

Bringing Business Success to a New Dentist

Like most dentists, when Jonathan Nelson graduated from Oregon Health and Science University's School of Dentistry he had most of the expertise to become a respected dentist, but only very basic information on how to run a successful business.

"I hadn't taken any business courses as an undergraduate, and there was only one business class a year in dental school," he recalls. "As a new dentist with debt, I just needed a way to make the business work. I wouldn't give up, but I would imagine there are a lot of people struggling and considering giving up. I heard Jen Butler talking on The Relentless Dentist podcast and subsequently met her at a seminar. She had ideas that helped me change the business of my practice, changes that I had tried to make myself without success and that would help any dental office."

One of the hallmarks of JB Partners, LLC, is personalized service. While many new dentists are overwhelmed by business and financial stress, the specifics differ for each practice. In-office visits, scheduled and impromptu coaching sessions, lifetime access to a library of resources, and focused, actionable plans ensure that every dentist receives exactly the type and amount of support required. Jen Butler, CEO and founder, has drawn on her experiences in public health and with major corporations, as well as her master certification as an Executive Business Coach, to create these individualized programs. She says, "We want to help new dentists to manage their business, including training staff, building a team, improving relationships with patients, and establishing metrics like key performance indicators. We also help them to manage stress. Their stress is understandable, and we give them both personal and professional coping tools. Because we spend so much time with them, we can customize our efforts to the practice, the team, and the patients."



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Dr. Ron, Atlanta, GA

The Practice: Increasing The Bottom Line

The debt from dental education and from outfitting an office is often overwhelming. In Dr. Nelson's case, JB Partners helped him to leverage insurance, joining more insurance networks to attract more patients; leverage staff to increase his productivity; and set up systems around collection and accounts receivable. "I kept close track of my production numbers," he relates, "and you could see an undeniable upward trend from the first month we started working together. A year later my production has more than doubled, that's an incredible difference in the amount of dentistry I'm providing to help patients. Jen made a real impact on my bottom line and the health of my community."

The additional income improved both his financial and personal outlook. "I don't constantly worry about paying my student loans now because these changes have enabled me to increase my income to pay down the debt, and now with more income private banks were willing to refinance my loan at lower interest rates. It's very helpful to me not to have that stress."

The Team: Leading From The Front

Part of building a successful dentistry practice is to know how to lead staff. Yet, most new dentists don't know how to be leaders. Dr. Nelson says, "Managing people is the most challenging aspect of my practice—managing the staff and hiring additional staff." Most dentists begin with a dream of how their office should look and work. JB Partners helps to bring that dream into being with practical advice, starting with goal setting and tracking tools and moving on to providing guidance in interviewing and hiring staff, how to set expectations, and how to ensure staff interact properly with the dentist, the patients, and each other. It embraces techniques for delegating, improving organization and teamwork, and creating a smooth workflow. The solution may be as fundamental as finding the best words to motivate staff, learning how to run a daily meeting, or delegating the right role to the right person.



The goal is to create a productive and pleasant work environment that supports the dentist and enables the practice to thrive.

The Patience: Changing The Patient/Practice Dynamic

The importance of the patient/practice dynamic rests on the value that patients place upon treatment. If they value treatment, they are more willing to pay for it, return whenever they need further treatment, and recommend the practice to others. The dentist and the staff must know how to talk to patients, set up regular systems for confirming appointments and collecting payment, and meet patient expectations.

"There's a very specific process on how to conduct the patient experience," Dr. Nelson asserts, "the touchpoints we should have, how they should be talked to, etc..." As patients began appreciating his practice, his anxiety decreased yet again. "It used to be common that I would see 4 to 8 patients a day, now I can see 25 to 30 patients a day. I'm working harder but I enjoy helping so many more people now."

Dr. Nelson is grateful not only for how JB Partners increased his bottom line and reduced his stress, but also for the company's commitment to, as Jen Butler puts it, "work ourselves out of a job." He says, "I'm hoping that after this year we will be able to take the training wheels off, and I can handle everything myself."