Eleven tips for success in your dental clinic

Part III: CASCO and PEC

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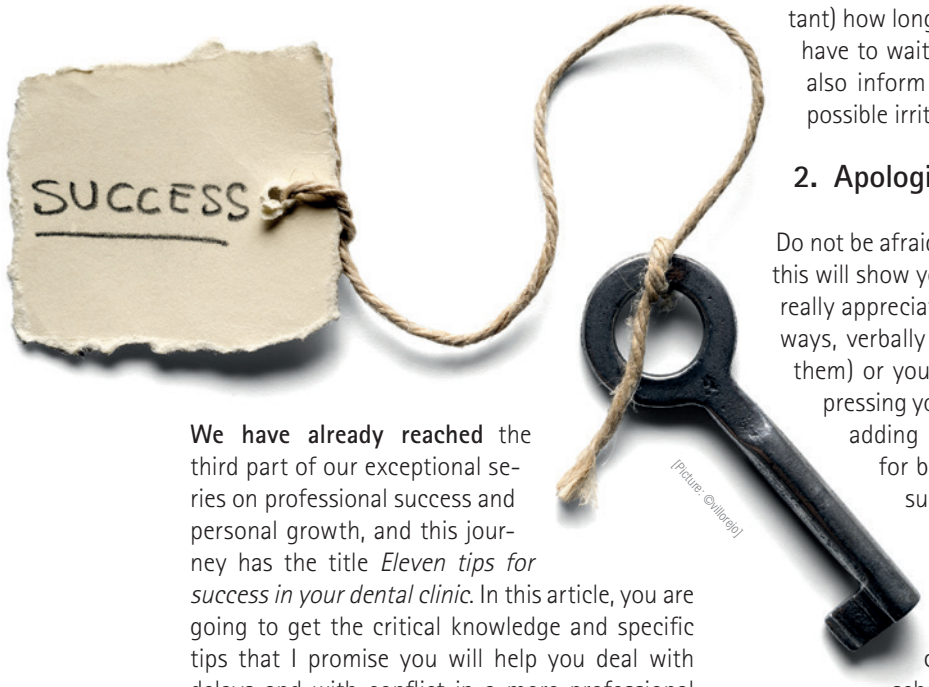

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We have already reached the third part of our exceptional series on professional success and personal growth, and this journey has the title *Eleven tips for success in your dental clinic*. In this article, you are going to get the critical knowledge and specific tips that I promise you will help you deal with delays and with conflict in a more professional and efficient way! Now let's start with delays!

As dental practitioners, we work with patients that have special needs and difficulties, therefore sometimes we find ourselves in trouble due to inevitable delays. My question here is: How can we deal with them? However, most essential is, how can we control them? Be aware of the acronym CASCO, which stands for control, apologise, solution, change, and offer.

1. Control

You can control your delays by assigning to your assistant to remind you every five minutes for the next appointment that awaits you. She can become your personal alarm clock that will wake you up and remind you of your next appointment. You should also inform your "alarm clock" (aka assistant) how long exactly your next patient will have to wait in case of delays, so she can also inform him/her promptly and avoid possible irritability.

2. Apologise

Do not be afraid to say sorry to your patients, this will show your humane side and they will really appreciate it. You can do it in so many ways, verbally (immediately when you face them) or you can send them an email expressing your apologies. But please avoid adding annoying excuses, like 'Sorry for being late, but I had a difficult surgery' or 'I am so sorry, but it is not my fault as the previous appointment came 30 minutes late'. Do you think that our patients should care about our uncontrolled schedule? Or worse, the previous patient? Absolutely not! Please remember to avoid any excuses that will make them more angry or frustrated.

3. Solution

Give them a solution for their next appointment. For example, you can say, "I suggest that next time we can book you especially the first morning appointment to ensure no delays."

4. Change

Do not be afraid to make the change—and change the habit of having delays at your clinic and create a clinic with no or limited delays. Trust me, this will add value to your clinic's image—be aware that the best dentist is the one that respects his patients by being punctual.

