



THE IMPACT OF MISSING SYSTEMS ON LARGE GROUP PRACTICES

By Roger P. Levin, DDS



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Introduction

Two things to keep in mind about multi-doctor practice success:

- 1) Very few large group practices reach their true production potential.
- 2) You don't have to own one of *those* practices.

While most dentists and specialists have superior clinical skills, those skills alone do not guarantee success for multi-doctor practices. There are many outstanding clinicians who operate struggling multi-doctor practices. In fact, 90%–95% of large group practices operate far below their production potential. According to the Levin Group Data Center™, large group practices lose on average \$200,000 per doctor per year due to outdated systems.

Most specialists are prevented from achieving the highest levels of success by what Levin Group calls “The Missing Systems™.” Most doctors will say, “I have good systems.” But are they the right systems? Do they allow you to...

- Continually increase production?
- Continually increase referrals?
- Continually increase profitability?
- Maintain a low-stress practice?
- Enjoy high professional satisfaction?
- Reach financial independence sooner?



The more inefficient and outdated the systems, the harder the multi-doctor practice has to work. But no matter how hard the practice works, it will never reach its potential.

Unleashing the Practice's Potential

What is missing from most multi-doctor practices is a series of step-by-step systems that must consistently be in place to reach true production potential. While at first the idea of implementing new or better systems and processes may seem like a great deal of work, let me assure you that when the right systems are incorporated as part of the daily activities, managing the multi-doctor practice actually becomes much easier and more rewarding.

Why would this effort be worthwhile? The answer is that a select few multi-doctor practices with step-by-step, documented systems are experiencing continual production growth while colleagues with outdated systems are seeing themselves reaching plateaus faster.

The majority of doctors want to know how to increase their practice production while maintaining a low-stress environment and high professional satisfaction. There are two types of dental practices:

- 1) The Plateaued Practice™—this type of office accounts for 90%–95% of all multi-doctor practices.
- 2) The Continuous Growth Practice™—only 5% of large group practices fall into this category.

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Plateaued Practices often reach average production levels and then stay there for years. Continuous Growth Practices, on the other hand, typically produce more than \$1.4 million a year per doctor and continue to grow, in all economic conditions, spending little or no time on a plateau.

The difference between the Plateaued Practice and the Continuous Growth Practice is the concept known as *The Missing Systems*™. The 10 areas where excellent systems result in significantly higher production for the large group practice are:

1. Administration
2. Communication Between Offices
3. Scripting
4. Scheduling
5. Collections
6. Case Presentation
7. The New Patient Experience
8. Customer Service
9. Referral Marketing
10. Financial Management



Multi-doctor practices that have implemented *The Missing Systems* spend little or no time on plateaus and achieve greater financial success in a low-stress environment. These doctors report that they enjoy practicing more and have additional free time. Implementing *The Missing Systems* has not only increased their production substantially, but also has improved their lives.

Dentistry in the New Economy

In the wake of the Great Recession and a slow recovery, it is more important than ever for multi-doctor practices to be innovative and prepared to meet the challenges of a changing economic landscape. In previous decades, doctors could enjoy a high level of success even with inefficient or outdated systems. The recent downturn exposed the inherent weaknesses in that practice model.

In the past, operating a multi-doctor practice almost guaranteed great success. Today, that is no longer the case. The profession is more complex. Patients expect more from their doctors. New specialists are facing higher and higher levels of debt. Competition for new patients is more intense. Dental service organizations are expanding and making their presence known.

If doctors want to reach their true potential, they can no longer ignore or neglect what's missing in their practices. And that's the business side of dentistry. This is the area where they have received the least amount of training.

Implementing step-by-step systems is the most effective way for doctors to reach their full practice potential. These processes will allow multi-doctor practices to increase their revenue over 20 years by \$4 to \$6 million per doctor and enable each doctor in the practice to reach his or her goal of financial independence years earlier.

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Multi-doctor practices that are able to implement effective systems will gain the following:

- Greater consistency and organization throughout the practice
- A unified vision and common goals supported by each office
- Improved production, profit and efficiency
- Lower stress and a more enjoyable work environment
- Time for the doctors to focus on leadership and team building without detracting from patient care
- A motivated team that enjoys learning and is willing to participate in practice growth
- Higher levels of patient care and satisfaction
- The ability to train new team members more efficiently
- The capability to rapidly adapt to change
- Improved teamwork between offices
- More effective communication between the practice manager and office managers

Systems, the Team and Success

Why do systems matter? Remember that dentists and specialists depend on their teams. What do the teams rely on? Systems. If team members do not have efficient, updated systems to rely on, stress and chaos will occur at some point. Stress will wreak havoc on doctors, teams and ultimately the practice's profit potential. Inevitably, the performance of stressed doctors and staff members will decline. As the practice's efficiency takes a downturn, practice production is affected. This, in turn, leads to even greater stress for the doctors. Only effective systems can stop this disintegration from occurring.

Like the best businesses in other fields, top-performing multi-doctor practices understand that step-by-step systems are critical to long-term success. We have seen this demonstrated routinely as clients transformed their large group practices into extraordinarily successful businesses.

Conclusion

Do you have a Plateaued Practice or a Continuous Growth Multi-Doctor Practice? What would you like to have? To make the jump to continuous growth, doctors need to implement *The Missing Systems* in their practices. Improved business systems allow you to make the most of your clinical training, reaping the rewards of greater success.



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Dr. Roger P. Levin

Dr. Roger P. Levin is a third-generation general dentist and the Chairman and CEO of Levin Group, Inc., the largest dental practice consulting firm in North America. A keynote speaker for major dental conferences, Dr. Levin presents more than 100 seminars per year. He has authored 68 books and more than 4,000 articles. In 2014, he received the Dental Excellence Award for Best Practice Management Consultant from *DrBicuspid.com*. For the past 12 years, he has been named one of the "Leaders in Dental Consulting" by *Dentistry Today* magazine.



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