

81

OBSTACLES TO PRACTICE GROWTH

And How To Overcome Them

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BOOK 1 ■ Speed Bumps

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**“ A lie can
travel halfway
around the
world while
the truth is
putting on
its shoes.”**

- *Mark Twain*



Although they may not realize it, dentists manage to create obstacles for themselves all the time.

How does this happen? It's actually quite simple. Armed with excellent clinical skills but lacking a comprehensive knowledge of business management principles, dentists are essentially flying by the seat of their pants, business-wise, when they open their practices. For other professionals, business management is a subject taught in classrooms. For dentists, it is basically an on-the-job learning experience.

Dentists enter their practice with a high state of confidence because they are thoroughly educated to deal with clinical aspects of treatment. Whatever happens chair-side, dentists can handle confidently. It's when they step away from the chair that the situation changes dramatically.

As a third-generation dentist, I have a confession to make—I also created several of these obstacles. Over the years, as Levin Group grew, my own list of obstacles was quickly added to by the collective experience of hundreds, then thousands, of general and specialty practices. Before long, there were enough to fill a book—this book, in fact. I hope you find this information entertaining, energizing and ultimately, enlightening.

Roger P. Levin, DDS
Chairman & CEO, Levin Group, Inc.

SPEED BUMPS

1

**“Stress
comes with
the job.
You just
have to
accept
it and keep
going.”**

Try again. While every business professional experiences some stress, too much stress will eventually compromise the potential of your practice. Your goal should always be to minimize stress. Keep in mind that its effects are cumulative. A great deal of stress can be tolerated—but only for a short time. Eventually, excessive stress will take a toll on your practice and you!

Stress is the factor that drains many dentist's passion for dentistry. When that passion is diminished, each day becomes more difficult and far less enjoyable. The excess stress has to go!

There are many possible sources of stress. It could be your schedule is wildly inefficient ... your systems may be outdated... you're hiring the wrong people... or perhaps your leadership skills need to be enhanced.

Once you can identify and address the sources of stress, your practice will be poised for explosive growth, and you will be a lot happier!

2

“My front desk staff does not need to understand clinical procedures.”

If you believe this, you may be shocked to learn that patients typically seek a second opinion about the treatment you recommend *before* they even leave the office. For example, a patient stops by the front desk and asks a staff member what he or she thinks about the procedure you have just recommended. With a response along the lines of, “I don’t really know much about that stuff,” the patient isn’t exactly going to be brimming with confidence about you or your office.

Your front desk staff spends a lot of time talking with your patients. Unbeknownst to many dentists, most patients will ask team members clinical questions. Careful scripting can ensure that patients get the right answers—the answers you want patients to hear from them. This cannot be left to chance. Only through effective scripting will this happen.

If trained properly, your staff will be able to relay the benefits of treatment to patients and reinforce its value.

3

**“Advertising
in the phone
directory
is the only
marketing
strategy
I need to
worry about.”**

Promoting a practice in phone directories is a baby step, and not a terribly effective one at that. In truth, phone directories are very “old school.” Today, we seek information about dental practices in many other ways, including the web and social media.

The phone book just isn’t that effective. Levin Group recommends other methods to reach the community. Advertising the practice does not necessarily involve ads in the newspaper (or commercials on television). Both are costly and seldom yield enough results to make them worth pursuing.

Marketing a practice takes many forms, most of which are less costly and can be far more effective for the practice than phone directory ads. In addition to electronic media, this can include seeking more patient referrals, community outreach programs, etc.

4

“A great brochure is all the marketing I really need.”

Be honest—how often has a brochure alone persuaded you to do anything? Did you buy your last luxury car based solely on a brochure you got in the mail or picked up at a showroom? Did you skip having a test drive or asking questions at the dealership? Obviously not.

For most patients, investing in dental procedures is not something done quickly without considering many factors, such as cost and whether the treatment is beneficial. Case acceptance is the end result of an intricate process involving many factors—not just a nice brochure.

Remember that a brochure is one piece of the marketing puzzle. Other pieces include scripting, a website, signage, posters, etc.

While you do want informative and interesting brochures that talk about the practice and support services you offer, you do not want to depend on them too heavily. Not everyone will read them—no matter how impressive they look.

5

**“We don’t
believe in
discounts.”**

Don't you want to reduce your overhead? That's the whole reason behind offering a discount when patients pay up-front. Discounts for paying up-front eliminate the costs of billing a patient later on. It saves money and makes perfect sense, right?

