we have a starting point to begin learning about the office dynamics, and we begin the process of gathering data and learning about the dynamics from a variety of perspectives. Some of the methods we may use are:

- ▶ Anonymous surveys
- ▶ Confidential interviews with people in and around your practice
- ▶ Observing the typical interactions and behaviors of the business.
- ▶ Analyzing hard data such as sales reports, internal records, financial reports and any other data that will shed light on the situation.

Leadership Analysis

There are many leadership skills and competencies that, when combined and applied, go toward making an effective leader. It is one thing to have a successful and smooth running office, it is entirely another thing when this happens consistently. Profitable offices have a common denominator, a leader who has developed each of these skills and competencies.

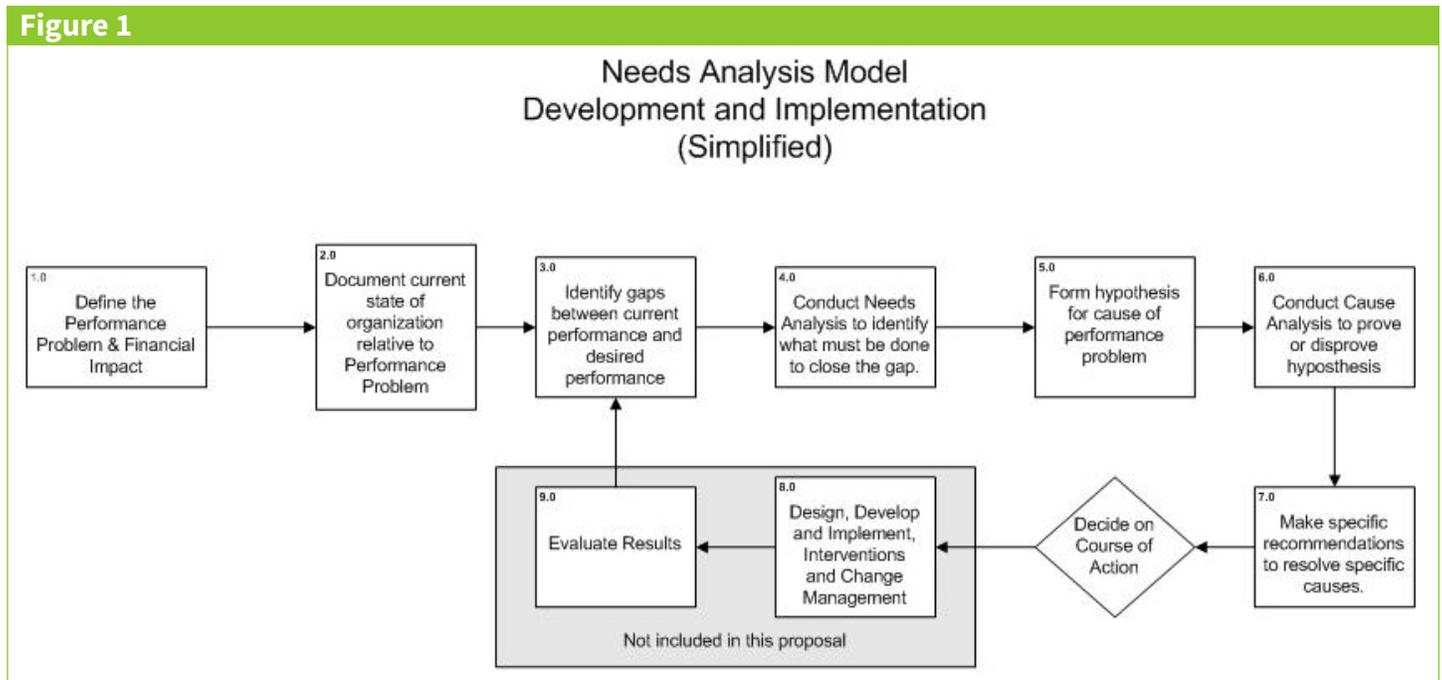
The Comprehensive Practice Analysis requires each team member to complete a confidential leadership questionnaire on their perception of the leadership's team ability to inform, provide feedback, and enforce policy and procedures to educate and motivate the team. All the responses are evaluated to provide the leadership team will a score anywhere from 18 to 90 points. 90 points being the maximum amount obtainable. As you are aware, one can never be too good at leadership or too experienced so the evaluations are intended to provide informative feedback on the areas the leadership team is excelling at and provide insight into areas that could be improved upon.

