

Fixed Impressions

Nourishing Personal and Professional Growth

Do you know a practice that always seems to bring in new patients and maintain a solid team, all the while staying efficient through its organizational structure? What's your immediate reaction to such a practice? Is it "How'd they do that?" Or, "What do they know that I don't?"

Sure, the grass is always greener on the other side; however, knowing the proverb only gives you half the story. Let's apply that proverb to the real world: To have the best lawn in the neighborhood, you must commit time, money, and energy. A vibrant, healthy lawn requires lots of care. It needs to be watered, fertilized, mowed, weeded, seeded, aerated, and dethatched—not just once, but constantly. To achieve maximum results year after year, homeowners know that they must continually plan and maintain their lawn.

Published with permission by the Academy of General Dentistry. © Copyright 2010 by the Academy of General Dentistry. All rights reserved.

"Encourage team-building, continuing education, and feedback. Your team is only as strong as its weakest player."



The key to obtaining your practice—and life—goals is not that different from maintaining a beautiful lawn. To achieve maximum results, dentists must continually plan and maintain their practice. Success is often the result of planning and improving upon basic functions.

Excelling in the following skills will help you to nourish positive and lasting impressions among your patients:

1 Phone skills. If a phone call is not answered properly, the caller's first impression of your office may be ruined. Make sure to review, practice, and test your staff's phone skills. Oftentimes, staff members are unaware of how their sound and tone may be interpreted.

2 Greeting skills. A positive, attentive greeting can greatly influence patients' receptiveness to treatment options and case acceptance.

3 Treatment discussion skills. Because treatment decisions affect the long-term health of your patients, it's important to involve your patients in the conversation. Listen to their concerns and let them know that you're available to answer any additional questions.

4 Leadership skills. As the leader of your dental practice, your success depends on the actions and behaviors of your team. Strengthen your leadership by providing your staff with the resources and tools to excel. Encourage team-building, continuing education, and feedback. Your team is only as strong as its weakest player.

You've committed time, money, and energy toward your practice. If you take some time each day to learn something new, refine a skill set, teach a team member, or ask a team member what they have to teach you, you'll find your practice beginning—and continuing—to blossom. ♦



Lorraine Guth is a professional speaker and consultant, as well as president of Motivations by Mouth. She conducts management consultations for dentists in both the United States and Canada to improve communication with patients and team members and to improve treatment compliance. She can be reached at 636.257.2066 or at lorraine@motivationsbymouth.com.