Yet, some dentists are tempted to view discounts as something that only retail stores do. For these doctors, it is somehow beneath the dignity of their practice to offer something as tacky as a "discount." While dentists certainly don't want their practice to be viewed as a "discount" practice, they may be looking at it from the entirely wrong angle.

If you were to do a quick poll of your patients, you'd probably find they quite like the idea of a discount. In fact, I think you would have a difficult time finding a patient who would say, "No doctor, I much prefer paying more if at all possible!"

6

**“I need to
move to
grow my
practice.”**

Sometimes, this is true. The demographics of the location may be changing and becoming less profitable or there are now too many competitors.

Most of the time, however, a move is not the answer. Often, whatever is limiting practice growth in the old location will also limit practice growth in the new office. For example, if the practice has an outdated and inefficient scheduling system, implementing it at the new location is not going to make it suddenly perform efficiently.

All too often, the desire to seek greener pastures masks the real problem. A practice must thoroughly examine its systems and determine what's holding it back. Seldom does the problem revolve around the office's location.

7

“My loyal patients are not going to shop around.”

If the relationship between dentists and patients were a marriage, well, many of your best patients would divorce you the minute the next attractive dentist comes along.

Unfortunately, the days of the totally loyal patient are pretty much over. Yes, some will stay with you through thick and thin, but many more are quick to jump ship if another practice offers something they want that you can't (or won't) offer. Maybe it's lower fees, a more convenient location, or services you don't offer (or just as likely, didn't tell them about). Don't give them reasons to shop around.

While you should do everything you can to retain long-term patients, you have to accept the fact that some will leave for a variety of reasons. The best course of action is to concentrate more heavily on bringing in new patients.

8

**“New
technology
is too
expensive.”**

No, new technology is part of the cost of doing business. Granted, dentists should not fall into the trap of purchasing every shiny piece of new technology on the market. However, you must keep in mind the public's perception of technology and how it relates to your office.

The truth is that people love technology. They purchase the fastest, most up-to-date computers. They buy the latest cell phones the minute they hit the market. If they sense you are behind the times in technology, their confidence in you will be shaken. They could easily be lured away by another practice that makes it apparent that they have kept up with the times.

Analyze new technology carefully. Some will work well for your practice, some will not. Make prudent choices after careful thought. In the end, it's well worth it.

9

“I think I have a good mix of reading materials in my reception area.”

Avoid stocking magazines that reflect your own interests and hobbies rather than what would interest a cross section of your patients. You may find *Harvard Business Review* a great magazine to have lying around rather than what you consider puerile gossip magazines. Your patients, however, may disagree. It may seem like a very minor issue to you but to your bored or anxious patients, a good magazine to pass the time is very relaxing.

Remember you aren't waiting in the reception area—patients are. Cater to their interests. Aim for general interest magazines that will appeal to a broad variety of patients, both male and female. And whatever you do, keep them current! There are some practices out there with three-year-old magazines collecting dust in their reception areas.

Make your patients' stay in the reception area as pleasant as possible. A good selection of reading material is an easy way to accomplish this.

10

“Spending money on refurbishing the office is a luxury I can’t afford.”

Believe me, a nice reception area is no luxury. It's as important as the diplomas on your wall. You may want to ask a few of your patients what they think of your office. You may think your office looks fine. However, your patients may hate it. Perhaps your office looks like a time capsule from 1974. Maybe the "Miami Vice" colors of your reception area worked in 1985 but not so much anymore. Perhaps the worn carpet next to the dental chairs does not create the right impression of the office. Regardless of the reason, you need to look at updating the appearance of your office.

Don't forget that this is one of the ways patients judge you. They can't judge you on your clinical skills because they aren't dentists. Therefore, they rely on emotional factors such as, how does the reception area make them feel when they walk in. Do they feel welcome? Are they impressed by what they see? It matters.

11

“Morning meetings aren’t worth it. They just turn into ‘gripe’ sessions.”

Morning meetings are one of the best things you can do for yourself and your staff. However, even the best of inventions can be put to the wrong use.

Remember, a little complaining is OK. It helps some people let off steam. But it can't end there. Small issues can be inflated into major issues—even if they really aren't. One complaint can easily lead to another until finally the meeting ends with the sense of, "Well, we just depressed ourselves enormously. Let's get out there and see if we can sink even lower." Face it—a meeting like that isn't even worth having!