Needs Analysis to Prove/Disprove Hypothesis

The next step is to conduct a second round of analysis. This analysis is designed specifically to test each of our theories to determine if they are completely accurate, partially accurate and need modification, or simply have no merit.



We use the same methods as we do in the original analysis, but with a completely different focus. When we are complete with this round of analysis, there is no question about the exact causes of the performance situation. This makes linking solutions to the specific causes very meaningful. Figure 1, provides a visual presentation of the process we follow.



Needs Analysis Areas of focus are as follows:

- Practices current performance vs past performance
- Evaluation of office hours
- Mystery caller evaluations
- Continuing care/ hygiene days assessment
- Case acceptance
- Overall office score
- Hidden potential of the practice as it relates to industry standards
- Account management

Recommendations

- Once we have proven the hidden potential and the areas that are underperforming, we make specific recommendations to resolve specific causes. In other words, we make recommendations to correct each thing that contributes to the performance situation/problem. In this manner we can ensure that the solutions have the greatest likelihood of providing a real solution, with measurable results, sustainable over time.
- The work we are suggesting in this proposal takes you up to, and through this part of the process. Once you have the recommendations, you are free to implement our recommendations yourself, contract Strategic Practice Solutions LLC to do portion or all of the implementation, find another resource, or to live with the situations cited. The choice is entirely yours.



STEP 2: Hire and Develop Rock-Star Team Members

In working with many dental practices and improving the performance of their teams, we have found the Performance Improvement Model very effective. The Performance Improvement Model is comprised of many components, where some of the components are related to the organization/practice and some are related to the individual team member. These components co-exist. They need to occur consistently, efficiently and in synergy with each other to maximize the team's performance beyond that of mediocracy. Chart 2.1 below outlines each of the components.



Chart 2.1: Components Related to Performance Improvement

Organization/Practice Components	Data/Feedback	Systems/Resources/Tools/ Policies	Incentives
Individual Team Member Components	Knowledge	Capacity	Motivation

Organizational Performance Components:

The practice components to improve the team's performance are as follows:

- 1. Data/Feedback/Information Provided by Leadership Team:** Items in this area will relate to whether an individual knows what is expected of them and whether they are meeting those expectations or not. This is more than performance reviews; it is all of the daily conversations, reporting, and SMART goals the practice has established. They assist a team member to evaluate their own performance. It is also related to whether the individual knows how their performance is measured. For more information refer to of the Leadership Development section of Step 2.
- 2. Resources/Systems/Policies/Procedures:** This category is related to whether the performer has the necessary tools to do the job. This is a broad category that includes everything from physical tools such as computers and workspace to policies that may impact performance, and the work environment itself. For more information refer to Step 3 of SparkPlug Dental Practice Management System – Create Business Systems and Standard Operating Procedures.
- 3. Incentives:** These are the things that an organization does to reward its employees for performance. It includes things such as compensation, bonuses, commissions, and the simple “nice job” and recognition of good performance (employee of the month, etc.). It relates to all of the things that make employees feel like they are being compensated and recognized for going above the norm.



Individual Performance Components:

An individual's performance is directly proportional to the following components:

1. **Knowledge/Skills:** Does the team member have the knowledge and skills to perform the job? Will the employee's skills improve with more professional development? Professional development is the process of improving and increasing capabilities of a team member through access to education/training opportunities in the workplace, through an outside organization or through watching others perform the job. Professional development helps build and maintain morale of the team members, and is thought to attract higher quality staff to an organization.

The reality is one can only perform to the level of knowledge they hold. To expect a person to perform beyond their knowledge only creates a stressful work environment not only for you but for the team member. One can only improve performance if new knowledge is received and there is time to practice the learned skill until it becomes an unconscious learned behavior.

Strategic Practice Solutions has spent the last 10 years developing its own training programs that apply layered learning to improve performance. Visit www.strategicpracticesolution.com >> Our Services for more information on our training and coaching programs related to increased performance such as C.O.R.E. – Guide to increased case acceptance.

2. **Capacity:** This category relates to whether the individual is qualified to do the job. That is, assuming they have the right training, is the job just beyond what they are capable of doing? As an example, if we took a school bus driver and made them superintendent of the school, they would not be qualified for the job (typically). They would not have the capacity to do the job.
3. **Motivation:** This is the internal drive a person has to perform the job. This is not necessarily the same as they are "motivated" or not. It's more about whether the work environment is causing the person to feel like putting 100% effort forward or not; most people generally want to do a good job. Often the "lack of motivation" is related to their perception of what is happening in the company and how that affects them.

