

HOW TO JUDGE THE SUCCESS OF ANY STRATEGY OR PRODUCT

A long time ago I decided to make decisions about business using seven easy criteria. The take away is that I wanted an unreasonable return for my effort, and I was not going to settle for less. This in turn modified my leadership approach to transform my office and staff to create the original Super General Dental Practice. Here they are. To have a successful strategy or product you have to:

1. **Move towards simplicity and understanding:** Too often we major in minor things. Keeping the overall premise of leadership and management, procedures and protocols, and actions simple and easy to understand guarantees that you will have more compliance and ownership from you staff.
2. **Always take the shortest number of steps to completion:** The shortest distance between any two points is a straight line. The problem is that we are so non-confrontational, or so resistant to change, that we fail to do the one thing that would insure success. Just go straight for the prize! By beginning with the end in mind you will have created a word picture of exactly where you want to go. Creating the ability for you and your staff to see this destination, smell it, taste it, and touch it creates the momentum you need to get there in the shortest amount of time.
3. **Get black and white results:** Do away with the grey and make as many things as possible black or white, good or bad, success or failure. A simple game with simple rules keeps your eye on the prize and forces you to create consequences for failure when your nature is to accept the grey. Good practices feel like it is OK to continually fall short, while great ones strive and succeed in obtaining that word picture or goal you began with. There should never be a doubt as to whether this is a good or bad strategy/product for your practice. No one should be able to convince you that it can't be done. If you doubt and/or waver, you are settling for mediocrity.
4. **Have speed of transfer and ease of tracking your results:** Every strategy or product should be attempted or purchased with a goal in mind. If it will not improve your current situation it should be passed over. It is not enough for you to understand the goal and the strategy; it must be easily transferred and reproducible by the staff. By measuring everyone's progress, you take advantage of the Hawthorne Effect: What gets measured gets done.

5. **Measurable positive impact on your profit:** If you are willing to make an investment on a new process or product, it needs to insure you a reasonable return on your investment. Decisions are made based on black and white returns. There are no silver bullets. So unless you see a positive effect on your bottom line, don't do it.
6. **A consumer understanding of follow through:** It is not good enough to be efficient and not effective. You must have both and the only person voting is the consumer. They vote with their feet and by their actions judge your purchases and strategies. If you are not growing, you are not meeting your patient's needs. If this is the case, you have to stop and do something different.
7. **Never pay anyone to make your life miserable:** Simply stated, you are always team building. If you have an employee that bugs you or makes you feel less than super every day, free up their future. Today! It is important to understand that as a leader it is your job to define what is core and what your vision is. You will go no further than the one person in your team that has the least commitment to that vision. It always seemed that they (the weakest link) made their presence known by making me less than happy. Hire slowly and fire quickly.

These are hard and fast rules for a new Dental Economy that have worked for four decades for me. This is how I Summit.

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