



EFFICIENCY
IN GROUP PRACTICE

Women Leaders in Dentistry

A celebration of
Women Entrepreneurs
and Executives in
Group Dentistry.



INSIDE:

- ▶ 5 core areas of culture you might be missing

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 HENRY SCHEIN **ONE**



Women Leaders in Dentistry

A celebration of women leadership. > pg 16

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Paving a Path of What's Possible

By Jake Puhl

March was Women's History Month – a time to celebrate the contributions women have made to history, culture and society. Within the dental industry, there has definitely been a trend of more women entering the profession. For instance, according to the Survey of Dental Education, in 2019-20, 13,314 predoctoral dental students were female (51.6%), and 50.6% (3,215) of graduates of the class of 2019 were female. In comparison, the percentage of graduates who were female was 46.2% in 2009, 35.3% in 1999, 27.6% in 1989, and 11.7% in 1979.



While we're seeing some progress in diversity, we also have to face the facts – the overwhelming majority of leaders and executives are male. This is true in group dentistry especially.

At The DEO, we believe the path forward is to shine light and give voice to the incredible women who are making a difference in dentistry, so that our industry can pave a path of what's possible and promote equality amongst all those who contribute to the profession. The road is long, but we forge forward with this special issue as hopefully a step in the right direction.

Our inspiring women this issue either come from a role where they serve as a dentist/entrepreneur/executive of a DSO, or an entrepreneur/executive that serves a DSO.

Nominations were provided within the DSO Secrets FB Group. I thought it would be worthwhile to share some of the comments that nominators provided of these individuals:

- “Inspiring leader and champion of women in the industry.”
- “She is in a league of her own. I have known many women leaders over the past 30 years and nobody even comes close to her accomplishments, knowledge, selflessness, and entrepreneurial spirit.”
- “Honorable, ethical, and generous.”
- “True inspiration and an excellent representative of women rocking it in the DSO space.”

We hope their stores will continue a long-overdue professional dialogue, and inspire new initiatives to bring us forward in our organizations and industry.

Thanks for reading this issue of *Efficiency in Group Practice*!

Jake Puhl

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The Way Forward

Charting a course for more women in industry leadership roles

By Lori Noga, DMD, Founder & CEO of Tranquility Dental Wellness



Working in a male-dominated space is not a new dynamic to me.

Before I entered dentistry, I worked as an actuary, navigating my career through corporate America.

Medicine appealed to me. But so did work/life balance. I wanted to be able to have a career but also have flexibility to spend time with my family and kids. Ultimately that was a determining factor in choosing to enroll at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in Boston. This was over 15 years ago. I was part of the first class in school history to have more women than men. The ratio

wasn't large – we barely tipped the scale at 51% to 49% – but it did signal the beginning of a trend.

Where has that trend landed us more than a decade later? My own experiences throughout lead me to believe we've made progress, but we still have plenty of work to do. After dental school, I went into the Navy (another male-dominated space) as a dental officer to complete my

obligations for the military scholarship I earned in dental school. Upon completing my time in the Navy, my husband and I moved to his hometown in western Washington, and I was on the hunt for a practice to buy.

I worked hard at networking, trying to get my name out there in the dental space, and I even had an “in” in the community. My father-in-law was a long-standing dentist in the town we moved to. But even with the connections he would give me, I was still being shut out. At the time, I never thought of it as a gender bias. But no matter how hard I tried, it was impossible to get a foot in the door.

Eventually, I decided to do a startup. My office was born out of frustration with the system. I know I'm not alone. When I look back at my graduating class from dental school, it is jam-packed with like-minded women who went the start-up route rather than becoming part of a group practice or buying one.

There could be many factors to that. Women go into the dental field because they want to have more control over their time and their careers. Personally, I felt like if I built my own office, I would control my own schedule. I could make it work around my life. I felt empowered to create my own future. And I couldn't wait to create opportunity for my future team to be empowered and offer a

place where women could be supported in their own personal growth and development.

As I worked to build my first de novo, I saw some old ways of thinking continually rise to the surface. I wanted to be a part of the local dental societies, but found them to be male dominated and unwelcoming. There were rarely, if ever, any women at the meetings. At one dental society meeting I sat down at a table full of men, introduced myself, and the group proceeded to get up and sit somewhere else. Since dental school, I have been on the receiving end of harassing, demoralizing, and inexcusable actions by male colleagues. Sadly, but not shockingly, I am not alone.

Frustrated and lonely on my journey, I sought out other ways to connect with like-minded dentists, longing to find my “place,” my tribe, or anyone I could relate to. This led me to eventually branching outside of dentistry and joining other organizations that are geared towards female entrepreneurs and business owners.

Today, I do see more and more women owning practices, or at least I have more awareness of them than when I started. Patients – both men and women – like being seen by female dentists. I don’t know if it’s just that women have a different chairside manner, or they’re more empathetic. Whatever the characteristics, women are definitely in high demand from a patient’s perspective.

As an industry, we’ve made progress. But we can do much better. From a sheer numbers standpoint, organized dentistry doesn’t yet reflect a high enough percentage of women in leadership roles to mirror the number

As an industry, we’ve made progress. But we can do much better. From a sheer numbers standpoint, organized dentistry doesn’t yet reflect a high enough percentage of women in leadership roles to mirror the number of women in dentistry.

of women in dentistry. Women make up the majority of support teams in a typical dental office (think hygienists, assistants, and administrative team), but are grossly underrepresented at the top.

Women need better representation at local, state and national levels of dental organizations. These organizations could benefit from seeking out their participation and input. Not only do women see their careers differently than men, the challenges woman dentist-owners face are vastly different than those of men. Women often bring a unique perspective to challenges. Women tend to lead from a place of deep connection to their teams and their patients. I would argue that welcoming a women’s voice to the conversations around how we, as a profession, can work to elevate the dental outcomes

and experiences for patients to how we can evolve dentistry to be the leading profession in the healthcare sector, to how we can really elevate women by understanding their unique skills, abilities, and needs is one worth considering.

Tides are shifting. Women dentists are going to outnumber male dentists in the very near future.

It’s time to start working together, open the dialogue between men and women, and begin the hard work of leveling the playing field. Will we get there? YES! And I can’t wait. I began my career in dentistry as part of a trail blazing class full of women dentists, but there’s a lot of trail still left to blaze. Moving an entire industry forward by elevating women is important work and a monumental task. I welcome you to join me on this journey! ■



Lori Noga, DMD

Dr. Lori Noga is the founder and CEO of Tranquility Dental Wellness Center, a rare woman dentist-owned dental group located in western Washington. Her concept of “Experience Affordable Luxury” began as a single, de novo dental practice with 2 employees. With her business prowess and a passion for empowering her team, she quickly grew it

to a multi-location, multi-million-dollar enterprise in 5 short years, earning a spot on the cover of Dental Economics magazine in April of 2018 and on the INC 5000 Fastest Growing Companies list in 2019. Other accolades include being recognized as “An Icon Of Dentistry” by Ultradent in 2020 and on the Group Dentistry Now’s “Top 10 DSOs to Watch” list in 2019.

Tender Care

How one group practice owner's desire to provide opportunity has empowered young women in her community

By Graham Garrison



Ever since she was a young child, Dr. Beatriz De La Roche wanted to become a dentist. The reason? Fear. “I’m the biggest chicken at the dentist,” she said. “I’m not a good patient.”

Dr. De La Roche was so terrified that she actually hit her childhood dentist during one visit. Rather than stay afraid, however, the experience motivated Dr. De La Roche. “My mother made me apologize. So my apology was this: When I grow up, I’m going to be a dentist for kids, so they don’t have to go through this.”

Dr. De La Roche has more than fulfilled that promise. Not only has she built a successful business, Tender Care Pediatric Dentistry, but she was recently honored by her community with the “Athena Leadership Award” for the empowering and mentoring of women in business.

Dr. De La Roche is changing how children experience dentistry with a state-of-the-art facility in Western Pennsylvania. Child-friendly diversions like 3D murals and the latest video games help kids look forward to dental visits. Even the dental rooms provide a different atmosphere such as being in a rainforest or an African savanna, or being among pandas or dinosaurs. The result is a positive environment that makes each visit fun.

Opening doors

Dr. De La Roche started her practice from scratch. “At the time, I actually qualified for food stamps.” But she has a passion for dentistry and making a difference in her community. She was able to slowly build a loyal patient base among an underserved community. There were lots of young mothers and single mothers among the community who would come to Tender Care for their children’s oral health.



It soon grew into something more. Eventually Dr. De La Roche was able to add one of her clients as a staff member. One became two, two became three, and three became more and more. Today, Dr. De La Roche’s staff includes 23 women – many of them former patients.

“It doesn’t matter who comes through our doors,” she said. “Serving the community with these opportunities and taking care of kids are the best parts of the job.”

As Dr. De La Roche grows her practice, she wants to provide even more opportunities for women and young moms that may not otherwise have a chance to start a career. “If we can, we want to help them and train them to become independent. If we can provide them a job in our practice, it could open new doors for better lives in our community.” ■



A Watershed Moment for the Dental Industry



By Emmet Scott,
President, Association
of Dental Support
Organizations

Exciting times are ahead for the ADSO and the dental industry at large. As ADSO continues to grow its membership of dental support organizations and the dental industry, our association has also been hard at work designing membership options to meet the needs of emerging and DSOs of all sizes. We are continuing our successful monthly membership calls, where DSO leaders provide valuable insights, and introducing new ways for members to learn and network with peers in an online environment.

One of our signature learning and networking events, Boldly Evolving Dentistry, will be held March 24 and 25 with hundreds in attendance. This virtual event will bring together group practice executives, division leaders, and industry partners from around the country. Boldly Evolving Dentistry will feature multiple event tracks and breakout networking sessions tailored to members from all levels and roles of their organization, including HR, IT, Compliance, Advocacy, Clinical, and Leadership.

Additionally, for the first time ever, I will share the (virtual) stage with my counterparts from other leading dental associations in the country: the American Dental Association, American Dental Hygienists Association, and National Dental Hygienists Association. It cannot be overstated how this new alignment of the associations is a watershed moment for the dental industry. Too often in the past, not being able to come together has left the dental industry overlooked as essential

health care. We saw this firsthand in 2020 when thousands of dental offices were shut down despite proven track records to effectively stopping the spread of infectious diseases. My mother always told me that “if you don’t like being walked on then get up.” Well, this is the dental industry getting up together.

Too often in the past, not being able to come together has left the dental industry overlooked as essential health care.



It is with that spirit in mind that ADSO joined the “COVID-19 Public-Private Partner Dental Coordination Group” spearheaded by Rear Admiral Timothy Ricks, DMD, MPH, FICD, Chief Dental Officer of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This forum has proved critical in urging the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to update and clarify the guidance of treating patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. ADSO has diligently worked with RADM Ricks to help ADSO member dentists secure the HHS funds they are entitled to through the CARES Act. ADSO is actively advocating for dental professionals and organizations through this group of peer national dental organizations and key stakeholders. We are continuing to work with RADM Ricks, HHS, and state leaders to ensure that dental professionals are supporting the country during this pandemic through vaccination administration and by keeping oral health at the forefront of public health.