As you can see in chart 2.2, it takes an extreme amount of time and energy to invest in team member #1 whose knowledge, capacity and motivation to perform their duties are low versus team member #3 who has very high levels of knowledge, capacity and motivation. Team member #3 will contribute a lot to the practice and will be eager to learn more skills to perform their job even better. On the flip side they will expect the practice to perform all 3 of the Organizational Components discussed to keep them motivated and a long term employee.

Chart 2.2: Relationship between Components & Energy/Time to Manage Performance

	Knowledge	Capacity	Motivation	Energy / Time to Manage Performance
Team member #1	Low	Low	Low	Extreme
Team member #2	Mediocre	Mediocre	Mediocre	Moderate
Team member #3	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very little



The fact is that our leadership scorecard is proportional to our team's results. If we have exceptional team members, the practice achieves success on many different levels. If we have mediocre or good team members, we have a chance to be successful. If we have underperforming people, we spend an extreme amount of time and energy:

- ▶ Leading the efforts
- ▶ Managing the team
- ▶ Investing a great deal of money to get the team trained
- ▶ Potentially putting the practice at risk of losing \$40,000 to \$60,000 annually by hiring the wrong people.

If you were to study the most successful organizations such as Google, Walmart and Home Depot, what do you think you would find as the common key to their success? They follow the Performance Improvement Model and they are strategic in the manner they hire people to join their TEAMS. These organizations hire tough. Hiring tough means they take the necessary time and resource to find the very best person for the "open" position. They follow a hiring system. This system ensures they are hiring someone that not only has the skills to do the job, but just as important, that person has an intense desire to be the very best at their job. As you have just uncovered or probably already were aware of, you have the choice to hire tough and manage easy or hire easy and manage tough.

I believe we can agree that if you want your practice to be the best, you simply cannot be an outstanding practice with average to below average team members. The only way you can become an outstanding practice is to have outstanding people join your team or train your people to have the skills to help them become outstanding. If hiring is one the most important things you do, it should be the most thorough activity that you engage in and it needs to follow a system.

Selecting the right employee can be a challenge. Developing a winning team takes time and strategy, it does not happen overnight and without a hiring system [refer to chart 2.3] that is strategic to locate the talent you are in search of to become the most successful practice you can possibly be. One that would:

- ▶ Increases profitability
- ▶ Increase patient referrals
- ▶ Reduces your liability
- ▶ Increase your willingness to delegate projects
- ▶ Foster a culture for ingenuity
- ▶ Increased collaboration amongst the team

Chart 2.3: Sample of a Hiring System



Are you aware that the average cost of a wrong hire runs a practice anywhere from \$40,000 – \$ 60,000?

- ▶ If you ever wonder why practices take so long in deciding which candidate to hire for a particular position, consider this: the price of selecting the wrong person can be very high, not to mention the potential negative impact to a practice's morale and productivity
- ▶ This might seem a little outrageous to you, but let's take a closer look at situations that occur when the wrong employee is in place:
 - a) How much does it cost the practice if they lose a family of 5 because they were not treated properly? Average patient brings about \$450 per year to the practice. Therefore a family of five would result in an annual loss of \$2,250now multiply that by 5 more families...you are now down \$13,500.00 each year.
 - b) Now consider the fact a treatment coordinator or insurance biller fails to bill out dental services rendered or does so inefficiently. How much do you think this will cost the practice every month and every year? Just think about it! Consider 1 or 2 procedures valued at \$500 each were not billed or incorrectly billed and eventually written off each week, what would this add up to? It could EASILY add up to \$26,000 to \$52,000 annually towards the practice's bottom-line.
 - c) We have seen situations where the employee wrote off several fees because they did not problem solve and found it easier to write off the fees rather than spend a few minutes researching the situation.
 - d) Not to mention all of the time your team puts into training the new employee.
 - e) A wrong hire could even affect the culture of the team.

