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June 8, 2022

Where Dentistry Fits Among Your Patients' Financial Priorities

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Kevin: Good day, everyone! Welcome to the latest edition of the Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator team call. The one and only: Scott Manning. Welcome to the call my friend.

Scott: Hey, DST universe. Good to be with you. Thanks for your continued amazingness. And we've been, Kevin, Maegen, and I, and actually our whole team it's like every day, we have this little secret email that goes out to all of our team members. And we're sending emails daily on record-breaking months, powerful stories, life-changing dentistry, and just cool stuff. So we keep going, it's early in the month, but we consider this our halftime show to keep you fired up and moving forward. And it's a unique call for the middle of the year as always. We like to think of those deadlines, and forced progress, and check-in for your pace as Kevin's one of his favorite words for the year. So exciting stuff.

Kevin: Yeah. Great. And listen, I appreciate you bringing up this whole topic of personal best, whether it be best day, best case, best month whatever the case is going to be. And you referenced this last week Friday in your, in the Weekly Report that you send out. And we're going to reference that even more today, because you wrote on a super important topic, and as we are discussing, preparing for today's call we all felt that it was relevant and important to take a moment and really address what's happening in the world today and how we can be prepared for particular conversations that we're going to have with patients, for conversations we'll have among ourselves as team members. And most importantly, how we can manage our mindset and have our mind act as our friend versus our enemy with a reference back to "Positive Intelligence," the book, a brilliant book that was written.

And so today I think that it's important for us to talk about what is top of mind for the majority of the people right now, which is let's face it, the state of the economy, the impact that inflation is having on people's decisions with regards to what they're going to do, and where they're going to place the priority of investment of the money they have, of course health being a significant one. And that's what we're going to talk about today. And so Scott in your report, you went into depth, which hopefully we'll be able to get a copy of that out on the replay that we send out with this. If not, it was from last week Friday, which would've been, oh gosh, what is that? June 3rd, I believe. And so if you don't mind, why don't you just set the stage today, because you have a really great four-point plan, and let's do it. I think everyone's going to benefit greatly from this.

Scott: Kevin, thank you. And listen, I'm glad you picked the topic. Not because I wrote about it, because you'll make it better. And I think it's, I love it when we have the chance to tag team and you give it a little bit more tangible, whether it's a word, a phrase, or strategy in action. So, I guess we'll see what happens. I do think I won't spend 30 minutes talking about it, but I do think it's important Kevin, for just to call it what it is that the reason why everybody listening to us humbly, we say this is lucky to be here is because we don't, we're not bullshitters. Okay. So a lot of people talk and while most of the world is built by the idea of make people feel worse so that they can feel better.

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Scott:

There are people out there that are just shallow pick-me-ups and we're the first to say the mindset, the head trip, the philosophy is all so important. And the attitude is the key to everything in life because the attitude truly, I mean, it's just a fact stimulates the different set of chemicals that make the human a better person, and everybody waits for a better world to have a better attitude. And then it's a better attitude, gives the better world. So nonetheless, you're not going to find any people that believe in you more than Kevin and I, than Maegen, than DST as a whole. And we champion that, at the same time it ain't artificial. It isn't shallow. And in the greatest compliments we ever get, is that everything we talk about helps your personal life, as much as your patient's life, actually far more important to us to make that impact.

But none, it's also that it's not just smoke and mirrors and warm and fuzzies and feel-good bullshit, okay? And so Kevin it came to me with this great idea of this relevant topic that we'll call one big frickin' excuse for why people aren't moving forward with shit, and why patients aren't accepting, and why teams are letting it get in their way. Nonetheless, it's real in that maybe when they look at their paychecks more is going to groceries and gas and utilities. And that's all true. So, we do want to be realists, because that's what's helpful. So, I want to start with that deal because we care about you, but you're smart to be cared by us, okay? Because you're going to get it 360, all the way around, not just the good news, even though it all is good news, but you're going to get the truth-telling too. And that's why it makes sense.

So I wrote about this Kevin because it's healthy to acknowledge current challenges, by the way, all same challenges, but that are exacerbated by the times. And we could use the word "economy" and that's fine. But there's a real excuse that is now more readily available for patients to delay, to hold off to question, that comes down to timing, to inconvenience, to a tightening of their pocketbook, their bank account, possibly a maxed-out credit card, possibly a reduction in even their income, because of employers cutting back. Another cool thing, team members out there, you're with a team, a group of people, a doctor that believes in abundance that pours into you, that charges ahead, that looks for opportunity. And that is always focused on creation and offense and making things happen.

That's a special place to be in because you could be somewhere with losers with people that retreat, that contract, that hide in corners, okay? So one, we got some people not showing up, okay? Not a new problem. We got some people not wanting to pay, we got some people wanting to delay, we got all these things.

So Kevin referenced the four-part plan. I don't know if I should say the four pieces or go back and forth, but I'll just tell you that it, number one, begins with you making the decision and reminding yourself that what you do matters, your patients' health is the most important thing in their lives, and anything you do that enables them to fall short of what you know is best, okay? Is your fault and your responsibility. So you have to double down on being an advocate.

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Scott:

And this is why I always say, be helping the patient, not selling the patient, not sympathetic to the patient, but helping them get to the goal. It's not hard to get somebody to admit they want better health. It's not hard to get somebody to say yes, if money weren't an issue, I would want to do this. So let's start there. Let's go back to finding common ground on goals. Let's start by aligning a victory in the patient's mind, we can call it clinical yes, but clinical yes is way down the road. When it comes to envisioning success, defining outcome, and in raising the standard and expectation of what health the patient deserves. And we say health because whether it's a beautiful smile of veneers in every tooth, whether it's pluckin' teeth, whether it's sleep appliances or ortho, you insert your version of health and that's what your responsibility to the patient is.