5. Offer

Be ready to give them a complimentary treatment to show your apologies once more, they will really love that. Avoid phrases like "I will give you a free treatment", instead explain to them that 'this treatment is a gift from us'. You can combine two treatments without charging the second one. In this way, you will raise the value of the treatment for your patients. At the same time, explain the separate cost of each treatment and the benefits you just gave to your patients without mentioning the word free. For example, "I will now do a dental cleaning and in addition we will do a polishing session with the new air flow machine that would cost 50 Euros. You will like the results much more than the ones from the simple dental cleaning, your teeth will shine more and the stains between your teeth will disappear completely."

Now let's go to the sixth tip, which is as essential as the previous one and concerns how we can deal with conflicts. Unfortunately, there are times that we have to face problematic patients or unpleasant situations with our employees or our associates. How can we face these conditions? Apply PEC to successfully deal with them. PEC stands for:

1. Perception

Name it! Behave as an adult and get rid of fear and just say the problem. Think what the worst scenario is. By making this risk management process, you immediately acknowledge the fact that you could face it as well. Be ready to listen to the other party, ask them about their opinion, maybe their perception is completely different from yours.

2. Emotions

Deal with them and then start the conversation. You should not start a discussion in case you still feel angry about the person or the issue. Be well prepared and avoid to take anything personally.

Be ready to express your feelings, you might be surprised with the other party's unawareness of the problem. Remember to show your empathy with phrases like "I understand you", instead of "You are right". It is a pity to miss the wood for the trees!

[Pictur: ©Sergey Nivens]

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In the upcoming issue, we will analyze two brand new tips and practical solutions that will help you to reveal new opportunities and potential of your dental clinics. Until then, remember that not only you are the dentist in your clinic, but you are also its manager and leader.

You can always send me your questions and requests for more information and guidance via dba@yiannikosdental.com or via our facebook account. Looking forward to our next trip of business growth and educational development!_

3. Communication

A constructive communication is essential to build relationships. Therefore, speak your truth without hurt feelings, ask questions to reveal the issue, sit together to find a win-win solution and make the gesture! This means you can make a warm handshake, or you can hug the other party (based on the type of your relationship) showing your positive attitude to resolve the problem. Finally, always remember to be calm, express some humor, and be humane!

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Kurz & bündig

Im ersten Teil der Serie „11 Tipps zum wünschenswerten Erfolg in Zahnkliniken" ging es darum, sich als Praxisinhaber intensiv mit den eigenen Fähigkeiten, Stärken und Schwächen auseinanderzusetzen. Der zweite Teil befasste sich im Anschluss mit der Suche nach dem idealen Praxismitarbeiter: Vier Schlüsselqualifikationen helfen dabei, den geeigneten Mitarbeiter auszuwählen, und fünf einfache Maßnahmen können dazu beitragen, diesen in der Praxis zu halten und zu motivieren.

Im nun vorliegenden dritten Teil geht es ganz um den Umgang mit den Patienten. Die Autorin zeigt den Lesern in fünf einfachen Schritten, wie sie ihr Terminmanagement optimieren können und auf unvermeidbare Verzögerungen und Wartezeiten reagieren: Dabei sollte die erste Maßnahme sein, die Terminabfolge stärker zu kontrollieren (control) und so Verzögerungen zu minimieren. Sollten diese trotzdem unvermeidlich sein, ist eine Entschuldigung beim Patienten (apologise) unabdinglich, gefolgt von einem individuellen Lösungsangebot (solution). In der Zukunft sollten lange Wartezeiten vermieden werden (change), um die Patientenzufriedenheit zu steigern und die positive Wahrnehmung Ihrer Praxis zu verstärken. Dazu können auch weitere Angebote an den Patienten beitragen (offer), wie zum Beispiel eine kostenlose Zahnreinigung.

Abschließend setzt die Autorin ihren Fokus auf den Umgang mit Konfliktsituationen: Hierbei zähle vor allem eine klare und realistische Wahrnehmung (perception). Beide Seiten sollen die Möglichkeit haben, Probleme direkt zu benennen und dabei auch gehört zu werden. Auch Emotionen (emotions) sollten offen geäußert werden, ohne jedoch aus der Diskussion einen Streit werden zu lassen. Bei allem gilt: Eine konstruktive Kommunikation (communication) ist essenziell für jede funktionierende Beziehung.

Seien Sie gespannt auf die nächste Ausgabe der *laser* international magazine of laser dentistry, in der Ihnen die Autorin weitere praktische Tipps für ein optimales Erfolgspotenzial Ihrer Praxis geben wird.

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