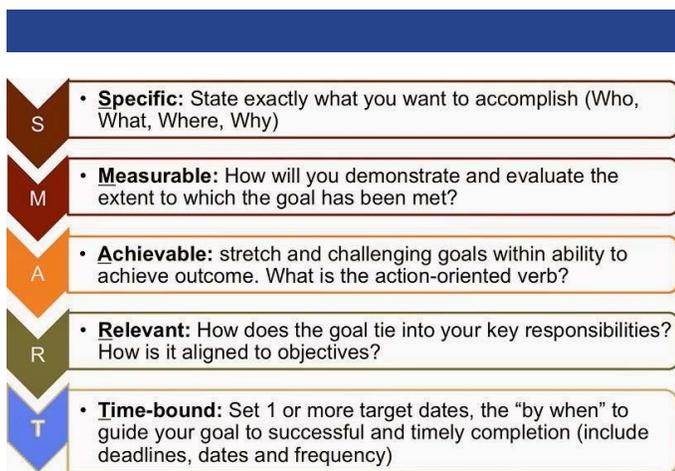
Can you begin to see how this can quickly add to your losses?



Leadership Development: Transformational leadership is a leadership style where leaders create an inspiring vision of the future, motivate their followers to achieve it, manage implementation successfully, and develop the members of their teams to be even more effective in the future.

To be successful, regardless of your title or position, focus needs to be placed on developing one's leadership skills. Effective leaders can add value simply by being present on teams. They are inspirational and motivating. They know the right things to say to people to help them understand what is needed, and they can convince people to support a cause. When talented and effective leaders are in a practice, the practice is well on its way to success. Develop these leadership skills in yourself and in your team members and you'll see the performance and productivity of your entire team improve. Visit www.strategicpracticesolution.com/effective-leaders-inspire to learn more about our Coaching Services and "Effective Leaders Inspire" training.

Effective leaders manage performance by setting their expectations clearly and concisely that measure up to the SMART concept. These are goals that are based on industry standards and take into account the practices current situation and "hidden" potential.



Specific: Do not generalize your goals, but specify what you want. General vs. specific is the difference between making, "I want to grow my business," your goal or making, "I want to gain 25 new clients by the end of the month."

Measurable: Make sure that your goals can be measured. For example, if your hygienists set a goal to increase their daily production from \$900 to \$1,500 they must have way to measure their progress. We have created daily tracking systems for our clients that not only track daily production but other key performance indicators [KPI] that would identify reasons the hygienist or associates achieved their

goals or fell short of the goal. The daily tracker helps the provider have a better understanding on what they need to work on.

Achievable: You need to make goals that clearly state who is in charge of their success. If you set a goal of increasing case acceptance 80% in within a month when the practice is averaging 20%, you are setting yourself and the team to fail. Goals should be difficult, but obtainable. Goals also need to be revisited as the skills of the team increase and other variables are considered.

Relevant: How does the goal tie into your key responsibilities? How is it aligned to the objectives? In the example where the hygienist wants to increase her daily production to \$1,500 you may want to also provide a relevant goal to your business team to schedule patients by following the "Block Scheduling" system 100% of the time and to maintain the amount of "open" time below 10%. This is relevant for the hygiene department to meet their goal.



Time-Bound: Make sure you set out a time line for the goals you set and they are reasonable. In the case of the hygienist, you may want to set a time line of one month for the hygienist to achieve the goal. You would also need to see a steady increase in the daily production that would be an indicator the hygienists are well on their way to achieve the goal set in the timeline provided.

By utilizing the Performance Improvement Model and developing strong leadership skills, your practice will have better tools in place to improve each department's performance and you are able to monitor their efforts as a leader. But this step is more than just training your team.

- ▶ We also teach you how to lead your team and help them prioritize.
- ▶ We help you create job titles and job descriptions.
- ▶ We show you how to run productive meetings.
- ▶ We help you develop ways to set goals for your team and monitor their success.

At the end of this step, you will have a team that is an asset to your practice not a liability. And if you are having trouble creating a team that can accomplish your goals, we can provide the leadership coaching, hiring system and/or recruit the talent for your practice.



STEP 3: Create Business Systems and Standard Operating Procedures



Now you have a GREAT team in place. They are all very knowledgeable, capable and motivated. You have provided them with the expectations you are looking for them to deliver. So you should have your best year EVER... right? Almost! You now need to be able to monitor their performance, as we discussed in Step 2, and provide further professional development. Remember, we can only perform to the level of our knowledge.