We are almost halfway into 2021 – so stay tuned for even more exciting updates and our upcoming events in the next issue of *Efficiency in Group Practice*. Until next time, keep smiling! ■

All in One Place

The benefits of centralization within a DSO

In his role as CIO of Thinc Forward,

Tom Barberio has helped numerous DSOs navigate just about every obstacle related to onboarding technology solutions for their business. He often finds that organizations are afraid of changing to a centralized practice management system because it will be too difficult and costly. Some DSOs realize they have problems caused by using multiple systems, but they worry that consolidating them will cause significant operational disruption.

Fortunately, Barberio says that with the right technology partner and a well-established implementation method, centralizing a DSO can create efficiencies, savings and happier staff and patients in short order. In the following article, Barberio provided several reasons DSOs should consider centralization.

Visibility

“The first benefit we see in centralization for DSOs is the visibility they gain for operating their organization,” said Barberio. “Starting with consolidated metrics they’ll more easily see their overall production collections and the health of the practice. Centralization allows them to run analytics across their entire platform and then drill down to the performance of individual locations even if they’ve got multi-specialties and multiple lines of business.”

Actionable insights

Data available through centralization allows DSOs to hone in on specific areas of their operations to identify improvements. “Practices can see what areas of production are profitable for them, whether it be chair time, utilization of practitioners, different types of procedures – all of the key performance indicators of their business,” Barberio said. Centralization creates universal visibility across locations.



Cost-savings

Not centralizing will cost DSOs more money in the long term, Barberio said. They’ll end up with more money being spent on IT for breaks, repairs, and the products they buy. By not centralizing, DSOs are “not benefiting from economies of scale,” he said. They may, for example, end up spending more money on practice management systems because they’re paying for supporting 10-15 locations individually. In addition, organizations that centralize can often find savings and increased efficiency when functions such as insurance processing and billing are handled by a central team.

Cohesive patient care

DSOs that don’t centralize, especially those that offer multiple specialties, are often plagued by a lack of cohesive patient care. “When patients go between locations, it creates a very disjointed experience if the organization isn’t able to share the patients’ records.”

Patient lifecycle

Effective centralization makes the deepest impact when using a practice management solution that covers the entire patient lifecycle. Barberio recommends Dentrix Enterprise to DSOs. Not only does it easily connect practice technology into one management system, one database, one workflow – so teams work smarter – but Dentrix Enterprise also allows practices to improve core practice workflows such as managing patient appointments, clinical encounters, payments, and recare from start to finish. He shares, “Dentrix Enterprise has built a suite of products around the entire patient lifecycle, from the initial visit, to expert clinical care, to billing and collections, and then to retaining that patient going forward.”

Dentrix Enterprise helps DSOs, large-group and multisite dental practices, tackle the complexities of centralization with ease. ■

For more information or to request a demo, visit DentrixEnterprise.com.

DENTRIX ENTERPRISE

The Sweet Spot

Mary Pham has built her group practice from the ground up by tackling tough clinical cases and a saturated marketplace.



Mary Pham's entrepreneurial spirit began at a young age. "Business is in my blood a little bit."

Her parents were entrepreneurs. While growing up in Mobile, Alabama, Pham's mom started her own nail salon. She would open five locations before eventually selling the business. Pham saw the everyday sacrifices her parents made to balance business and family responsibilities. When Pham turned 12, she started working at one of the locations. "I really loved working with different customers and just getting to know different types of people," she said. "And I think that that really helped me learn how to build relationships."

As she got more experience, Pham would help with payroll and making sure that everyone was taken care of. Pham's mom would always try to help employees if they were struggling or in need of financial assistance for a car loan, house loan, healthcare bills, etc. "Who else is going to help them?" Pham said her mother would tell her. "They do so much for me every day."

Those were just a few of the lessons Pham carried over into her own entrepreneurial venture, Lollipop

Pediatric Dentistry, a three-location dental group practice in communities in and near Orange County, California.

A winning combination

Pham opened Lollipop Pediatric Dentistry as a start-up in 2011, right out of her University of Illinois at Chicago residency. It was hard to find a practice that would accept her as a full-time associate in Orange County because the market was so saturated. Instead, she worked in more rural areas initially.

While she built up her business, Pham's husband, an orthodontist, ran a practice that depended heavily on referrals from general dentists. They came up with the idea to add pediatric dentistry into his practice, so their business model became ortho-pedo at two locations. They opened another location five minutes away from Pham's home in 2020, and have three more locations slated to open in 2021.

Pham said opportunities have opened up in prime real estate areas because some companies have gone out of business or local dentists are retiring. "Some retail areas, because of what's happened, they're having these spots open in areas that are very visible and with pretty good deals. The bank approved us for financing for the locations, so we were like, 'Let's just do it.'"

Pham said they've had a lot of interest from local associate teams to partner. "They love our culture. They love our leadership team. They want to be a part of something that they really love already without having to open on their own."

Belief from the core

Pham said the challenge going from one practice to multiple locations is making sure that the team still feels cared about and a part of the organization the same way they did when the group practice was smaller. It's

also important that the core leadership team believes in the vision, values and message so it trickles down to every member of the team, “and, in turn, trickles down to the patient experience,” she said. Lollipop Pediatric Dentistry’s leadership team includes:

- › Leslie Ramirez, operations manager
- › Vanessa Mueller, clinic manager
- › Dominique Cavallo, administrative manager

“They play an essential role in making sure that everyone is onboarded the same, is being trained the same, and learning and making sure that they’re competent in our systems and processes. We want to make sure every patient is getting the same experience and level of customer service every time.”

That continuity among the leadership team has Lollipop Pediatric Dentistry poised for a banner year in 2021. Even amid the pandemic, Lollipop hit the \$10 million revenue mark in this past year, with no signs of slowing down. Lollipop team members were proactive with patients, communicating via newsletter, social media and videos to demonstrate the protocols and screening measures in place to make them feel safe. “We kept in touch with all of our patients throughout the pandemic so that they knew that if they needed something, that we were there and that we were going to take precautions seriously.”

Despite the success, Pham said her goal is to continue to grow and develop as a leader.



“We kept in touch with all of our patients throughout the pandemic so that they knew that if they needed something, that we were there and that we were going to take precautions seriously.”

– Mary Pham

“Any opportunity that I can to improve, I take it,” she said. “I’m always open to change. Any programs, vendors or consultants that I think align with who we are and what we stand for as a company, I will look at. It’s not a strategy as much as it is organic – I’m always trying to be better, not only for myself but for my company and all the patients and team members that depend on me every day!” ■



Inspection-Ready

A maintenance program can help your dental group practice always stay in compliance when it comes to amalgam separation.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, dental practices are the number one contributor to the discharge of 5 tons of mercury to Publicly-Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) each year, which can ultimately contaminate the water supply.

Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that bioaccumulates in fish and shellfish. Mercury pollution is widespread and a global concern that originates from many diverse sources such as air deposition from municipal and industrial incinerators and combustion of fossil fuels.

What's required?

Because of this, the EPA requires MOST dental practices install either a ISO 11143:2008 certified amalgam separator or a certified ANSI/ADA Standard No.108 amalgam separator, both at a separation rate of at least 95%. New dental practices have 90 days to install an amalgam separator. Existing dental practices who already have an amalgam separator installed have until July 14, 2024 to install an amalgam separator that meets all the regulation requirements.

Why is there a need for these rules?

More than 103,000 dental practices in the United States use or remove amalgam. Mercury-containing fillings are safe in a solid state in a patient's mouth. However, once those fillings are drilled out and flushed into the chair-side traps, they then enter the

wastewater stream. Mercury entering POTWs frequently partition into the sludge, the solid material that remains after wastewater is treated. From there, the mercury from waste amalgam then makes its way into the environment from the POTW through the incineration, landfilling, or land application of sludge or through surface water discharge.

amalgam, chair-side traps, vacuum filters, and spent amalgam capsules.

Vacuum line cleaner. Regulation requires the use of only non-chlorine or non-oxidizing disinfectants with a neutral pH _ 6 and _ 8. [Greater than or equal to 6 and less than or equal to 8.]

Proof of recycling. Regulation requires that dental practices provide amalgam waste recycling records showing name and address of disposal company, plus maintenance and service completed. Records must be kept for at least three years.

More than 103,000 dental practices in the United States use or remove amalgam.

What do you need?

Your EPA Dental Rule Compliance Checklist:

Amalgam Separator. Regulation requires the use of an ISO 11143 certified amalgam separator with a separation rate of 95% or greater.

Amalgam waste bucket. Regulation requires that all 'dry' amalgam waste be collected in a clearly marked amalgam bucket for recycling. Dry waste includes: Contact & non-contact amalgam, teeth with

How do you ensure your group practice is always in compliance and inspection-ready?

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Company Culture

5 core areas of culture you might be missing

By Sarah Ruberg

In work society today, people are putting much more value in a company's culture than ever before. This is seen during interviewing, where almost all of our interviewees ask, "What is your company culture like?" Individuals are looking for a place where they feel a sense of belonging and are willing to make compromises for it. Some are willing to take a reduction in salary if they feel as though they've found a company with a good culture that they want to grow with.

Beyond hiring, having a strong company culture can play a large part in reducing team turnover, boosting morale, improving workplace productivity and creating a positive and healthy working environment! At SMC, we've identified five core areas of culture to focus on that will help your team tremendously.

Take your shoes off

In the group practice space, a common challenge is merging a new acquisition's culture into your own. To make this easier, think of culture like a fine china shop. Be respectful, take off your shoes, and maneuver carefully and sensitively as you don't want to break anything. Sure, you can move things around, but make sure to wear gloves so you don't leave any damaging marks.

Discover your "Why"

Establish who you are, what you stand for, your purpose, and your "Why." Lack of a clear foundation will result in a company taking on the culture of its people rather than the people taking on the culture of the company. When you identify a strong foundation, you will attract the kind of people who fit with your culture and exemplify your core values.

Find unicorns

At SMC, we refer to these ideal culture fit individuals as "unicorns" and the team loves it! Defining this culture and the individuals makes it more real and fun for everyone, so sprinkle it in! Incorporate it into your day-to-day and even into your recruiting and onboarding systems. Make sure that job postings and interview style reflect your culture and it will be sure to be a big hit.

Show, don't tell

Most importantly, culture comes from the top down. Even if you have the "sparkliest" and most "unicornesque" person on your team acting as a Culture Ambassador, if the

higher ups don't feel the same, it will show and be hard for the team to adapt. Explain to new team members that culture isn't just lip service, it is adapted on all levels of the company and that the growth of your team is a top priority.

Ask "what's for dinner?"