On the other hand, an ideal morning meeting can make all the difference in office morale. It sets a positive, constructive tone for the day. It sets the tone for the day. Keep in mind that the meeting is about identifying and solving issues. The end of the meeting should always feel upbeat, like, "We can handle what is going to happen today. Let's go!"

12

“Staff issues usually resolve themselves without me getting involved.”

Yes, staff issues will “resolve” themselves... only after they tear up your office like a mad bull thrashing around in a china shop. Sure, the incensed bull will eventually get tired and stop knocking things over. However, that’s not much comfort to the shop owner who has a lot of clean-up ahead. Should the owner look at the raging bull in the show room and decide to go for a bite to eat until the animal gets tired of knocking things over? I think not.

In the dental office, the problem revolves around the fact that dentists typically don’t want to be “the bad guy.” In their version of leadership, they may want to be seen as “above it all.” As a result, they turn avoidance into something of an art form. Unfortunately, this only allows a situation to get worse. If there are staff conflicts, you need to identify and remedy them. More often than not, staff issues can be resolved before real damage is done.

13

**“If my
staff was
unhappy,
they would
tell me.”**

They do tell you—only not always *in words*. Their actions, however, often speak loud and clear... if you are listening.

Many employees are reluctant to march up to you and say, “I’m not happy.” They might imagine that you see this as a sign they are looking to leave or they are hard to please. As a result, they have a tendency to suffer in silence rather than attempt to get the problem addressed. Before long, their attitude suffers and they really *are* looking to leave. This could happen just as easily with a long-term team member as a new person.

You don’t want to lose good people. Office turnover is too serious of an issue to ignore. Make it known to team members that your door is always open. Get them to understand that you are depending on them to identify the issues they are facing. Good team members will appreciate this opportunity to contribute.

14

“I have a website, but there’s no need to update it all the time.”

The internet has changed radically since the early 1990s when the World Wide Web was born. Today, visitors expect many things from a website—not the least of which being the expectation that it will change from time to time. No longer can you simply upload a little basic information to a website and forget about it. Business website design grows increasingly intricate as each year passes.

When the internet first became popular, websites were simple things. Anyone could design one. Over the years, websites have become far more sophisticated and complex. An amateurish or overly simplistic website is not taken seriously. A poorly designed website is ignored and seldom re-visited by users. A website that isn't interactive does not live up to user expectations. What worked for a website in the past does not work today. In short, people want pizzazz. Your website needs to deliver. Work with professionals to design and maintain an excellent website. Update it frequently to keep it fresh. What good is a website if people don't come to visit?

15

**“I don’t need
a website
with all
of the
‘bells and
whistles.”**

All of the “bells and whistles” could be what keeps you from being vandalized online.

One of these bells and whistles is a firewall. In today's online environment, a firewall is an absolute necessity. These days, an insecure website is dangerous for you and your patients and possibly other doctors as well.

We all know there are hackers out there who infiltrate websites. Their motives are many. Some are just enjoying themselves as they disrupt the activities of others. Some, however, have far more devious intentions. To them, information is power and ultimately, money when they use their ill-gotten information for illicit purposes.

For example, suppose someone hacks your website. The hacker could potentially get hold of sensitive patient information such as names, addresses, social security numbers and perhaps even financial information. The hacker might also be able to access correspondence and treatment information. This activity is easily stopped through good online security.

16

**“My
hygienist
is too busy
to educate
patients
about the
service mix.”**

Yes, hygienists believe this. In fact, they can be very emphatic about it. However, your practice's growth depends on production driven by the hygiene department. The education that patients receive during the hygiene visit is the springboard to higher production.

If you have any aspirations of expanding your service mix and being less dependent on single-tooth procedures, you will quickly realize that your office revolves around the hygiene department.

The hygienist has a captive audience in the chair. She has a choice. She can do her work silently, chat about the weather or educate the patient about the practice's services when applicable.

Which do you want her to do?

17

**“Implants
are a
pain to
deal with.”**

I know where this thinking comes from—straight out of the mid-1980s. Back then, implant choices were fewer and success rates were a good deal lower. In addition, component parts were more confusing and not as good as what we have now.

Implants have come a long way since then. Specialists are deeply committed to being a source of education for restorative doctors. They are also keenly aware of the need to keep the lines of communication open between the surgical and restorative office. In addition, implant manufacturers have highly competent sales representatives to help you understand the latest products and innovations. From simplified components to immediate load cases, implants have *never* been such a good choice for edentulous patients. In fact, success rates for implants are approximately 98%. I *challenge* you to find many medical surgical procedures that can claim success rates that high!