Many practice owners invest in technology due to the benefits towards patients and the practice. “[Refer to Step 4 of the SparkPlug Dental Practice Management System]. They attend training to improve their technical skills. Yet, they are unaware of the lost revenue walking out their door every day. There is no system to attract, convert, follow up and track treatment presented to patients. They are unaware of how many new patient inquiry calls actually schedule and show up for an appointment. The team has not received formalized training to learn of a system where they are viewed as a patient advocate and take a patient through a process where the patient realizes they have a dental need(s), the urgency to take care of it, and are involved in finding a solution that best meets their needs.



As a leader of the practice, you should be able to:

- ▶ Identify the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) that the practice should be monitoring daily/weekly/monthly to find lost opportunities
- ▶ Set measurable goals for each of the KPI's
- ▶ Create the data collection systems necessary to monitor the KPI's
- ▶ Train personnel on how to access position appropriate data
- ▶ Develop, implement, and train personnel on what each KPI is measuring and the appropriate response when goals are not being achieved, or negative trends appear. Equally important is the ability to identify causes of positive trends and assist them with creating a system for monitoring and tracking positive trends. When complete, the practice will have a fully functional dashboard that allows each member to have their finger on the pulse of their position, and will be empowered to make decisions to improve their individual performance, leading to improved results for the practice as a whole.

Practice owners and/or office managers need to always be aware of how the practice is trending in order to make any necessary adjustments in the event the practice is trending negative.

CASE STUDY:

Dr. Frank could never get into the habit of reviewing the practice dashboard to see if the practice was on course to meet/exceed/fall short of the current month's goal. Dr. Frank just did not have the time. It was important for him to know the status of the practice for he would always begin to worry if a day suddenly fell apart or if there were "openings" in the schedule. This caused him to come down "hard" on the team – demotivating them. We created a daily huddle worksheet customized specifically for Dr. Frank. The worksheet included a business section where every morning his Business Team Specialist informed him not only of the practice's MTD stats in relation to the set goal, but also how his previous day closed and how the current day was trending. The daily huddle worksheet also provides the BTS with vital information on where to focus the team on to meet/ exceed the daily goal. SPS approaches each client uniquely and customizes reports and business systems to meet the practice's and owner's needs.

What exactly are the procedures and policies put in place to perform job functions? Once we have evaluated, we will recommend ways to improve your procedures and give you the tools you need to monitor performance.



CASE STUDY:

An example is Dr. Smith's practice; she had two people in charge of recall. As we evaluated their recall efforts we noticed the following:

- ▶ The client's recall process could be improved upon by adding three different types of messages in the event voicemail messages needed to be left, and each message had to be executed within a specific time frame.
- ▶ We changed the dates / times when recall attempts were being made to Wednesday 4:00pm – 9:00pm, Friday from 9:00am -2:00pm and Saturday from 9:00am -1:00pm.
- ▶ The two team members had a difficult time overcoming stalls such as “I need to check my schedule”, “I will call you back”, or “I cannot afford it now”. We taught them the verbiage to address the stalls and noticed their confidence increase as they were getting favorable results from the new verbiage.
- ▶ Developed a tracking system the two team members completed to monitor their recall efforts and to discuss with their Manager at their monthly team meetings.

In the event you require assistance, SPS can review the departments you are wishing to have analyzed, make recommendations to improve your procedures, and provide coaching on an as need basis. We will suggest ways to improve your business team and clinical team; as well as, everything in the middle. Very similar to the recommendations we made to Dr. Smith's recall process.

Just how every practice is unique, every segment of a business is unique. In order to be successful, you have to set standards for every area individually.

Once all business and monitoring systems are in place, consistency is key! As a leader, you need to be consistent in the goals and expectations you have set for each department. If you set requirements for your receptionist to always call patients 2 days before an appointment in order to remind them of their appointment, you cannot get upset when a patient complains that he or she would prefer the reminder to be 24 hours before the appointment.

While processes can be changed if they prove to be unsuccessful, they should not change from day to day. Also, when they are changed, the change(s) should be clearly communicated and, if necessary, training should be provided.

It is important to remember here that nothing lasting can be built in a day. In order to create business procedures that work, you have to dedicate time and perseverance. It is important, though, that you do take the time to accomplish this because without it, your employees will be dissatisfied because they are unsure how to do their jobs or what you expect of them. This will then translate into a poorly run business that is a turn off for customers.

In order to help you create systems that will work for you, one of the things we do is talk to your staff confidentially. What do they think is run properly and what could be improved? If they have a problem with their job, what is it? After interviewing each team member, we will present to you the general patterns brought out into the open by the team so we can identify areas they would like to see improvements to.



