

THE POWER OF LEVEL IV LEADERSHIP™



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Practice Production Whitepaper Series



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Introduction

Leadership can be extremely challenging for dentists. Their days are spent devoted to providing optimal patient care, yet doctors are still expected to find time to manage their practices and lead their teams. While there are many popular books on leadership, most are written from a perspective of a Fortune 500 executive with 10 assistants and five vice presidents to carry out his or her every command. This is not a reality for dentists and specialists. Yet without strong leadership skills, doctors will find it difficult to reach the highest levels of practice performance and success.

The Four Levels of Leadership

Levin Group offers leadership in its management consulting programs, in particular a concept called Level IV Leadership™. When doctors recognize their current level and what it takes to proceed to the next level, they are able to make a tremendous difference both in their practices and their lives. Effective Level IV Leadership™ allows doctors to maximize their skills and enjoy a fulfilling and rewarding career.

Levin Group has determined there are four levels of leadership for dentists:

Level I: The New Leader

Level II: The Competent Leader

Level III: The Overworked Leader

Level IV: The Levin Leader™



Level IV Leadership™ is a progressive journey. Every dentist starts at Level I and proceeds through Level II. However, once dentists reach Level III, many stay there for the rest of their careers. That can be an incredibly stressful way to practice for years on end. Becoming a Level IV Leader should be the goal for every dentist.

Level I – The New Leader

The New Leader has strong clinical skills, but is not experienced in managing a practice and leading a team. He or she often has no systems in place, and is “winging it” as far as running the practice is concerned. Every dentist starts as a New Leader. This phase is a challenging and exciting time in the dentist’s career and typically lasts for one to three years.

Levin Group has a number of young dentists who have decided to enter consulting programs before their practices mature. These young doctors have a smart rationale—they want to set a strong foundation before the practice gets too busy. They want to avoid years of operating inefficiently. Young dentists who start with strong management and leadership skills will reach their true potential far sooner in their careers.

Level II – The Competent Leader

Level II occurs after several years in practice. A doctor reaches this level by virtue of working and learning through experience. This is the stage where the doctor begins building the practice, setting the foundation for future success. Doctors generally stay at Level II for only a few years.

Level III – The Overworked Leader

The Overworked Leader is “maxed out.” This phase often begins around the fourth or fifth year of practice and can continue until retirement. It is not a good place to be. The dentist usually finds that the business side of the practice—not the clinical aspects—is creating most of the stress and frustration. In addition to working too hard, the doctor is typically earning significantly below his or her potential. Many dentists spend the majority of their careers in this phase.

Fortunately, there is a way out. There is something better that leads to more fun, more production, and greater profitability. It is called Level IV Leadership, and it is where every doctor needs to be.

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Level IV – The Levin Leader™

This is where doctors want to be, earning more and leading a much less stressful life. In Level IV, the doctor becomes less involved in administrative areas of the practice and focuses more on productive clinical care and referral management. However, in order to reach this level, dentists routinely use the help of expert advisors who will work with the practice to implement updated systems and train the team to effectively use those systems. Advisors are often called upon to assist doctors with other aspects of their lives, including financial and retirement planning.

Through a process called the Level IV Transformation™, Levin Group guides doctors on how to focus 98% of their daily time and energy on patient care and referring doctor communication, while everything else is handled by team members. Many dentists are involved in some activities simply because they have always done them or because they have not considered letting others take over those tasks. Level IV is about giving away responsibilities to appropriate team members trained to complete the tasks.

Levin Group clients who become Level IV leaders enjoy tremendous professional and personal success. During the Level IV Transformation™, it can at first seem daunting or even scary as doctors give away certain activities that they have always done. “Why wouldn’t I do this myself?” and, “Why would I pay someone else to do this?” are two common objections. Does a star baseball pitcher sometimes play left field because he feels he could do a better job of it? No. And neither should doctors conduct activities that can clearly be accomplished by others. Being a dentist is about performing dentistry and providing optimal patient care, not getting bogged down with administrative tasks that should be the responsibility of others.

Be aware that transitioning to Level IV Leadership™ is not an immediate process. If team members are to take on more responsibilities, they must be able to rely on effective systems and they must be trained in those systems. Invariably, systems used by Level III leaders are outdated and ineffective. A doctor cannot become a Levin Leader™ until these issues are resolved.

The fastest way to achieve Level IV Leadership™ is for doctors to surround themselves with a set of advisors who can take away a great deal of unnecessary work. The best advisors help dentists achieve their goals more quickly because they are highly experienced and will prevent doctors from making mistakes that set them back in their practices and their lives.

Conclusion

Evaluate yourself and your practice. At which level do your leadership skills reside? The majority of established dentists will find that they are at Level III and have been there for quite some time. The cumulative effect of remaining at Level III can be debilitating. Doctors are more overworked and overwhelmed, making practice growth incredibly challenging, if not impossible. Staying at Level III will cause many dentists to work 7 – 10 years longer to reach financial independence.

Level IV living is the ideal to which every dentist should aspire. This is the place where doctors get to do what they love and reach the highest levels of production and profitability. Become a Levin Leader™ and get the most out of your career and your life!

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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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

The Practice Performance Analysis™

Get the peace of mind you deserve... with a Practice Performance Analysis™. More than 6,800 dentists and specialists have used this analysis to gain a better understanding of their practices and increase production.

The analysis is conducted at your practice with minimal interruption to your business operations by a Certified Practice Analyst. During the assessment, the analyst will review your practice's operations... examine under-performing areas... and give you solutions for increasing production. To find out more, visit www.levingroup.com/analysis or call 888.973.0000.