Team one-on-ones aren't something new, but they are POWERFUL when conducted regularly and correctly. Many times these meetings end up being conversations about strategy when they should really be about connecting with your team. With a properly conducted one-on-one, you can protect your

company culture and keep a pulse on the happiness of your team just by asking questions totally unrelated to work! When you ask about the personal, professional, and financial goals and interests,

people tend to open up more. Not only will team members open up about their life, but they will also open up more about work, giving you an insight you wouldn't have seen otherwise. ■



Sarah Ruberg

SMC's Culture Ambassador is all about helping her team of Unicorns grow and develop, both personally and professionally. Through unique and innovative team building ideas, she has increased overall satisfaction company-wide and created a thriving culture for SMC. Her passions include raising house plants, an (un)healthy obsession for Simon Sinek, and sending Looms of her singing when nobody really asked for them.



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Women Leaders in Dentistry

Welcome to Efficiency in Group

Practice's celebration of Women Entrepreneurs and Executives in Group Dentistry. These leaders come from across the United States and Canada with different backgrounds and serve different roles in the dental space. We hope you enjoy reading about their leadership experiences, lessons and hopes for the future.



Aman Kaur, DDS

CEO
AiM Dental Alliance
Kansas City, Mo.

Dr. Kaur is the CEO of AiM Dental Alliance and has added over 20 practices in the past year. With 18 years of experience in the dental industry, she has worked with multiple DSOs over her career in various executive roles and is a board member of DSOs, government dental programs and dental product companies.

EGP: Who do you look up to for inspiration or mentorship?

Kaur: There are so many people who have inspired me throughout my career at various stages in my life. My parents and my dean from my business school are my sounding board and have kept me in the right frame of mind throughout my career. I have been very fortunate to be a part of some great teams throughout my career; their drive to grow and excel has been my true inspiration. I have always believed that I work for my teams and not the other way around. I am also a member of a small community of women executives across different industries. We collaborate on a regular basis to learn more about various business areas, as well as continually grow as leaders.

EGP: How do you keep your team motivated despite conflicts and obstacles?

Kaur: We need resistance to move forward. Running into obstacles is a sign that you are not staying still but going places. Everyone has different work styles, strengths and preferences; conflicts are bound to happen, especially in growing organizations in a rapidly changing industry like ours. We have a great team of leaders who are comfortable with conflicts and see obstacles as a challenge and reason to change and improve. There are times things do get hard and teams lose motivation to give their best. But teams generally take on the mood and feelings of their leaders, and with leaders being comfortable with conflicts this helps team members speak their mind and

have open and meaningful conversations that ultimately keep us all motivated. Being able to talk to your manager honestly, feeling heard, and knowing you all are rowing in the same direction is something everyone deserves.

EGP: What qualities are lacking among today's leaders?

Kaur: I am a personal fan of the thoughtfulness and ability to give back that I have seen in today's leaders at all levels. As we all grow in our roles, we learn the importance of permanence, perseverance and persistence despite obstacles and lack of encouragement. Once they go through such experiences and form these qualities that can help leaders grow to even greater heights.

EGP: What are your current goals?

Kaur: We have been consistently meeting our growth goals and want to keep up with these growth goals for our organization to add more locations, as well as further growing our services portfolio. However, I am most excited about working with some great DSO industry veterans in the WomenInDSO organization that we have started together. It is amazing to see so many talented women doing the lion share of work in various large DSOs over several years. With WomenInDSO, we will be creating a formal mentorship program for future women leaders to continually grow and shape this industry.

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Executive of a DSO

Maryam Beyramian

CEO

Westwind Integrated Health
Phoenix, Ariz.

Dr. Beyramian started Westwind Dental Group in 2002. Primary care medicine was added to its service offerings in 2017 and the group was rebranded to Westwind Integrated Health. Today, it consists of nine practices and more than 20 associate doctors throughout the Phoenix area. Westwind Integrated Health is a service-oriented group providing comprehensive integrative oral and systemic care to patients of all ages.

EGP: What did you learn about yourself and your team amid the pandemic?

Beyramian: When the pandemic really started to take a serious turn, we were in the Houston airport just returning from our family vacation in Belize. We arrived at an airport filled with people staring at a news conference with Donald Trump announcing that he would be closing the borders on Friday. It was Wednesday. I looked at Nabil, my husband, and thought, “wow, is this real?” Are we going to go down this road again? I’m not sure if you know, I am Persian and was born in Tehran, Iran, just before the revolution. By the time I was three years old the war had begun in our once peaceful and prosperous country and for the next eight years we lived through war and chaos. The start of the pandemic reminded me of our earlier life where chaos management was the norm. In the coming days, as we listened to our friends in other states shut down their offices, we braced for a full shutdown.

Crisis management and survival was the only thought on my mind. We had over 80 team members and 20 doctors that may possibly be without a job and income. This weighed heavily on my heart. In the next month and a half, we closed six of nine offices and filled the remaining three to capacity. We just put our heads down and worked. We cleared our AR processes and improved the workflow around billing. We set up a call center, brought in all the office managers and treatment coordinators that needed to work, but had no office to work in, and set them up to take calls and start training a

new call center team from scratch. We renovated our closed locations – something we had been putting off for a while. We worked and worked – six days a week seeing patients until the country opened back up and a new norm was established. I learned a lot about myself and my team during the pandemic. We are a resilient bunch!

EGP: What skills will be needed for dental group practice leaders to succeed in the next five to 10 years?

Beyramian: Owning a group practice as a dentist and practitioner has its unique challenges. I chose a career in dentistry because I truly believe that the creation of a beautiful and healthy smile for a patient improves their emotional, mental and physical well-being. We created our group practice to focus on just that, improving our patient’s overall health. We want our patients to walk out of our offices emotionally and physically healthier than they walk in.

Group practice is the future of our profession. The level of collaboration, support and growth opportunities you receive as a practitioner in a group setting is unparalleled. As a group practice leader, I believe that vision for patient care needs to be very clear so that it can be communicated to all levels and all team members in the organization. For example, our group focuses on the delivery of whole-body wellness to our patients. If all our touchpoints are focused on this mission, then our care is consistent across all levels and all offices.

I believe that care alignment is the foundation for creating a strong base for a group practice. Once your group grows past four or five locations, unless you have a clearly communicated care model, your offices will get fragmented into subcultures. I guess my advice for a practitioner looking to expand their practice into a multi-location group is to look and see what you believe in. Look at your care philosophy and develop your systems and processes around that vision.

EGP: What resources, programs, etc., have you found effective for personal development?

Beyramian: Personal development for me started about 13 years ago after we sold our first dental group. By 2008, I had been in practice for seven years, we had built 11 offices from scratch – four from other corporations, and six were ours which we sold in earlier in that year. By March, we had kept one remaining office, which was our flagship location, and I had hit a wall.

I had planned out so much of my career and personal life up to that point. At the time, my mind was solely focused on graduating dental school, opening a group practice and nothing more. Once I had achieved this goal, I did not know where else to take this vision and my future. I needed direction and I needed to take some time off, reprioritize and build clarity. I spent the next eight years practicing dentistry part time, spending lots of time with my young children, and finishing my MBA, which was a life-long dream of mine.

During my MBA program, I attended many leadership and personal development courses. I spent many days and weekends in courses, meditations and vision sessions, and retreats with leadership coaches. Finally, I slowly began developing a new purpose, a vision of how my strengths and skillset can translate to the betterment of my community. By 2016, we began to transition our practices to a model of whole-body wellness care with a mission to identify and fill patient's care gaps. When we started down this model of care, we were unique in the dental industry and were afraid to share our model for many would judge that we were reaching too far into medicine. Dental group practice was controversial enough at the time. Imagine talking about a dental group that

was trying to incorporate primary care medicine!

We searched for resources and organizations that would understand our vision and encourage our path and we found the DEO. The DEO is a mastermind group for dental group owners who are looking to collaborate and grow. We joined them to help us in the process of developing and clarifying our group's vision and goals to align with our personal goals and mission to serve. Throughout the years with the DEO, we have grown both personally and professionally. We have developed lifelong friendships and found mentors. I sometimes feel that we are all a group of misfit children that play together, laugh together and encourage each other no matter how far our nutty ideas take us!





Maja Martin, DDS

Co-Owner and Chief Dental Officer
Village Dental
Raleigh, N.C.

Dr. Martin is the co-owner – with her husband Chris – and chief dental officer of Village Dental, a group dental practice with a focus on sedation dentistry. There are four locations and about 120 team members. She came to the United States as part of a student exchange program in 1991 and stayed to play basketball at the University of North Carolina (UNC) from 1992 to 1996. She is a 2002 graduate of the UNC Adams School of Dentistry and a member of 1994 University of North Carolina Women's National Championship Basketball team.

EGP: How do you align your organization with your vision and mission?

Martin: We are building a legacy model dental group where everyone can be their best self by changing the way people feel about dentistry. Our 10-year target is to become a nationally recognized "Best Places to Work" organization with six convenient sedation locations helping 250 team members be their best self.

EGP: What are the most important traits before promoting?

Martin: The trait I look for the most when hiring doctors is how humble they are. My favorite quote is "If you are not willing to learn no one can help you. If you are determined to learn no one can stop you."

We are building a legacy model dental group where everyone can be their best self by changing the way people feel about dentistry.

EGP: When building up your group practice, how do you create alignment in your culture where everybody is under the same brand?

Martin: It's interesting, we're going through some major cultural shifts in our practice right now because until recently, we were sort of running parallel to each other with our two practices. We had two really large

practices that we ran separately. And now we're trying to combine it into one brand and make things uniform across all the locations.

It's definitely a shift we're going through and it's a super important aspect of our growth right now. This is going to make a huge difference in what we can do going forward.

We joined the EOS (Entrepreneurial Operating System), which has been important in defining all of our business components, and communicating the message down to the whole team. We're working through the process and going through some growing pains, but we're seeing the benefit of it already.

Our why and core values; never stop learning, whatever it takes, own it, solve it, embrace change, be kind and have fun, are written and posted in all of our offices and our level 10 meetings are happening at the executive, operative and other levels.

EGP: Who do you look up to for inspiration or mentorship?

Martin: I love practicing dentistry. My Kolbe is 7-7-2-5, which makes me ideally suited for the detail-oriented, precise nature of dentistry. When it comes to being a co-owner, leader and manager of a group dental practice, things are a little more challenging. I am still very much a beginner in this area and spend many hours reading and learning from other great dental leaders. My favorite books so far are: "The Carolina Way," "Radical Candor" and "Ask Powerful Questions." The DEO has been a great resource for business development and leadership role models. If I had to summarize my leadership style, I would say I lead by example.



Executive of a DSO

Ellen Polsky, DDS

Owner
Kid's Choice Dental
Puyallup, Wash.

Dr. Polsky is a pediatric dentist, serial entrepreneur, innovator and technologist. She runs a multiple-location pediatric and orthodontic practice focused with a data-driven approach in clinical dentistry. She serves on the board of MultiCare Cascade Outpatient Surgery Center and recently joined the advisory board for tab32, an enterprise, cloud-based dental software company.

EGP: What's the most important risk you took and why?

Polsky: Admittedly my perception of risk is a bit different than most as I believe the greatest risk is missing a good opportunity because the fear of failure is too great. Having previously survived failure has proven to be a valuable lesson.