STEP 4: Technology Utilization and Opportunities

Just like every other field, technology has greatly changed the way dentistry works as well as how practices are managed. In step 4, we will evaluate ways that you can incorporate technology into your business in order to streamline your practice and improve the customer experience as a whole.

Before you purchase anything, we sit down with you and your practice manager in order to work together to create a plan to implement the technology when you do get it. In this way, you will be able to immediately start working on getting a ROI as soon as you set up your new equipment.

There are two main areas of focus that we will be looking at when we evaluate your technology use.

1. Technology in your practice
2. Technology in your business management

Technology in Your Practice

Advanced dental technology might be expensive, but do not let that stop you from utilizing it. The use of technological equipment makes the dental process faster and more effective and comfortable. In turn, this makes people want to keep coming back as well as make recommendations for you. This means that the technology could easily pay for itself.

We will audit the technology you are using and make recommendations on places you can improve in this area. There are many types of technology you can be using in your practice.

- ▶ Intraoral Cameras
- ▶ Diagnodent
- ▶ Lasers
- ▶ Paperless Technology
- ▶ Electric Hand Pieces
- ▶ Dental Software

These are just examples. Just because technology helps does not mean that you should run out and spend a million dollars in advanced technology. We



work with you in order to determine the equipment that will help you most.

Technology in Your Business Management

Incorporating technology into your practice is not the only way you can use it to enhance your business. Practice management tools allow you to run your entire business as well as you run the actual dentistry component of the job.

There are many ways to incorporate technology into your practice in order to make running the overall business smoother and more efficient. For example, you might be able to use dental practice management software.

Additional tools that might help you include patient appointment and records software along with marketing software.

By bringing your practice into the present or even the future, you make a business that not only runs smoothly, it is a place patients trust and want to go for dental services.



STEP 5: Make Marketing a System

If nobody has ever heard of you, then it does not do you any good to have the perfect practice. Sometimes, improving your practice is as simple as getting your name and reputation out there to your potential patients.

A marketing system should be two-fold. It should help you get new patients. However, it does not stop once you gain a client. The second part of marketing is making sure current and new patients stay with you.

Marketing is relatively easy to accomplish and low cost. When you have a set plan in place, you can do much of the legwork yourself and can find easy cost-effective solutions for the rest.

When we look at your marketing efforts, we will start by looking at your current approach. In order to help, we need to see where your marketing is currently getting you.

Once we have a picture of your current process, we will work with you to determine just who your patients are and who you want to get. The first thing you should do when you are creating a marketing plan is figure out who your target audience is. All of your efforts should revolve around them, so you need to know who they are.

You have to know what they want from a dentist, what their concerns are, why they need you, and why they chose the dentist they are currently using. All of your marketing efforts, from the customer experience to your website, and everything in between, should reflect your findings.



When we help you come up with this plan, we will help you figure out where you are different than your competitors. If you are exactly the same as any other practice, then why should a patient switch to you? When you market yourself, you need to show people how you are better than your competitors. Maybe this is the fact that you treat patients like family, offer the best post-cleaning swag, or you use the best technology on the market. No matter what it is, you need to figure it out and let potential patients know.

Once we have figured out who your ideal patient is and how you stand out, we can work with you to paint a picture of what you should be doing. We will work together to find out every area your potential patient might be using to find dentists, and we will create a marketing strategy for each. Plus, we will examine trends and forecasts to figure out ways you can expand your marketing reach in the future.



Conclusion

If your dental practice is not what you want it to be, then something as simple as stepping back and looking at the big picture can really help. It's time to stop working in the business and work on the business. A practice audit from the ground up can help you identify areas of hidden potential, identify areas that need tweaking, and locate solutions to dramatically impact the bottom line and make things much easier to accomplish.

With Strategic Practice Solution's SparkPlug Dental Practice Management System, we can help you perform this audit and take the steps to start growing your business.

We have been helping dentists in the area for 20 years, and in this time we have developed a lot of insight into the world of dentistry. Our experience can help you accomplish your business goals.

As we learn how your business works and where it needs to be improved, we will create plans and train staff that will get you back on your feet. We cannot do all the work, though. You have to want to improve and be willing to work in order to do so.

Our business depends on your success. That is why we are selective of the clients we work with. If you love dentistry and are fully committed to growing your practice into a top-notch patient experience, then we want to help. The fact that we cannot succeed unless we help you succeed also means that you can count on us to put our full effort into helping you just like we have helped all of our other clients.

