If the economy of the last two years has taught us anything, it is this: Dental practices have to be innovative and prepared to meet the challenges of a changing economic landscape. In previous decades, clinicians could enjoy a high level of success even with inefficient or outdated systems. The recent downturn exposed the inherent weaknesses in that practice model. If dentists want to reach their true potential, they can’t expect outdated systems to drive practice performance. Implementing updated step-by-step systems is the most effective way for dentists not only to jumpstart practice growth, but also to increase their revenue over 20 years by $3 to $6 million.

Practices with effective systems gain the following:

- Improved production, profit and efficiency
- Less stress and a more enjoyable work environment
- Time for the clinician to focus on leadership and team-building without detracting from patient care
- A motivated team that enjoys learning and is willing to participate in practice growth
- Greater acceptance for recommended treatment and increased patient satisfaction
- The ability to train new team members more efficiently
- The capability to rapidly adapt to change

**Systems**

Establishing documented systems is critical to long-term practice success. Six key systems that require analysis and possible revision are:

- Scheduling
- Case presentation and case acceptance
- Hygiene productivity
- Practice financial management and budgeting
- Account receivables
- Customer service

Updating your systems should be based on ideal models customized to fit the unique needs of your practice. For example, every practice differs in the type of services provided, number of staff and type of technologies used. Thus, each of these differences necessitates a variation of the ideal model.

Why do systems matter? Remember that dentists depend on the dental team. What does the team rely on? Systems. If team members do not have efficient, updated systems to guide them, stress and chaos will become their standard operating procedures.

**Conclusion**

Many dentists have “dream practices.” They go to their offices every day and find very little stress despite being highly productive. They add new services on a regular basis and either change or add team members with little effort. How? Their practices have a solid foundation of effective systems that drive growth and increase production. If these practices can achieve this kind of success, so can yours!

**About the author**

Dr. Roger P. Levin, DDS, is founder and chief executive officer of Levin Group, a leading dental practice management consulting firm. For more than 20 years, Levin Group has helped thousands of general dentists and specialists increase their satisfaction with practicing dentistry.