My most important risk was to build a medical and dental surgical center in an area where three large hospitals were denied the permit to establish a lower-cost care level facility. I was trying to solve the problem of patients' high out-of-pocket expenses and high-wait times caused by low operating room capacity in the area. We bet on being able to maneuver in the space much faster than local hospitals while at the same time seeing the hospital's need for a low-cost operating center. By building a surgery center, then partnering with the local hospital we were able to lower patients' medical out-of-pocket costs by 300% and decrease waiting times. Today, the surgery center performs over 5,000 orthopedic surgery procedures, ENT, oral surgeries and pediatric dental surgeries per year. The importance of this project was its profound impact in the health care access of the community and a validation that our insights into the health care market were correct.

EGP: What are your current goals?

Polsky: I am an admirer of Mark Cuban who is noted for saying "The best way to predict the future is to invent it." The health care landscape is rapidly changing as the consumer demands cheaper, faster and better care. Our multiple practices strive not only to implement best practices but also to be on the forefront of developing novel tools that improve outcomes and lower cost.

We are currently adopting AI and computer-guided technologies in our orthodontic practice as well as building the digital infrastructure to track clinical outcomes. We plan

to leverage tab32 PMS's Big Query data warehouse mining capabilities to gain business and clinical insights for efficient data-driven decisions. Further, we are partnering with tab32 to create a digital platform that will engage providers to collaborate and share their clinical experiences; and develop decision support algorithms to ensure a higher standard of care.

EGP: How do you align your organization with your vision and mission?

Polsky: Meticulously defining the vision of the company and the execution plan is essential and allowing for flexibility, as things never seem to go exactly as planned.

This leads to the second point. Don't try to control everything. This did not come naturally to me as my pediatric dentist training taught me to take personal responsibility and control of everything. I learned the hard way that in the business environment this approach doesn't work. Aligning the organization's goals with employees' personal goals starts by having an active, ongoing discussion with them. Giving them a personal stake in the company they work for makes them the best advocates for the product and the mission. It took us years to create this culture.

EGP: What are the most important attributes of successful leaders today?

Polsky: A successful leader creates robust systems and a culture that empowers employees in the organization so there is less reliance on the leader to make all the decisions and push the organization forward.



Shawn Wherry

VP of Marketing
Dental Care Alliance

Wherry has overseen all aspects of marketing at Dental Care Alliance (DCA) since 2006. DCA is one of the largest, multi-branded dental support organizations with 330 allied practices, including all specialties. DCA supports more than 750 doctors in 20 states.

EGP: What are the most important attributes of successful leaders today?

Wherry: I think 2020 certainly showed that adaptability is a key attribute for leadership and business success. Being able to capitalize on and thrive in all economic climates is extremely important for leaders to be effective today. Nothing is static, especially in marketing. Identifying opportunities and being able to execute strategic solutions quickly is essential. The execution component is often the most difficult. In my experience, there's no shortage of marketing ideas and opportunities, but a leader's ability to prioritize and execute is where they can differentiate themselves – and that ability is made possible by the team that surrounds them. Unleashing the talents and strengths of others around you is great leadership.

We celebrate wins and learn from losses. The learning never stops, and there is always opportunity for growth and improvement.

EGP: How do you keep your team motivated despite conflicts and obstacles?

Wherry: Working in marketing can be challenging, but that is what makes it exciting and fulfilling. Marketing can be an easy scapegoat

for poor performance, and oftentimes not the hero when business performance is positive. Data is our greatest tool and asset. When conflicts or obstacles arise, I keep my team focused on our overall objectives and stress the importance of clear, proactive communication using our data analysis to educate and inform. We celebrate wins and learn from losses. The learning never stops, and there is always opportunity for growth and improvement. Striking a balance between autonomy and teamwork is important. I strive to lead by example while also giving my team the freedom and opportunity to carve their own roadways to success.

EGP: What are the most important traits to look for when hiring a new employee?

Wherry: Critical thinking skills are the number one attribute I look for in employees. Being able to assess a situation accurately and take appropriate action is essential in marketing. Communication skills are high on the list too. So much of our role as marketers centers around communication, so the ability to effectively communicate with all audiences in all formats is extremely important. Flexibility and self-motivation are other key traits. With DCA's multi-branded structure and diverse mix of practices, we must be able to work seamlessly together at a fast clip and pivot quickly to anticipate and respond to changing business needs. Choosing employees with these traits who also align with our company and team culture is a great recipe for a strong, highly effective marketing team in my opinion.



Executive of a DSO

Heidi Arndt

CEO

Strive Dental Management
Austin, Texas

Arndt has served the DSO space for more than 18 years. She is dedicated to supporting clinicians and management teams to meet their full potential. She has served as CEO and chief operating officer of Strive Dental Management since 2019. Previously, Arndt was the founder and CEO of Enhanced Hygiene, dedicated to helping dental groups create an engaged and profitable dental hygiene team.

EGP: What's the most important risk you took and why?

Arndt: The most challenging and vital risk I ever took was selling my consulting business after founding it and growing it for eight years. My consulting company was like a child to me. This move was by far the most challenging and eventually rewarding risk and shift I ever made.

While I am a trained and licensed dental hygienist, my passion was to continue growing within the dental community, specifically within the DSO community. I wanted to reposition myself away from only being seen as a clinician. My goal was to move into an executive position where I could use my clinical and business knowledge to support an organization's growth. This shift in my career was difficult, but it led me to be the CEO of a mid-size dental group. I have grown leaps and bounds and am excited about what the future has to hold.

being a leader. You must be willing to fail and learn from it. Learning how to fail forward has taken me years to do, but my most valuable learning lessons have come this way. I had to move from perfect to getting uncomfortable, taking risks and accepting failure, which was the hardest one.

As a leader, I need to create an environment where failing forward is accepted and embraced as part of a learning culture that seeks continuous improvement. For my teams and me, that improvement includes actively learning from our individual and collective mistakes.

EGP: How do you generate great ideas in your organization?

Arndt: Collaboration. As the CEO, I do not have all the answers. My goal is to create an environment where the entire team can share ideas – not just the leadership team but also the organization. Some of our most

Learning how to fail forward has taken me years to do, but my most valuable learning lessons have come this way. I had to move from perfect to getting uncomfortable, taking risks and accepting failure, which was the hardest one.

EGP: How do you continue to grow and develop as a leader?

Arndt: Learning and growing personally and professionally is essential to me. I am an avid reader and podcast listener. However, my greatest lessons have come from the hard knocks of

significant advancements have come from all corners of our organization. Once you align your team around your goals, the ideas start to flow. Clear mission, clear vision and clear objectives have guided our team to perform at a high level.



Leader Serving DSOs

Jodi Evans

Founder and CEO
RevOps
Dallas, Texas

Evans has worked in the dental industry for nearly 10 years and helped build Community Dental Partners from five locations to 50 and more. She has served as a chief marketing officer and chief operations officer. Most recently, she is the founder and CEO of RevOps.

EGP: How do you keep your teams motivated despite conflicts and obstacles?

Evans: This is an amazing question. I'll use an example of when conflict could arise in trying to achieve a goal. When there were obstacles and conflict, I would always go back to my alignment anchors: 1) our mission as a team, 2) the ultimate results that the company is committed to and 3) our culture.

- 1. Our Mission:** Serve the underserved market
- 2. Core Results:** Provide an amazing doctor, staff and patient experience
- 3. Our Culture:** The 9 pillars

The power is that I was able to hire great people who thought and behaved differently than me, and then empower them to get the best results.

Everyone in the room was aligned on these three items, so we automatically had common ground we agreed on. Then, I move to the "what's." What are the strategies to achieve the mission and results? And every "what" had an assigned leader. For our teams, we developed an annual playbook that told us what we were going to do and who was leading that "what."

During COVID, that playbook changed dramatically. So, we adjusted and rebuilt our playbook for the period we could see (for one day or one week, for example). What are we going to do? Getting aligned

on what created the needed discussion for us to work out any misalignment and then assign the right leader to implement the strategy.

Then you have the "how." For me, the "how" is entirely up to the people in charge of the "what." Empower them to do it their way. Appoint a lead and let them lead. If you have your anchors, the "how" is flexible. We had systems to guide them and ensure they collaborated with all departments, but ultimately, it's the leaders in charge of "what" that drives the "how."

Lastly, we measure the results and more importantly, celebrate the results. Don't take wins for granted. Wins unify the team and

get them back to the three alignment anchors of 1) mission, 2) ultimate results and 3) culture. That's how we created unity and kept the team engaged.

EGP: What is the most important attribute of leaders today?

Evans: What I think great leaders need more than anything is the ability to see themselves from a data standpoint. I needed a systematized way to get feedback that told me how I show up, how I solve problems, where I contribute and where I get in the way. That level of continual

awareness allowed me to make it safe for my teams to see the same things in themselves.

Leaders must be the most vulnerable and always go first in this area. Intuition wasn't working for me, so I created what I call baseball cards, along with team summits to help us embrace this more. The power is that I was able to hire great people who thought and behaved differently than me, and then empower them to get the best results. Strong leaders could be threatened by the fact that their team is smarter than them in multiple areas or leads better than they do in many ways. But if you want to lead leaders, you must make a clear space for them.

EGP: What's the most dangerous trait a leader can have in their career?

Evans: Unspoken insecurity. I was assigned to collaborate with a new team, and I felt very inadequate. I wasn't sure how to navigate the new role. I found myself saying "yes" to things that were so outside my wheelhouse, and I was trying to hold it together. In fear of being seen as inadequate, I tried to leverage my team. Then one day, I knew it was time to increase transparency. I wrote to my boss and said "I love your vision and where you are going. Here is where I think I can help and here is where I do not have the skills and I'm struggling to support, etc."

I came up with some solutions of team members who had those strengths as we worked through how to get the results we needed. It worked so well that I took the same framework to my direct reports and they were able to share where they were confident and where they were struggling. It drove so much clarity, team collaboration and support. We improved morale and collaboration, and we helped everyone get in the right lane to get the best results.

Three books I recommend:

1. "Tribal "Leadership"
2. "Who Not How"
3. "The One Thing"

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– Author Unknown

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Leader Serving DSOs

Dee Fischer

CEO
Fischer's Professional Group
Orlando, Fla.

Fischer has decades of experience growing DSOs, helping doctors create systems, accountability and passion in the workplace. She has been an integral part of several DSOs' exponential growth, guiding the operations and HR management to scale to larger organizations.

EGP: What is one decision you wish you did not make?

Fischer: The one thing I would have done different is to remain with my design-build company that I created. I left when it was in full swing. The model that I created was unique and worked well. Many doctors that were part of this program have flourished beyond expectations. I learned that it is extremely important to lay out ground rules as to what each partner will be accountable for. My error in the long run was to never assume the long-term outcome.

make, a direction with a knowledge base as to where to go and how to find what is needed, and a timeline to implement systems for scaling.

EGP: How do you generate great ideas in your organization?

Fischer: All are empowered to grow. They must learn something new every day and put it in use and to be discussed at leadership meetings so it can be delivered to all team members. There was never a slip up on this. It was done every day by each employee. It made them realize

They must learn something new every day and put it in use and to be discussed at leadership meetings so it can be delivered to all team members. There was never a slip up on this. It was done every day by each employee.