Remember that all it takes is letting us walk you through five steps.

- ▶ We will take the pulse of your business.
- ▶ We will help you build a team that is as passionate about your practice as you are and who knows how to get the job done and consistently works hard to accomplish it.
- ▶ We will create a plan to incorporate useful business systems.
- ▶ We will determine where you can use technology and show you places you can implement it.
- ▶ We will work with you to improve your marketing plan in order to help you find and attract new patients while keeping your current ones.

Your practice depends on every process, worker, and department. If any one of these is falling short of the mark, then your whole practice will suffer. In order to truly improve, you have to look at every area of your business.

With us by your side, you will quickly get your business back to where you want it to be.



CASE STUDY:

Dr. Capaldo purchased a 2nd practice approximately two years ago and hired an associate to help run the practice. Dr. Capaldo hired a practice consultant after the first year of purchase to help grow the practice. During the introduction of the practice consultant a new office manager was hired to join the team. In a matter of one year, the practice went from a monthly ROI of \$20,000 to a -\$17,000. Dr. Capaldo was informed by the practice consultant that it was the economy and would only be short lived. Dr. Capaldo was nervous about switching out practice consultants, but was at a point where he had to put money into the practice to make payroll and knew he needed to do something. He finally entrusted SPS to get the job done. We conducted an audit of the practice and quickly identified the problem as simple as the associate's adjustments were being posted under Dr. Capaldo's name causing the practice to overpay the Associate. We also identified the hygiene department was underperforming and case acceptance was 25%. We quickly adjusted the payroll issue, provided sales training, implemented the Revenue Directed Hygiene training, and set up a recall system. In a matter of 6 months the practice went from an ROI of **(\$72,000)** to an ROI of **\$64,000**.

Getting started is easy.

Visit

<http://strategicpracticesolution.com>

or call 888.421.1808 to request your free Dental Practice Assessment today!





About Strategic Practice Solutions

Based in Michigan, Strategic Practice Solutions (SPS) is a leading provider of dental practice management consulting, coaching and training in the Midwest. Since 2009, SPS has been providing dental practices with knowledge, skills and personal coaching to improve revenue, leadership, staff communication and client satisfaction. SPS offers a variety of training, seminars, certifications and workshops including, Everything DiSC: a Wiley Brand, for new and existing dental practices in Metro Detroit, Troy, St. Clair Shores, Ann Arbor, Howell, and surrounding areas including Ohio and Virginia. Learn more at www.strategicpracticesolution.com.

What Clients Are Saying

“We’ve been working with Strategic Practice Solutions (SPS) for more than 8 years now. Sure, I’ve used other dental practice management consultants before, but SPS is different.

Other dental consultants we’ve used were not local, so they would fly in from where they were located, stay for two or three days and leave. I noticed when they weren’t in the office we would revert back to old habits and have to start over again the next time they were in town. This also put a lot of extra work on my plate to manage and motivate my staff.

SPS takes great concern and pride in making sure we succeed. The difference between SPS and others boils down to this; other consultants give you the cook book and say, ‘Go cook.’ SPS not only provides the cook book, but helps you cook; they teach you how measure the ingredients and how to stir the pot. Because they are local, they are more embedded in our office on a weekly and monthly basis and provide the coaching and accountability we need to reach our goals.

After working with SPS, my staff is more accountable and I can objectively evaluate performance and performance improvement versus just guessing. We are also much more systemized so many of the management and administrative responsibilities have been taken off my plate, which is great for me because I don’t like doing most of them.”

– Dr. Goldstein, DDS

“Even before I purchased my own dental practice, I knew from working in other dental offices, that I was going to need help. I realized that if I tried to do it all myself and tried to do dentistry, my practice would fail, so I called on Tricia and Strategic Practice Solutions right from the beginning.

I spent 10 years working with other consultants and found them to be very arrogant and cookie-cutter in their approach. Many of them have a ‘Do it my way or your business will fail’ attitude and Tricia wasn’t like that. She is warm, listens and truly wants to know what my vision is.

Before I started working with Tricia, after work I would go to a park by my house before I went home to my husband and kids. I was so stressed out with numbers and making payroll. Tricia came in, helped me see the big picture and got some things in order. I owe Tricia the world. Now, when I go to that park by my house it’s to have fun with my family.”

– Dr. Kelly M. Giera, DDS, PC