18

**“Finding an
associate is
not hard.”**

Most dentists say this—until they actually start looking for one. In fact, finding and hiring an associate is no easy task. First off, there are far fewer candidates out there than you might imagine. These days, the right associate is often not on the other side of town but rather on the other side of the country!

Still, some dentists insist on handling this process themselves. They find themselves going through three, four or even five associates before finding the right candidate. Sometimes, they don't find the person they were looking for and just settle for someone they can live with.

Dentists who go through this difficult process on their own soon realize their mistake was trying to find an associate themselves instead of letting an advisor help them. Using an outside advisor saves money, time and headaches.

19

“I get along great with my new associate so I’m sure my team will too.”

Don't be so sure. Here's why ...

A dentist, we'll call him Dr. Brown, was happy with his new associate, Dr. X. However, he noticed that his staff was becoming unhappy and sullen. Soon, a staff member who had been with Dr. Brown for 10 years quit abruptly. Morale in the office plummeted. Others seemed likely to leave as well. The problem was Dr. X. Although very personable with Dr. Brown, Dr. X's personality changed when he dealt with the staff. He was demanding, condescending and impatient and had succeeded in alienating the entire staff.

Dr. Brown's choices aren't easy. He can let Dr. X go. Or, he can try to help Dr. X gain a better understanding of the value of the team. However, there is no guarantee this will work. The best thing is to **not** get into such a situation in the first place. The selection process is a delicate one, and it's a choice you AND your staff have to live with. Proceed with caution and seek advisors.

20

**“My staff
knows
how to do
everything.”**

There are two situations that can shoot holes in this thinking pretty quickly.

First, let's assume that your staff really **does** know how to do everything. The question is, how long will that last? It could be a year or it could be next week. Your office does not function in a vacuum. Things are always changing. Services are added, new technology is introduced, office policies evolve, etc. If your team members don't catch up with the changes, two things will happen. They will quickly become frustrated and patients will likely receive compromised customer service.

Second, your team is not going to be together forever. When new people join the team, they could have a very difficult time learning "everything" if systems and procedures are poorly documented. This is quite common with teams that have been together for a long time. They don't bother to document what everyone already knows. However, every long-term team splits up eventually. Be prepared with documented systems.

21

“Customer service is basically how nice you are to patients.”

“Nice” alone just doesn’t cut it anymore. Every practice can be nice. You’ve got to move far beyond nice.

To grow your practice, you’ve got to “wow” patients. And that requires exceeding expectations every step of the way, from the moment patients walk into the office, through interactions with the dentist and clinical team, until checkout at the front desk.

Customer service is more than just smiling employees—it is everything you and your team do. Patients won’t judge you on the level of your clinical skills because they can’t—they’re not dentists. But they will judge you by the level of customer service they experience at your office. It’s what they will remember about you when they get home. It’s what they tell others about.

Nice is good, but not good enough.

22

**“My staff will
get along
with me
better if I’m
laid back.”**

Your staff is expecting you to be the practice leader. That means making decisions, treating staff members fairly and holding people accountable. If employees are not doing their job or are acting inappropriately, it is your responsibility to speak with them. Staying out of the way won't solve any problems. If you ignore the problem or their behavior, that doesn't make it go away. In fact, you are condoning the behavior by doing nothing. This approach will only make matters worse.

Some dentists fear being the "power boss." They say to themselves, "What if this employee won't like me if I get too strict about office matters?" It's not about liking you. It's about respecting you. You don't have to walk around spitting out orders like a drill sergeant. Being in such close quarters pretty much demands a friendly atmosphere. However, there IS a difference between being friendly to employees and being friends with your employees. The first approach makes sense, the second doesn't.

(See Obstacle #31: "My team is like my family.")

23

**“I can’t fire
her because
I can’t
replace her.”**

This is a dangerous mentality to have. Let me ask you this—is it good to hold onto someone who really has no place in your practice? What if she isn't good with patients? She could actually be costing you money by causing patients—even those who have been with you for years—to go elsewhere.

And the truth is you CAN replace her. Just don't expect her replacement to walk in the door and be ready to take over as if nothing has happened. Think about the classic phrase, "great leaders aren't born, they're made." The same could be said of good team members. No one comes into a new position fully knowledgeable about its tasks and responsibilities. People get better through training.