EGP: What are the most important traits before promoting?

Fischer: First and foremost, humility is a must. Second, work ethic. Next, can they still grow in the position we are putting them into? Finally, can they see their career path?

they were learning new things every day. Whether it was from a patient or a coworker. It is the skill set of listening to learn something new every day. Imagine 100 employees' input: an amazing outcome!

EGP: What one thing makes you most proud?

Fischer: Easy one here: Having a group of dentists and team saying, "I would have never been able to do this without your guidance." This is always music to my ears. I feel they would have been successful, however, populating them early on with knowledge of mistakes not to



Kiera Dent

CEO

Dental A-Team

Reno, Nev.

Dent is the CEO of Dental A-Team. She believes running a practice should not be hard, having accountability can be easy and getting home on time is your reality. Her passion is helping dentists and teams expand what they believe is possible in business and themselves.

EGP: What qualities are lacking among today's leaders?

Dent: Today's leaders are often forgetting foresight, agility and the ability to innovate while being compassionate and truly leading. As leaders, we are the examples, the people who set the tone for society and it's our moral obligation to show up, play full out and truly lead people to being their best selves. I feel we have sometimes become hardened instead of being there to truly lead. Be the example. I believe to be the best, we must be competing against our best and looking for the next version instead of blaming and finding the excuses. Seeing the economy, COVID, housing or any other problem as "flavors of business" instead of something to blame is where leadership shines.

This is business. This is where leaders get to stand up and shine. They get to take ownership and dominate no matter the circumstances. I think if more leaders were like this, we would have a different society, stronger businesses and stronger teams. The great news: This is an opportunity for leaders to show up and make strong movements for change now.

EGP: What's the most important risk you took and why?

Dent: Literally starting The Dental A-Team! I knew I always wanted to own a business. It called to me and I could feel that yearning in my soul. I couldn't satisfy it and it would never go away. I grew up very religious and the thought of being a working female was never something I had entertained. However,

business called me. I have a passion for growing, building and creating. Businesses are my creative playground to make all my crazy ideas become a reality.

Starting the business was terrifying. What if I failed? What if this was just some silly idea? I literally jumped without looking to see if the parachute was attached and followed the inner knowing that this is where I should be. I would tell all entrepreneurs to jump! Follow that inner knowing and move. Move quickly. You are the only thing holding you back. It won't always be smooth sailing, but it will be the freedom and creativity your soul is begging for! It is truly still a scary ride but loving the journey.

EGP: How do you continue to grow and develop as a leader?

Dent: I invest in myself every year. I look to see where we are weak as a company and where I am weak as a leader and I look to find the best people to teach me. I've attended Tony Robbins since I think he is the greatest when it comes to consulting and events, which is the area we are in. I love Donald Miller for marketing and Rachel Hollis has been a great mentor. Connecting with authors of books that have transformed me – Mike Paton from the EOS crew, Mike Michalowicz from Profit First. I am forever the student and always looking for coaches, consulting, and people who are experts in their industry who can mentor me, or I can get closer to and continue to learn from. They say repetition is the mother of skill.

I also read at least one book a month. I love Audible and find there

is more gold from the minds of men and women than anywhere else. Invest in you. Take time. Become a master scholar in the areas you are weak. Snag a mentor. Hire a coach. I do a lot of coaching with experts because I believe proximity is power.

EGP: How do you align your organization with your vision and mission?

Dent: We operate our company from the “Traction: Get a Grip of Your Business,” EOS model. Every quarter we run a quarterly meeting and align the entire company. We review

the mission, vision, core values and company goals and ensure we are all bought in and committed and change them as needed. It’s a collaborative process and I believe the team has brilliant ideas that can make the company even better.

Every week we run a meeting and review our mission statement, vision statement, core values and our goals for the quarter. We ask for feedback from our team and integrate their ideas. We are constantly analyzing and creating a better company. I believe having a leader who knows the big vision and having a team

create the way of how to get there creates buy in, connection and unity to achieve goals together.

We also have monthly check-ins with each team member and assess how they are living our company core values, mission and vision of the company. We live by our core values and standards of our company and make sure they are integrated into all the areas of our company. It’s amazing when you see the team literally living your core values and mission statement in their daily lives. That’s when you know they are bought in completely!



Grace Rizza

Founder and CEO
Identity Dental Marketing
Chicago, Ill.

Rizza is the founder and CEO of Identity Dental Marketing, which serves dentists nationwide with ethical, effective marketing solutions. It has helped to propel more than 1,500 businesses to more success. Rizza has authored industry-specific articles, podcasts and blogs since launching Identity Dental Marketing in 2009 and spoken at dozens of dental meetings.

EGP: How do you keep your team motivated despite conflicts and obstacles?

Rizza: Recruiting the right team and leading them with enthusiasm is one of the three most crucial elements to the success of a business. The others involve organized processes and the quality of your product or solution. I have a few unconventional ways of keeping my team motivated and excited, even in the most challenging times.

Consistency is crucial. Team members will leave an organization (or a leader) who isn’t consistent in the expectations, involvement and positivity. Employees love to know exactly what is expected of them. By utilizing a platform that allows for clarity in task delegation, quality control and communication, we can be confident that each team member knows exactly what’s expected every day and is held accountable for their individual contribution.

Beyond clarity in expectations, it's important to be consistent with your involvement. I love our weekly Monday morning meetings. It allows us to connect, talk through learning experiences from the previous week, introduce new clients, discuss process changes that will improve our service to clients and so much more. My team knows exactly when to run new ideas by me, how to request for time off, how to handle a deadline extension request, how and when to get approval on a design or a written project. By showing up every day and sticking to my commitments to my team, they in turn do the same.

the length of a potential shutdown (and was correct almost to the day). I came up with a payment deferment plan for my clients, assured all my team members that I would not be laying anyone off and would personally fund any damages to the business for at least two months and then we would reconvene.

I led my team with positivity and confidence, despite not knowing when our clients would be allowed to reopen or ready to invest in marketing. I coached my team on compassionate conversations, I donated free services, and even started a daily positivity text and group to help those who

the value of consistency and its ability to transform a disjointed team into a well-oiled machine.

EGP: What are the most important attributes of successful leaders today?

Rizza: Successful leaders must be dedicated to their goals. They must take full responsibility for all mistakes, mishaps or miscommunications. Most importantly, they must enjoy hard work and savor the feeling of accomplishment.

EGP: What qualities are lacking among today's leaders?

Rizza: Humility. Leaders are just humans who have been given talents and opportunities by God. They are no more important than any other human being on the planet. With great blessings come great expectations. At the end of your life, what will others say about you? Will they remember your positive impact on their life, or will they remember your flashy shoes?

EGP: What are your current goals?

Rizza: It's always my goal to become a better human. For me, that starts with serving God by serving others.

Of course, I'm continuing the growth of Identity Dental Marketing through innovation and recruiting. I'm currently also developing a new dental software for team management and building an online training program for dental marketers. Lastly, I'm planning to contribute more this year to the dental community through writing and education. ■

Leaders are just humans who have been given talents and opportunities by God. They are no more important than any other human being on the planet. With great blessings come great expectations. At the end of your life, what will others say about you?

Consistent positivity is the most challenging in my opinion. Being an "open book" is great, until you have a bad day or face a conversation that requires a great deal of patience and compassion. Being a fast-paced decision maker is great if you know how to slow down when it's required. During the COVID shutdown, like many other business owners, I had many tough decisions to make very quickly. Early on I came up with a plan. I estimated

were struggling to stay positive. At one point, I had to step away. I delegated my leadership role, and took a week to cry, experience the sadness of loss that was happening all around me and to my own business, and recommit to a positive mindset. I do believe that break was imperative to remaining consistent in my ability to lead my amazing team.

As someone who lives a very spontaneous, creative life, I've learned

Benefiting the Community

“Dr. Tiff” leads, expands Atlanta area’s Polish Dental Centers through the pandemic

By Daniel Beard and Graham Garrison



Dr. Tiffany Jamison-Rand

Dr. Tiffany Jamison-Rand is the owner and CEO of Polish Dental Centers, a group of general and cosmetic dental practices serving the Atlanta area. Known as “Dr. Tiff,” she has been named a top dentist by *The Atlantan Magazine* and *Jezebel Magazine*.

Dr. Jamison-Rand has been a general dentist for over 13 years and specializes in high-end cosmetic and complex restorative dental procedures. After graduating dental school in 2007, she did her residency in New York City, and practiced as an associate dentist in Los Angeles before returning home to the Atlanta area. Today, Dr. Jamison-Rand has acquired multiple practices as the owner and CEO of Polish Dental Centers, a Dental Service Organization with locations in Atlanta, Alpharetta and Lilburn, Ga., and is actively pursuing the acquisition of multiple additional locations across the Atlanta area.

“Polish has really blossomed because we deliver a great product with great service, and we just happen to have a woman-led team,” said Dr. Jamison-Rand. “We cater to all households, all budgets and all people. We have been successful because we have the resources and infrastructure of a large Dental Service Organization, but the white glove touch of a single private practice.”

Community outreach

As an Atlanta native, Dr. Jamison-Rand said she feels a strong obligation to provide community outreach. Therefore, Polish Dental Centers has consistently given back in multiple ways in its 10+ years of serving the community.

“I plan for Polish to be around serving the greater Atlanta community for a very long time,” she said. “As a result, I know that it is critical that this organization be seen as one that gives openly and frequently, and is a true partner to the communities they serve, rather than simply being just a vendor. Over the long term, I know that everyone benefits when the relationships are true partnerships versus transactional. That’s why we are so consistently and frequently developing programs that allow Polish Dental Centers to give back.

“I really like that phrase ‘purposeful philanthropy,’” she continues, “because it captures the essence of how my family and I approach giving. We have been fortunate, and so I think it’s important that we share our blessings in a way that provides concrete impact for those who need the assistance most.”

Polish Dental Centers has a partnership with nSoro Education Foundation. Its mission is to ensure all young adults – ages 16 to 26 – who have aged out of the foster care system have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive and become educated, confident, self-sustaining and contributing members of society. The nSoro Foundation has awarded more than 700 scholarships for post-secondary education since

2005, currently supporting 302 students at 192 universities.

“We are excited and proud to be providing \$250,000+ worth of dental work to those young adults,” Dr. Jamison-Rand said. “This year and moving forward – hopefully every year – we’ll be engaged to help give them free dental work.”

“I really like that phrase ‘purposeful philanthropy,’ because it captures the essence of how my family and I approach giving. We have been fortunate, and so I think it’s important that we share our blessings in a way that provides concrete impact for those who need the assistance most.”

The partnership between the nSoro Foundation and Dr. Jamison-Rand was catalyzed by the story shared at the nSoro Foundation’s Starfish Ball in January 2020. A 23-year-old named Justin spoke on stage about growing up poor and in the foster care system. His front teeth were knocked out when he was 13 years old and were not fixed until days before he spoke on stage at the

Starfish Ball, 10 years later. He spoke about the self-esteem issues he had without having his front teeth. After the speech, Dr. Jamison-Rand told nSoro Foundation’s head executive that she had to help. Polish Dental Center is especially proud of the partnership with the nSoro Education Foundation because of the profound impact that a smile can have on these young adults and the effect that it will have on the rest of their lives, Dr. Jamison-Rand said.

