

Dentistry as a Business, Not a Burden



Generic business courses and generic advice on business practices may fall short when they are applied to dental practice—even for someone like Dr. K, with a DMD from Boston University plus many years of experience as a dentist in the US Air Force and as a dental associate.

When Dr. K opened his own dental practice in Texas, he took the courses and the advice. Still, he says, “I felt I was doing all the right things, but it wasn’t working. I needed someone to come in and see the day-to-day operation of the office, work directly with me, and shadow team members.” He called upon JB Partners, LLC, to help. Jen Butler combines an MA in education and a BS in educational psychology with board certification as a Master Executive Business Coach and years of experience working in both public health and major corporations. As CEO and founder of JB Partners, she concentrates on dental practices. She summarizes her practice this way: “Our goal in helping dentists is to work ourselves out of a job. We retrain staff, we hire new staff, we show dentists how to run a business, we give them coping skills, and we are physically present in each office to support the changes we recommend. We provide a safety net.”



Finding The Truse Source of Problems

Dr. K was surprised at some of the recommendations that resulted from the first week of shadowing by JB Partners. “I discovered I was talking too much to patients,” he says ruefully. “I was over-explaining things and losing their attention. But I also began to see that everything that goes on in my office is not my fault. For example, there were underlying issues between team members. Jen brought them into the open and sorted them out.” Dentists often have an overwhelming sense of responsibility, which interferes with their ability to see what is working, what needs changing, and what is actually under their control. By coming to the dental office on a regular basis, JB Partners is able to examine office operations from the moment a patient walks in the door; assess existing and potential issues; and find solutions. As Jen explains, “A dental office has to schedule and monitor patients in a certain way to generate profit as well as superior patient care. For example, you have to remind patients about appointments. Those reminders not only show concern for patients, they also reduce no shows and cancellations. You have to focus on prevention as much as fixing. That benefits the patient and also increases the flow and loyalty of patients who may not need intervention right then. Dr. K’s office became so adept at focusing on prevention that he had to hire a new hygienist.” The doctor himself was amazed at the difference these changes made. “We almost doubled our patient flow. I’d say there was a 70% increase in patients returning. It was a shock.”

Rediscovering The Benefits Of Dentistry

Often when a dentist is concentrating so hard on the business of dentistry—struggling to overcome financial problems, dealing with insurance issues, and overseeing an entire office—the love of dentistry becomes lost and stress takes over. A dentist may try to overcome those problems by working more hours, borrowing money, and racing from one off-site seminar or consultant to another. JB Partners is dedicated to ending this cycle by building a year-long relationship with a dentist. The focus is on reducing the dentist-owner’s stress and placing the business on a solid foundation. JB Partners spends a full week each quarter on site (equivalent to 180 hours), and then is available for unlimited access throughout the rest of the year, by phone, text, or video, in addition to one pre-arranged video visit every week. Each visit addresses business needs, key performance indicators, and other metrics and includes personal interaction with the dentist to reduce stress and improve business skills.



Currently, Dr. K has asked Jen to concentrate on financial presentations to patients and reactivating patients who have fallen out of communication. “We’ve handled the big issues,” he asserts, “and now we are looking at the details.” Dr. K adds, “I am finally able to see the benefits of my hard work. Sometimes it’s difficult when you’re in the middle of a problem to see everything going on. You need a different perspective. Jen will push you to be better. If you’re open to that, she will lead you to great results.”