It may not be easy to find someone else, and it will take excellent training, but you can find someone as good—and maybe even better.

24

“The only way to motivate my staff is to pay them more.”

Hold on, not so fast with the cash, doctor!

Compensation is important, but it's not the only thing that makes staff members happy with their jobs. People want to be appreciated. Many dentists are tempted to say, "Isn't that what a paycheck is for?" Yes—partially. But most people appreciate being *appreciated*. This can be as simple as saying "thank you" or "nice job" after a team member has completed a task or somehow gone above and beyond in their responsibilities.

Your appreciation can be shown in any number of ways, which can be as simple or stylish as you prefer. You could treat the team to breakfast or lunch after a stressful or trying week. Or, you could take the entire team to an amusement park for a day. Whatever option you choose, socializing outside of the office is an excellent way to motivate people and build team cohesiveness.

25

**“You can’t
find good
staff
anymore.”**

Here's something to keep in mind... every generation of business owners has said this. It's actually just a re-phrasing of the tired, old cliché, "You can't find good help anymore." You can't just run one newspaper ad and expect to be inundated with strong candidates. Finding good people usually takes time, but they are out there. How did you get your current staff members? Did they just magically appear at the office one day?

Before you try to discount the entire work force in general, take a good long look at how you are hiring. The fault could be yours. It's possible that you are hiring the wrong people. You could be looking for the wrong qualities in candidates during interviews. Or, you may be looking for older, more experienced staff members but offering too low of a salary to attract them. There are many possibilities. Also, make sure you have a top-notch training program in place. Even the best candidates can wash out if they are not trained properly!

26

**“Ten-minute
units will
make me
rush
through the
schedule.”**

Obviously, no dentist wants to rush through a procedure. That's not what I'm recommending.

That being said, when was the last time you performed procedural time studies? Your schedule should be based on accurate time studies. Ten-minute units provide greater accuracy and flexibility when designing a schedule. After careful examination, you may find that a 45-minute appointment only takes 35 minutes.

What is ten minutes worth to you and your practice? Are you willing to simply write it off as "down time"? Do you really think that sitting around for those extra 10 minutes doing nothing is the best use of your time?

Could you or your staff use those 10 minutes more productively? I should think so.

27

**“Team
members
have it easy
compared
to what
I do.”**

You think so? Well, suppose you had opened your practice without the benefit of going to dental school. Suppose you had to learn every dental procedure on the job. How well would that work out?

Remember that when a staff member joins your practice, she likely has no dental experience. Everything she knows, she learns on the job. You, on the other hand, received many years of clinical training for everything you do chair-side. You approach each patient with a certain degree of well-earned confidence. On the other hand, your new assistant approaches patients desperately hoping she isn't forgetting something she was taught a few minutes beforehand. She is well aware that you are the expert, and she knows that you will immediately realize any tiny mistakes she is making. That's quite a pressure cooker! How would you feel if your old dental school instructors hovered over your shoulder each day?

Remember that if you have a good team, they help drive your success. Appreciate them. They are crucial to your practice growth.

28

**“A new logo
will bring
in new
patients.”**

If you're looking to get out of a plateau or grow your practice, a new logo is not going to be the magic bullet. A professional-looking logo is a must for any practice, but new patients aren't surfing the internet looking for dental practices with interesting logos.

Make no mistake—I'm *not* saying forgo a nice logo. You should definitely strive to have an attractive professional logo. It reflects well on your practice. However, don't misplace your priorities. Other things matter more.

For instance, what's your reception area look like? Does it look inviting? Is your customer service first rate? How about your case presentation skills?

If you don't get this kind of stuff right, it won't really matter how nice your logo is.

29

**“Branding
is for other
kinds of
businesses.”**

What are you? Aren't you a business? Don't you have services and collect payment? Don't you have customers? Why wouldn't a strong brand be an asset? What are you known for now? Are you just a run-of-the-mill dental office? What sets you apart from the dentist three blocks away? What is your competitive advantage?

Many dentists believe that having a dental practice is a brand in itself. There's some truth to that idea, but it doesn't automatically guarantee you patients. Thirty or forty years ago, you could get away with placing a humble, nondescript sign outside your office. That doesn't cut it in today's highly competitive marketplace.

What do you want to be known for? Does your office and service mix reflect your vision and brand? If you want to be known for cosmetic dentistry but your office is as aesthetically pleasing as a bus station, you are undercutting your brand.