“In previous years, we have performed pro bono work for battered women who were trying to get back into the workforce and before that, mission trips to Jamaica,” she said. “I really like doing that because it’s just so impactful and it helps so many children and adults from marginalized communities.”

Dr. Jamison-Rand also founded the I Love My Dentist Foundation, through which she educates and mentors teenagers and young adults. The mission is to alter the stigma of dental visits by encouraging preventive care. It also encourages youth in the community to consider dentistry as a career path.

Female-led

Polish Dental Centers is a woman-led practice.

“My closest mentors have been women,” Dr. Jamison-Rand said. “But 15 years ago, when I was coming up, a company like this didn’t exist. My organization allows you to both get the mentorship that you need, and you also aren’t stuck doing low production work. You can achieve whatever goal you want as a dental professional. It’s limitless.

“We didn’t do that intentionally,” she continued, “it just happens to be that way where many of our employees have found that they can connect and express themselves and just have someone that they feel is looking out for their best interests, which we are. So, I think that’s what provides them with that security.”

Dr. Jamison-Rand said she is excited that more women are becoming dentists, and as a result the profession is changing rapidly. “I think more women are choosing dentistry because they can have a work-life balance. That’s what I aim for Polish Dental Centers to become: A place where women can have that work-life balance and still be moms and make a good living.”

Dr. Jamison-Rand is constantly building, managing and developing her team of doctors, staff and other strategic partners. She also sets Polish Dental Centers’ marketing strategy across digital, social and in-person channels. She has executed more than a half dozen acquisition and re-financings, while evaluating new opportunities for growth through acquisition and de novo platform buildouts. She is always developing her team and systems in order to improve the patient experience and deliver a consistent dental product to patients.

The team frequently completes continuing education courses to stay up to date with cutting edge best practices. “We have continuing ed for our staff every two months,” she said. “Doctors are required to take at least two continuing eds, which they must utilize as soon as possible or as applicable.”

“I think more women are choosing dentistry because they can have a work-life balance. That’s what I aim for Polish Dental Centers to become: A place where women can have that work-life balance and still be moms and make a good living.”



She credits her staff with helping Polish Dental Centers hit its pre-COVID 2020 goals at two of its three offices, even amid the pandemic. And Dr. Jamison-Rand anticipates three new offices this year, with three more next year. “I realized how tough I was and how tough my team was,” she said. “I asked, ‘Guys, do we need to shut down?’ They said, ‘No, we’re going to work through this. We’re going to be on the frontline. We’re going to do what we need to do to service patients and to keep the business afloat.’ That was a group decision. There wasn’t much hesitation about that.” ■

‘This is what you can be’

Dr. Tiffany Jamison-Rand said being a mom gives her the most joy. “My children are the light of my life.”

She has two-year-old twins, and a stepson who is 21. “I’m definitely growing my business because of them,” she said. “I want them to see as they get older

that their mother had an impact on their community.”

She said she wants her young son to see her example as the type of woman he would want to be with, and for her little girl, “This is what you can be.”

Dr. Jamison-Rand credits her immediate

family with helping to realize her dream of owning a group practice while raising a family. “The only way to both balance motherhood and a business is a lot of family support. My immediate family helps with my kids. It makes all the difference in the world.”

Public Outreach via Teledentistry

How one dental group practice used a teledentistry initiative to strengthen its ties to the community – and increase patient volume in the process.

Paul Labbe, DDS, is big on community outreach. He's constantly looking for ways to bring his group practice out into the local towns, neighborhoods, and schools.

For instance, through teledentistry, the Planet Dental Texas team created a public health initiative for kids in the local school districts in Laredo, Texas. Through coordination with the school nurse and principal, Planet Dental team members would usually set up in the school nurse's office to conduct the screening. They would go grade by grade and class by class. "Some days we were seeing 200-300 kids," said Dr. Labbe.

from MouthWatch. The screenings allowed the dental team to determine whether their children had a high, low or medium caries risk. "If they had plaque, a cavity, broken teeth or calculus build up – or if they're teeth were in good shape – we'd report back to them," said Dr. Labbe. "That way, the parents had a good idea of what their child needed, or if everything was going well." The screening was free

"If they had plaque, a cavity, broken teeth or calculus build up – or if they're teeth were in good shape – we'd report back to them," said Dr. Labbe. "That way, the parents had a good idea of what their child needed, or if everything was going well."

Planet Dental Texas team members took intraoral pictures using the MouthWatch camera, then provided recommendations and risk assessments to the parents via the TeleDent teledentistry platform

to the parents, who were provided a printout.

Dr. Labbe said they conducted several thousand screenings over a short period of time. The response to the program was "fantastic," and



generated traffic to the dental practice. "We had some patients come in with cavities that had been patients of ours previously but had not come back until then," Dr. Labbe said. "We had some kids with big issues where we were able to use evidence-based dentistry to give recommendations and get them into the dentist to be treated. And then we had some patients who had good oral hygiene and just wanted to get on track with preventative work. It was kind of mixture of everything, but it was very helpful."

Although Planet Dental Texas paused the telehealth school program during the pandemic, Dr. Labbe said they are eager to get it going again when things settle down. "The community really responded well to it." ■

Women Are a Powerhouse at 42 North Dental

Over one-third of its 80-plus supported practices are female led

Among the more than 200,000 dentists working in dentistry in the U.S. today, 34.5% are female according to the ADA Health Policy Institute (HPI). That percentage is growing as the demographics of the dental industry continue to shift.

Forty years ago, just 7% of dental school graduates in the U.S. were women, according to HPI, and that percentage is up to 49% in recent years. So how do dental groups and practices recruit, attract and retain female dentists and female leaders?

42 North Dental, a DSO supporting dental practices in the Northeast for over 40 years, aims to be an “Employer of Choice.” To be successful, they recognize that the changing demographics of today’s dental school graduates means emphasizing and embracing female leadership across its supported practices, where more than one-third of its 80-plus practices are currently led by women.

Out of the nearly 300 dentists, the top three producers at 42 North Dental supported practices are all female specialists. Their leadership style is embraced at the DSO and leveraged across all brands and practices.

“Dentists and specialists aren’t expected to fit any one style of managing or practicing here,” said Caitlin Maehr, director of specialties for 42 North Dental. “Providers have freedom to practice and manage their team how they want. That leads to

more productive providers and a more engaged staff.”

Maehr leads an all-female team providing business support to more than 80 specialists across the organization. There are over 2,000 dental professionals at 42 North Dental and its supported practices, and about 300 of those are general dentists and specialists.

“Our top three producers the past three months are all women who are originally from three different countries,” said Maehr. “We encourage supported dentists and specialists to work together for the greater good of the patients,” explained Maehr. “When you treat patients right, the rest will follow.”

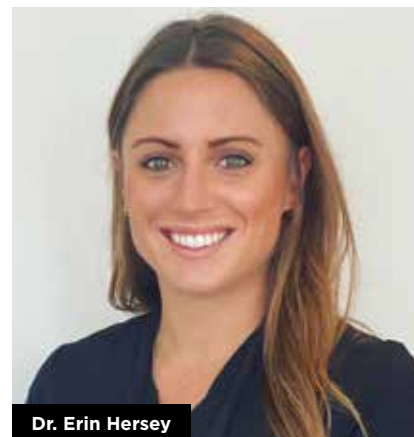
The culture at 42 North Dental is at the core of the organization’s success fostering female leadership. According to Maehr, there’s opportunity for growth, development of skills and mentorship by strong women in leadership positions. One such leader is Dr. Maryanne Irwin, an endodontist and member of the clinical management team, who was recognized by 42 North Dental with the Award for Excellence in Endodontics in 2019.



Caitlin Maehr



Dr. Natalia Hoffmann



Dr. Erin Hersey

When seeking practices to affiliate, 42 North Dental takes the same collaborative approach. The practice and providers must have an excellent reputation in the field and the community, plus have an empowering culture in place. Strong leadership and a partnership mentality are must haves, all leading to future success and growth for the practice.

One of those affiliated practices is Dynamic Dental, currently the top producing practice supported by 42 North Dental. Its all-female team is led by its dental director, Dr. Erin Hersey. The practice is well-known for its exceptional patient experience and focus on patient-centric quality care. Dr. Hersey oversees all aspects of care to ensure the Dynamic Dental brand thrives.

“Leadership is through action, not a title,” said Dr. Hersey.

She was a Division I swimmer at Florida Atlantic University before attending dental school at Boston University.

“I’m naturally competitive and try to motivate my team by example,” said Dr. Hersey. “I’m lucky to work alongside so many other women and hygienists, assistants and administrative staff. We learn from each other.”

Dynamic Dental’s three general dentists are all women and Dr. Hersey was named a *Boston Magazine* Top Dentist for Cosmetic Dentistry in 2020.

“I enjoy going to work and creating beautiful smiles. It’s a genuine fulfillment,” she said. “I love the art of dentistry and the relationships with my patients.”

Dr. Hersey is following in her father’s footsteps, who is a dentist in Derry, N.H.

Another top earner is orthodontist Dr. Natalia Hoffmann, who has been with 42 North Dental for 15 years. She was given the Award for Excellence in Orthodontics by 42 North Dental in 2019 and was named a *Boston Magazine* Top Dentist in 2017.

She enjoys developing a deep understanding and relationship with patients and their family, discerning their unique needs and wishes and believes she is afforded that opportunity at the 42 North Dental supported practices where she treats her patients.

Out of the nearly 300 dentists, the top three producers at 42 North Dental supported practices are all female specialists. Their leadership style is embraced at the DSO and leveraged across all brands and practices.

“Sometimes it’s easier for patients to express their feelings and needs to female doctors,” said Dr. Hoffmann. “Many doctors, both male and female, feel compassion and empathy for their patients, but some patients think they feel more comfortable with female doctors.”

That comfort crosses over to her professional partnership with 42 North Dental where she is an equity partner.

“Instead of a competition, it’s a team approach,” said Dr. Hoffmann. “It’s idealized and what we learned in dental school. I love the multiple group practice environment. It’s so easy to refer patients.”

All 42 North Dental supported practices have specialty services including orthodontics, endodontics, periodontics, oral surgery and

pediatric dentistry. Providing comprehensive care to patients is an important part of the success.

“It’s not a cutthroat environment. Supported doctors are praised and provided teaching and development opportunities with a work/life balance,” added Maehr. “They have clinical autonomy to treat patients with compassion and empathy. It’s not about how many patients they serve.”

Dr. Hoffmann explained that it’s easier to collaborate on clinical questions when you know your peers

so well through 42 North Dental, and that women are welcomed and treated as equals.

“You see how many other women are working at 42 North Dental practices, plus are attending meetings, and it feels comfortable,” said Dr. Hoffmann. “I came in with only one year of experience but there was a lot of trust in me from the beginning. I was able to talk to more experienced clinicians and was able to create the practice the way I wanted to.”

