

# Building a Cosmetic-Centered Practice

Cosmetic dentistry is a highly personalized science, which requires an extraordinary combination of communication, technical mastery and artistic skills.

So, you've learned the skills—you've attended a hands-on, live, patient-aesthetics course and you're ready to use your new skills in your existing practice. You arrive home into your comfortable environment (your comfort zone) and realize that things must change in order to incorporate all you've learned. Change ... yikes! There's that word again. This time follow the easy plan outlined below, knowing that this time the change will be great.

Peter Drucker once said, "Everything new gets into trouble at some point. It needs a champion." Your plan needs someone who will defend, support and protect it. Your plan needs you to champion it. Furthermore, your team requires leadership. Your team needs continuity. Your team needs to know where they stand, how the changes will effect them and what your new expectations are of them. You and your team need a plan. Not having a plan is like playing the lotto—chances of winning are slim. To get the best results, you must know what your expectations are—then you can coach your team to specific outcomes. If you don't know what you want, others will be guessing or assuming, which results in confusion and unmet expectations.

You are now ready to contribute significantly to making a difference in people's lives and even more, extending lives. It's time to raise your standards. Think about the areas of your practice that have become mediocre: facility, team appearance, your appearance, communication skills, value added services (customer service) and marketing. Are the fundamentals of your business in place—your mission, purpose, values, definition of performance and results?

Decide what you want. Start with the end in mind. Be specific. Talk to your colleagues who have had experiences with integrating cosmetic procedures into their practices. Model those areas that will work for you.

Some questions to think about while developing your plan:

- » Be clear in your own mind why you're doing this. What's your purpose?
- » What schedule do you want? (How many days do you want to work?)
- » What procedures will you do?
  - What % aesthetic?
  - What % restorative?
  - What % hygiene?
- » What capital investments do you need to make?
- » What fees require an increase?
- » Which labs will you use?
- » How will you market 'it'?
- » Are you available on email and the web?
- » How will you enroll patients?
- » How will you raise your standards of customer service?
- » What additional customer service features will you add?
- » Do you have the right team to fulfill your dream?
- » Does your smile and those of your team reflect the standard of dentistry you are marketing?

When you know what you want, present your plan to your team. Set aside a half day to mastermind the implementation of your new plan with your team. Pre-frame your conversation with them by requesting that they listen to the entire plan before discussing it and that they take notes during the presentation that will contribute to the question: What needs to happen in order for this to work vs. why it won't work. Also make an agreement that failure is not an option. Deliver your plan with emotion. Get behind your purpose and your reasons to look forward to being an architect of dentistry—to make a difference with smiles.

Congratulate yourself on a solid plan and go do it! Be the architect of your business—your cosmetic practice. Get a coach/mentor to help you strategize your plan and future to keep you on track. Remember to celebrate your successes every step of the way.