30

**“Sales reps
are just
order-
takers.”**

No, sales representatives are an important resource for industry information. And they come to you free of charge.

Many dentists hold sales reps at arm's length, little realizing the advantages they are denying themselves. Who knows what is happening in the industry sooner than sales reps? Who can get that information to you at no cost? As you work to expand your service mix, add new technology, improve customer service or enhance your level of clinical expertise, sales representatives provide a valuable service.

You don't always have the time to research the latest developments regarding new products and technologies every week. But guess what? You don't have to. There is an army of experts out there who will come to you without charging you a penny. Give them a chance.

31

**“My team
is like my
family.”**

Yes, this is a nice idea—in theory. However, in practice it doesn't work. In real families, children don't leave and join up with another family because they realized they could get a bigger allowance. In real families, parents don't fire their children for repeatedly failing to clean their rooms and then hire others to take their place.

There will be times when you will have to let team members go for any number of reasons. You can't allow yourself to be distracted by how you feel about them. Remember, a staff member can be an absolutely wonderful person and still be lousy at her job—no matter how diligently you coach her. Yes, I know, that sounds harsh. But, CEOs have to make difficult decisions. In the end, her poor performance can have a *very* direct and negative impact on your personal income.

It's good business sense to treat your staff well. It makes the day much more enjoyable for the team *and* for you. Your universe is, after all, a pretty small one. It's better to have a relaxed, friendly atmosphere than a tense, distant one. However, don't blur the line between your professional and personal life. You'll regret it.

32

“Posting policies is a way of informing my patients.”

No, posting policies is a way *out* of informing patients. People don't read policies posted on the wall. To them, it's just clutter. For example, if you posted a sign that read **"all patients will pay a \$5 million dollar cancellation fee on all missed appointments,"** you might be surprised how many weeks or months pass before someone actually questions you about the absurd policy.

Don't use the posting of policies as an excuse for not discussing them. That would be a mistake. Team members—whether they are new or seasoned veterans—need to be aware of your policies. If policies are posted but not strictly adhered to by the staff, patients will either be unaware of them or will ignore them. When that happens, you might as well take them off the wall and throw them in the trash.

Well-informed staff members should be enforcing practice policy. It makes for a smoother practice and a less stressful environment.

33

**“We’ve
always
done it
this way.”**

Isn't one definition of insanity, "Doing the same things over and over, and expecting different results?" Maybe... just *maybe*... there is a better way to do something than the way you are doing it now.

For example, just because you've always used 15-minute scheduling units doesn't mean that you should keep doing so when 10-minute units would actually benefit your practice much more. The worse mistake dentists can make is believing that the way they ran their practice 10 years ago is the exact same way they should run it now.

Try not to box yourself in with fixed ways of thinking. The world changes. Dentistry changes. Therefore, you need to be open to change. I'm not talking about change for the sake of it but rather change that accomplishes what wouldn't be possible any other way.

34

**“I don’t
need a
dress code.”**

In an ideal world, having no dress code might work out fine. Many dentists don't see the need to be picky about how the staff dresses, trusting that they will know what's appropriate for the office. However, you never know what a staff member is going to consider appropriate.

If your previously sensible front desk person shows up one morning with her tongue pierced, you are going to regret not having a dress code. The list of possible transgressions is huge. Your dental assistant may think nothing of showing off a little midriff underneath her smock. She might not think twice about wearing jeans with holes in them.

To some dentists, these situations may seem highly unlikely. Believe me—you'd be surprised what can happen if a dress code is not enforced. Every practice should exude a professional atmosphere. Patients expect it—and so should you.

Final Thought

Self-imposed obstacles are easy to create. They are much more difficult to dispense with. Why? In every instance, they provide a false sense of comfort to their creator. To have a growing practice, you must tackle challenging issues like these head-on. These mind games (and others) must be identified and handled. The success of your practice depends on it.

If you are interested in learning about more mental barriers to your practice, you'll want to continue with *81 Obstacles to Practice Growth, Book 2 — Hurdles and Mountains*.

As always, I wish you and your practice continued success!



About the author:

Dr. Roger P. Levin is chairman and CEO of Levin Group, Inc., the premier dental practice management firm in the United States. A third-generation general dentist, Dr. Levin is one of dentistry's most sought-after speakers, lecturing to thousands of dentists and dental professionals each year.