Dr. Hoffmann is currently a top three producer associated with 42 North Dental and is excited for the future.

“42 North Dental is on a bigger mission,” she said. “It’s changing the world of dentistry for the better and I like working with the new, younger directors and dentists they bring in.” ■

Five Keys to Supporting Growth of Women Leaders

By Alan Cherry



Women comprise the vast majority of the workforce in the dental industry, yet they are disproportionately underrepresented in leadership positions at all levels. This needs to change. A recent webinar hosted by The DEO explored the obstacles to progress as well as ways that each of us can turn the dial on this issue and be an agent for change.

Women are highly intelligent, driven, and capable individuals and they want to show up and perform in an authentic way.

How can organizations give them the platform to be their best selves, be confident, show their strengths, and deliver results?

Here are a few actionable things that both individuals and organizations can do to acknowledge and raise up the women who work for and with them.

1 Organizations and leadership should be intentional about hiring and promoting women into leadership roles.

“[We need to create] an environment where women aren’t just going from level one to level two, but where they can actually emerge as leaders, where other women can look at those women leading, growing, and want to be like them, and think that this is possible,” says Dr. Aman Kaur, a DSO Strategy Developer and Growth Accelerator. “I don’t think it’s intentional that people don’t want to promote women, but it will take some intention and action to follow that intention to promote women to those leadership levels.”

2 Create a culture that supports women from the bottom up.

“It’s really important for the leaders of organizations to bring their women up, not just in title, but also in the social respect and letting them speak up and bringing in ideas,” says

Eva Sadej, founder and CEO of Floss Bar. “But it’s also creating a culture where the bottom of the organization supports women. Because what could happen with a woman [who is] put into a VP or other senior role and growing to a CEO, is that she actually faces a lot of questioning from below. A lot of, some people use the word, ‘insubordination,’ others use the word ‘disrespect’ and ‘lamenting.’ I see a lot when [women are put into leadership positions], it’s a shaky position – not because your glass ceiling is the guy above you, but because in your constant day-to-day you’re not being treated with the same level of respect that perhaps another male VP is being treated with.”

3 Women leaders should look for opportunities to support and mentor other women in the industry. And organizations should be intentional about creating those opportunities.

“One of the tangible things, [when I have promoted] women in my organization, is given them opportunity to mentor and partner with women from other DSOs,” says Dr. Aman Kaur: Dr. Kaur also talks about how important it is for leaders – both men and women – to actively seek out opportunities at conferences or other industry events to introduce the female leaders in your organization. She notes that a simple introduction goes a long way.

“[For example, saying], ‘Meet Alyssa. She is the anchor of our team and she does all these things amazingly well.’ – suddenly that person exudes that confidence, talks differently,

and now the other organization’s leaders are partnering with them. That’s what we need to do. We can say ‘It’s a equal world, go grab it, and then run with it,’ but no, there has been years of suppressing women. So we need to give them a pick-me-up, and then once we level the playing field, then I know they will run and they will win.”

“One of the tangible things, [when I have promoted] women in my organization, is given them opportunity to mentor and partner with women from other DSOs.”

– Dr. Aman Kaur

4 When there’s no role model to look up to, look sideways.

“For me, in the dental space and in healthcare, I didn’t have anyone specifically to look up to. So I [instead looked around to see] who’s next to me that can help buttress me to rise to the top,” says Eva Sadej.

“I used that concept a lot when I was there early. As a complete outsider, I faced a lot of weird looks and discrediting, and so what did I do? I borrowed credibility. I’d go to something, I’d grab the smart dude, tell him to say nice things about me in the intro and then I’d keep going,” she says. “Just grab your resources. When I’m in trouble, or there’s some weird situation, or investors are mad at me or something, I bring my phalanx of dudes with me, and we go handle it.”

5 Remember the power of a job title.

Too often, titles are descriptive of a person’s job responsibilities but don’t signal anything about their place in the organizational hierarchy. Titles, for better or worse, automatically generate credibility and authority, both within an organization and to the outside world.

“Even though we think that titles are not as important, what I’ve seen is titles are not as important internally in the organization, but titles are for the external world,” says Dr. Kaur. “Titles are meaningful when we want the women in our organizations to be seen with a higher respect level from another organization. So I think there is some merit to giving [women leaders] the right title ... which will give them confidence. And then they can exude that confidence when they go outside and talk with other people.”

It is crucial, Dr. Kaur says, for men and male leaders to talk about how your organization’s women VPs or directors are making your organizations run better.

“Believe me – give them those tiny little wings and they will fly.” ■

Generational Growth

With two daughters on her staff, Dr. Robin Reich's group practice blends the best of career and family.

By Daniel Beaird

Dr. Robin Reich wanted to be a dentist since high school. It was the health care path she thought provided the best lifestyle for a career and family. After graduating from the University of Michigan, she received her D.D.S. from the University of Detroit School of Dentistry. She has been a practicing dentist in the Atlanta area since 1984.



"It was a straight-line path from high school to undergrad to dental school," Dr. Reich said. Starting her dental career, she saw the upside and downside of working for a corporation.

"Working as an associate is a good experience for anyone. It shows you what's good and bad about working under that setup," Dr. Reich explained.

Then after dividing and sharing responsibilities with a partner for five years, Dr. Reich broke away to hang her own shingle.

Today, Reich Dental Center consists of five dentists, including two of Dr. Reich's daughters. Another daughter is an orthodontist in the Atlanta area.

"My daughters' encouragement is the reason behind growing the office," Dr. Reich said. With a supply chain management degree from Lehigh University and an industrial engineering degree from Georgia Tech, Dr. Reich's daughters originally worked for a large consulting firm and in medical offices before attending the Dental College of Georgia at Augusta University (formerly the Medical College of Georgia) and receiving their D.M.D. degrees.

Dr. Reich's daughters – Dr. Stacey Reich Wingad and Dr. Megan Reich Rihan – inspired her to expand Reich Dental Center. They saw a void in the dental community and in

the area. They, along with Dr. Kristin Cooney and Dr. Lauren Hughes, serve under Dr. Reich.

Reich Dental Center has a large single office in Smyrna, Ga., has bought a second office in Roswell, Ga., and is building next door to its original office to double its size.

“Good management systems are the key to growth,” Dr. Reich said. “Growing chaos doesn’t work well.”

According to Dr. Reich, her dental practice is growing exactly how she’d like it, slowly adding to its growth each year through organized systems. In five years, Reich Dental Center aspires to have a new building at its main office in Smyrna, more chairs, more property purchased, and a third building built.

“And if my daughters want to expand beyond that, they can,” Dr. Reich said.

Dr. Reich believes management is easier in larger practices and continually invests in her staff’s continuing education.

“Group practices are the future for dentistry,” Dr. Reich said.

Group practice continues its rise through financial and administrative advantages as it provides solutions to practitioners, allowing other professionals to share the administrative and practice management burden.

Mostly though, it’s about the culture.

“We were talking about a culture of kindness years ago before culture was talked about as much as it is today,” Dr. Reich explained.

Reich Dental Center wants patients to have a premium dental experience from knowing their names to empowering them to make the right



Today, Reich Dental Center consists of five dentists, including two of Dr. Reich’s daughters. Another daughter is an orthodontist in the Atlanta area.

dental decisions. Its expression is “Little things make a big difference.”

Dr. Reich wants to create one big, loyal family of patients and staff. She aims to provide her patients up-to-date care in a kind and comfortable setting that she believes requires constant continuing education and a personal commitment to excellence.

She is politically active in the industry to help achieve these goals and goals for the dental community. Dr. Reich is a past president of the Georgia Dental Association and an active member of the American Dental Association. She has also been recognized as an Honorable Fellow of the Georgia Dental Society. ■

Preparing for a Post-Pandemic Boom in Healthcare Consolidation

Strained finances are set to accelerate mergers and acquisitions in the wake of Covid-19.

By Michael Brookshire, Joshua Weisbrod and Erin Ney, MD

Editor's note: This article is part of Bain's report *US Healthcare Trends 2020: Insights from the Front Line*.

Explore more insights from the report: www.bain.com/insights/topics/us-healthcare-trends-2020-insights-from-the-front-line.

Providers have been consolidating over the last decade as organizations pursue economies of scale and expand vertically and horizontally. Post-Covid-19, we expect that larger healthcare groups and investors will accelerate their acquisitions of smaller hospitals, physician practices and alternative sites of care.

Strained finances and a sharp drop in procedure volumes have pushed organizations hard hit by the pandemic to entertain acquisition offers. Bain's 2020 US Front Line of Healthcare Survey showed 70% of physicians in independent practices were amenable to acquisition (see Figure 1). The findings were consistent across surgical specialties (74%), primary care physicians (69%) and other office-based practices (67%). Both surgeons and office-based physicians were willing to consider an acquisition.

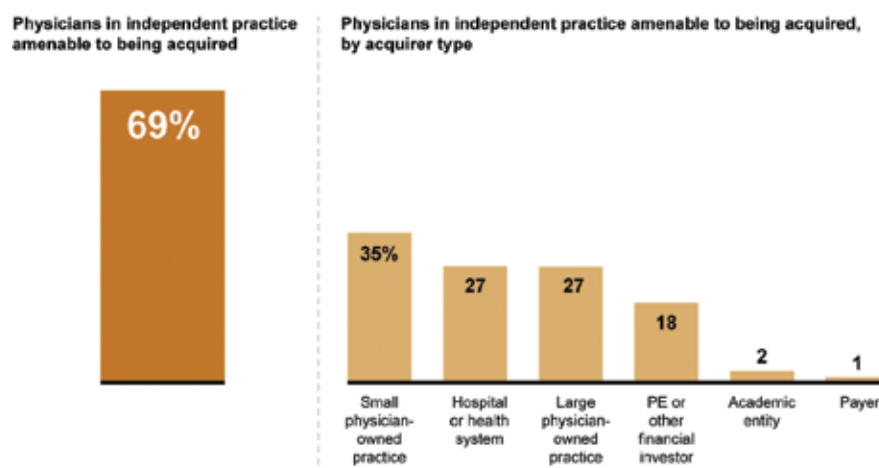
In 2019, 30% of physicians who owned practices reported that they would sell their practice in the next two years, according to Bain research. Today, physicians favor acquisition by organizations that would provide increased financial stability but still offer physician autonomy, namely by other physician practices. Nearly 30% of respondents were open to acquisition by a health system, and nearly 20% said they would agree to a private equity buyout.

As acquisitions pool physicians in larger groups, provider organizations will need to be mindful of professional satisfaction. That's particularly important when management-led organizations acquire independent physician-led practices. Although management-led groups offer economic security, physician-led groups enjoy a Net Promoter ScoreSM that is 40 points higher, according to our research.

Large healthcare organizations, including hospital groups, expect to do more mergers and acquisitions. Fifty percent of hospital administrators said their organizations were



Figure 1: Nearly 70% of independent physician practices are open to mergers and acquisitions



Source: Bain US Front Line of Healthcare Survey 2020, conducted with Dynata (n=109)

highly likely to make one or more acquisitions over the next two years to pursue greater scale. Administrators considering M&A were most interested in alternative care sites, including ambulatory surgery centers, urgent care clinics and pharmacy in-store clinics. The next most popular target was independent physician practices, followed by standalone hospitals. Home health businesses that provide care services in the home have continued to gain market share over the last few years, fueled by lower costs and patient convenience, and investors have taken advantage of this trend.

