All dentists want to grow their practices. At times, though, it seems like an impossible task. To grow—to really grow—your practice means asking questions about how your office runs.

Focus on what’s important
What do you need to concentrate on to achieve greater practice success? The following should be your principle targets:

- **What is your production?** You became a dentist to provide quality care to patients. Their dental needs drive your practice. Have you set daily, weekly and yearly production goals? Are you meeting or exceeding those goals? What opportunities are there to increase production? Do you have an ideal treatment plan for every patient?

- **What percentage of fees are you collecting within 30 days?** Dentistry is a business. True, patient care is a top priority, but patients should be expected to pay for services. Levin Group’s target is 90 percent at the time of service and the remaining 10 percent within 30 days. The goal is to collect 98 percent or more of what your practice is owed.

- **What does it cost to turn on the lights today?** Every practice has normal operating expenses, including rent or mortgage, equipment, dental products, utilities and salaries. How much does it cost to turn on the lights every day? Does your budget accurately reflect expenses? Have you taken into account the operational costs of the practice?

- **What grows your practice?** To grow, practices need new patients. However, dentists lose a certain amount of patients each year. How do you track patient turnover? Is it because of normal attrition or other factors at work? Do you have a system in place to boost the percentage of new patients? When new patients come in for treatment, does your staff ask them how they were referred to the practice? A systematic patient referral program will boost the number of new patients.

- **What treatment represents the greatest percentage of your production?** If your answer is, “single tooth treatment,” introduce patients to your full array of products and services. Comprehensive care—not single-tooth appointments—should be the goal. Even a small increase in production per patient can lead to a big increase in profitability.

Conclusion
In a slower economy, many practices find themselves flat. It doesn’t have to be that way!

Nearly every practice in the United States has the capacity to grow 15 percent next year— if you implement proven strategies to increase production.