As healthcare providers consolidate, they are likely to invest in digital capabilities. That move

is increasingly important as digital natives like Amazon and Google enter the fray. Leading providers are building digital capabilities, such as apps to message directly with patients, that enhance care delivery and strengthen patient loyalty. One large S provider group generated big returns by investing in a secure doctor-to-doctor messaging platform and integrated patient portal that allows physicians across the country to share records in real time. Several years after launch, 70% of members are registered for the patient portal, leading to greater medication adherence and improved patient outcomes. Member loyalty is three times higher for users of the group's digital tools.

Consolidation is likely to pick up in medtech, too. As provider systems consolidate vendors, medtech companies with category leadership positions will be in the best position to win in the ensuing flight to quality. Well-capitalized, larger medtech companies will be able to invest through the downturn to gain market share through organic and inorganic growth as demand returns.

Historically, M&A has been a critical part of a winning response to a crisis. Companies that made frequent acquisitions over the 10-year period from 2007 to 2017 – through the financial crisis and beyond – had on average 27% higher total shareholder returns than companies that made infrequent acquisitions, Bain analysis shows. Healthcare companies initiated several industry-defining deals during and after the last downturn, including Roche's acquisition of Genentech and Optum's purchase of Alere Health, Catamaran Corporation and DaVita Medical Group.

Both healthcare companies and outside investors have long sought to use vertical integration and horizontal expansion to better manage patient outcomes and financial risk. Sophisticated acquirers are evolving the way they structure deals, balancing cash and risk sharing. That approach, coupled with attractive valuations, is likely to make the next two to five years an active period for healthcare M&A. ■

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Know How to Grow

Implementing systems that scale with practice growth

By Amber Collins



There is a world of difference between operating a single dental practice and running a successful multi-location organization; a truth that many organizations who failed to shift their mindset as they grew learned the hard way.

Fortunately, the Peak Dental leadership team had that insight at the very start of our expansion efforts. Expanding a small dental practice starts by implementing systems to grow just that one practice. When Peak was still a small practice, our biggest focus was on supporting the doctors and learning everything that we could about how to run a dental practice.

At the three to five location mark, we realized the more that we were looking to scale, the more we had to have consistency across locations.

It's important to think about if your management practices and processes that will work for a handful of locations are also going to hold up work for 40 or even 100 locations.

We think a lot about culture and people, and how to continue to scale

those two along with our systems, processes and trainings.

Hiring the right people

One tentpole of Peak Dental's success is the group's hiring practices and mindset. We typically look for people who have a good attitude and who are capable of receiving feedback.

This may be surprising, but industry experience is not always a requirement. We tend to hire a lot of people who have no dental experience because it's not necessarily the dental experience that matters in leadership especially in our organization. It's really [those] people who are going to take opportunities and learn along the way and grow.

Managing a company's human resources can be a challenge, especially when an organization is actively expanding. My advice? Try to figure out where your organization's biggest "pain points" are. Identify what is taking up the most of your time that could be spent on things that you know are going to grow your business.

Standardized training

One of the key ways that Peak Dental creates and provides organization-wide consistency is by implementing a standardized training program. Sometimes, the best way to make sure a training program

is tailored to your organization's specific needs is to make it yourself.

Peak Dental's leadership created the TOM, or "Top Office Management" program.

Everyone in the front office goes through it, including patient coordinators and treatment coordinators. But it really focuses on how to manage a practice, how to grow a practice, how to take care of your patients, and how to lead the team within that practice.

It's really been a process now that we're working on virtualizing all of our trainings, but we offer over 125 hours of proprietary CE within our organization. We also offer third party leadership training that we send a lot of our top 15 of the management team through, and we'll cycle through all of our providers that go through that and then anyone else in an office management role and up.

But having a thorough, standardized training program is only half of what makes Peak Dental's system work. It's just as important to pace that training in a way that recognizes new hires' limits. We don't want to overwhelm them with so many systems and ways of doing things that people are frustrated or you don't see the results that you want from doing that. So it also involves a lot of onsite training. It's not just, 'You're going to go through this one-day seminar and you're going to know what you need to know and be done. The last thing you want to do when acquiring an office is to give them a bunch of instructions and then just say, "Sink or swim."

With any sort of goal-setting, it has to be attainable, and you also need to be able to provide predictable results for your business. Your goals should align with what's predictable and actually attainable.

Goals

It's impossible to successfully grow a practice if you don't have an end goal in mind.

With any sort of goal-setting, it has to be attainable, and you also need to be able to provide predictable results for your business. Your goals should align with what's predictable and actually attainable.

But that doesn't mean setting an "easy" goal. It means having all your systems and processes in place that will lead you to a target. It means that when you're setting your budgets or thinking about what your revenue goal for the next month or year is, that it's just as important to be a predictable business.

When it comes to growing a practice, there are seemingly innumerable goals to shoot for. So which metrics should you prioritize when it comes to measuring the success of your growth?

For Peak Dental, the one of the most important indicators of success is patient retention rates. Do you have people coming back? Do they like you? Do they want to continue to see you? Patient retention really is a combination of a bunch of things, but when we're actually tracking it, it's going to be information that we're pulling from our data warehouse. It's the loyalty of the patients that matters. ■



Amber Collins is Chief Operating Officer for Peak Dental Services, which has been recognized as one of *Inc. Magazine's* "Top 5000 Fastest Growing Companies" for three years in a row. Amber has extensive knowledge of operations in the dental field and has been dedicated to the growth of Peak Dental Services since 2009.

For the past several years, her focus has been on building and growing teams, as well as growing and scaling operations, building a positive culture, training teams by designing, writing and implementing incentive training programs, and coaching and developing teams to support growth.

Amber started at Peak Dental when it was still a single location and has been with the company every step of the way as the organization scaled up to the nearly 40 locations it supports today.

Better Business Models

Editor's note: The DSO Secrets:

Dentist Entrepreneurs Growing Dental Organizations Facebook page is a place to find resources, networking opportunities, information about upcoming industry events, and a forum to ask fellow dentist entrepreneurs questions you may have about running your business. The following was a recent discussion among DSO Secrets Facebook page members.



Praveen Gudipati asked:

Which business model is better?

1. Five \$1 million offices
2. One \$5 million office

What is...

1. More profitable
2. Less stressful
3. Easy exit-able
4. Pros and cons of each model

DSO Secrets Facebook page members responded:

“Five \$1 million offices. You have to deal with five places, and do everything five times. If you have a strong support structure, it will be fruitful. But with one \$5 million office, all your eggs are in one basket. If you’re excelling, your margins are higher, as the constant expenses like rent will be capped.”
– **Veerjinder Singh**

“From a buyer’s perspective, the single practice is much more valuable. There are likely multiple providers (decreases risk), lower overhead compared to five locations (less overhead) and there is only one culture to manage. Give me the single location doing \$5 million all day long.” – **Kevin Cumbus**

“No brainer for me. We have one \$4 million office, two \$1.5 million offices and one \$800,000 office. Guess which model we’re going with for our next office?” – **Joshua Elliss**

“A single \$5 million practice is better in almost every way except exit-able. Thinking long-term, larger practices are also more at the mercy of changing demographics and population movements. But besides that, I can’t imagine one thing I’d rather do five times versus once.” – **Kai Weng**

“It’s about risk management and diversification. Hurricanes, fires etc.... one location, you are done.”
– **Enrique Acosta**

“Depends on the exit strategy. A \$5 million office is better in terms of EBIDTA. Most likely it’s dialed down for the efficiency of one large office. This type will sell to a doctor/provider, but most likely not attract an institutional investor. If you build one \$5 million practice, you’re not showing the scale and lateral growth to capture different markets. That’s a major metric institutional investors are looking for. So both are good as long as the strategy is clearly identified. If you’re not planning to bring institutional funding in, a \$5 million office is good. If the plan is to attract outside investors, multiple \$1 million offices are good.”
– **Ellen Polsky** ■



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3 minority oral health professional unite to form Diverse Dental Society (DDS)

The Diverse Dental Society (DDS) is a new entity comprised of three culturally diverse organizations: the Hispanic Dental Association, the National Dental Association, and the Society of American Indian Dentists. These groups celebrate their rich and diverse cultures and share a common mission to address unmet needs in under-resourced communities and leverage their collective impact to eliminate disparities and increase health and oral health equity. DDS promotes inter-professional collaboration and considers the integration of oral health throughout the healthcare infrastructure as essential for a healthier nation. To support its mission to support oral health awareness, DDS, with sponsorship by Colgate-Palmolive Company, created a Pandemic Oral Health Safety Video Contest, winners to be announced soon. DDS, established in April 2020, is a 501(c)3 organization comprised of three organizations whose alliance embodies their similar ideology and a shared mission: the Hispanic Dental Association (HDA), the

National Dental Association (NDA) and the Society of American Indian Dentists (SAID). The unified and collaborative efforts of these organizations will address the unmet oral and healthcare needs of underserved populations through service, education, outreach, and advocacy. Collectively, DDS will impact and reform health policy.

Penn Dental gifted \$5M to create Center for Integrative Global Oral Health

Penn's School of Dental Medicine has received a \$5 million gift to create the Center for Integrative Global Oral Health and an endowed professorship to lead it. The Center will develop curricula for DMD and Master's-level training in oral disease prevention, Penn Dental Medicine reported. The Center will also work to integrate oral health as a part of overall health by introducing a Penn Dental Medicine Master of Public Oral Health degree. The new center will also conduct research on oral health policies at the global, national, and local levels, and facilitate conversations among educators and policy-

makers on health policy and health systems. The gift will also create the Fields-Rayant endowed professorship within the Center, whose recipient will work with faculty to develop curricula to integrate oral health into broader conversations surrounding health and healthcare. Penn Dental Medicine plans to launch a multi-year fundraising campaign to match the \$5 million gift to secure a lasting endowment for the Center.

Mike Baird named as new CEO for Henry Schein One

Henry Schein One announced that Mike Baird will assume the role of CEO, leading all aspects of Henry Schein One's business. Baird joined Henry Schein One in July 2020 as executive advisor to the Henry Schein. In his new role, Baird will work with leaders across Henry Schein One, including the Company's software businesses in Europe and Asia-Pacific, to continue developing industry-leading practice management, dental savings plans, marketing, office information technology (IT), and patient engagement solutions. Baird's team will also partner closely with Henry Schein Dental, utilizing the Company's portfolio of supplies, equipment, and practice services to provide comprehensive solutions for customers. Prior to joining Henry Schein One, Baird held several leadership positions in health care information technology, and most recently served as President of Health Systems at American Well. Henry Schein One is a joint venture of Henry Schein, Inc. (Melville, NY) and Internet Brands. ■

EVENTS

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Virtual

For more information, visit
<https://deodentalgroup.com/summit-summer>

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