So be a better advocate. That's the key. And I'll just couple this with number two. And then I'll let the master of the words, I call Maegen the wizard of the words, so I'll call Kevin's the master. I'll say the master of the human mojo. That's really what he is. So the second thing is that in doing so you got to make sure that there's no weak links in the team on this mission. Now team here's what I know: that anybody driving to the gas pump, pulling out the pump, putting it in their car and paying for it out of their own dollars, you feel a little bit of an issue too. I'm not going to quote media stories because I literally am immune to them and I have no understanding of them.

But if you're going to the grocery store and you can't find the food you want you get it, okay? But you can't fall victim to it. You can't buy into that bullshit no matter whether it's real or not, whether you feel it or not, when you show up on the field, okay, you ain't thinking about what's at home or in the locker room, you ain't thinking about the aches and pains. You're thinking about the victory. And so as a team, you got to be unified and just, I mean, fired the you-know-what up every day to help patients beat this thing, okay? Which happens to be these days may be called financial challenges, economic woes, uncertainty in society, in the marketplace. I mean, oddly again, all the same stuff, just a little bit maybe more painful in the moment. So that, those two things together, it ain't new. That should be the best news of the day. It is however doing more to make sure you are both of those and that two-part plan so far out of four and that energy you will find will diminish the patient's resistance, first by diminishing yours, okay? So I'll stop there, Kevin, and let you run.

Kevin:

Yeah. Thanks, Scott. And it's a great runway into, and of course, we're talking about a very timely, relevant, in-the-moment topic, yet this is simply an important message now and forever more, because it completely starts with us and translates into the patient and how they're connecting with us, what they're feeling from us. I talked to one of our superstar young doctors earlier today, and we were just basking in the amazement of the trajectory and progress that he's made since he's been with us. And he's been with us literally since he started in practice and what was so neat about it is as we went back he had mentioned to me, he goes, "Kevin, I don't know, do you think that there's just a difference because when we first started we were trying to fill the week.

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Kevin:

Now we're like five weeks out. And do you think that we're just different?" And I said, "Absolutely doctor." And we went to this thing that we're not on the defensive, we're not in this desperation mode, we're in an abundance mode. And I wanted to tie that into what you said, Scott, because every team member is blessed to be with their doctor, because we filter them out as best we can, but that's a big component of wanting to be part of us and what we do to help and come along with you on this journey together. Because if you don't believe in abundance, if you don't believe that things are possible, that the opportunities exist, you're not just not going to do well because it begins and ends with your mindset.

That's why I referenced having your mind work as your friend versus your enemy. And so just to tie in a couple of pieces with regards to verbiage, because I get pretty excited about that part of it. And I love it. I truly enjoy working on combining words to get things to make sense to people, to connect with people. And so, as an example, I just wrote down this note with regards to your first point of being this hardcore advocate for the patient's health. And so some version of, if I'm talking to a patient, I'd say, "Well, listen Mrs. Smith, while many people may be putting off decisions about their health, we're advocating more than ever. So this way we can keep your investment to a minimum because God forbid things keep going up in price. Well we sure don't want to add to that. So let's figure this out together."

So it's again, taking what their focus is on, what their objection is, and using that as the reason from a logical standpoint, which that is very logical, and turning it around. And then if we dive into that's the second part, Scott, where you had mentioned that it's up to us as a team to be united in our belief, to be united in our mindset and approach to our advocacy for the patient, is one of the things that we can also state to a patient that's relevant, like right now, and then when all this goes away, whenever that may be, we can obviously disband from this particular word choice.

But as you can say "Listen Mrs. Smith, we get it. We understand that inflation is impacting people." Whatever the case is going to be. I love being a realist too, I call myself that and I think it's important; it builds trust and it shows that you're not trying to dismiss it. You're actually taking it head-on and you can say, "Listen, inflation, could and eventually is going to impact dental services too, but I'll tell you, we're so proud of our doctor because he or she has worked so hard to make sure that we're not contributing toward the inflation. We are fighting this as much as possible in order to continue to keep your investment to a minimum without having to pass on any of this garbage that's going on out there. So we're fighting for you. So you know what that means, Mrs. Smith, now's the time, let's get this done." Right?

With some passion behind it, and you guys know, I'm a little bit crazy. I go over the top. That's just my personality. Take the word choices, put them into a way that sounds very natural for you. That sounds passionate. That sounds empathetic, caring. Whatever your style is, take the time and effort though, to think about it, consider it, craft your words so that by the time you've said it a dozen times, it sounds the way that it does in your mind as you're putting this

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Kevin: together. That's why preparation is so important, right? Preparing is what gives you the opportunity for victory. It's not necessarily just playing the game. Some of us are good enough to do that, but not the majority. The majority have to prepare. And so Scott, why don't you take it away and move on with three and four. I'm excited for those as much as the first two.

Scott: Well, thanks. Well, Kevin, your words and your approach is...it's so...I mean, I can't say how masterful it is. So, I think what I would just say, team, you do need to role-play, you need to practice, you need to be prepared. I love Kevin's point. I'm going to add just really quickly before we go into the next ones. I really want everybody to remember our core principles, and that's ask questions, okay? Have empathy, not sympathy. So a patient says something, you can ask a clarifying question: tell me more about this. What do you mean by that? Totally understand. Share with me what do you want to see happen? What do you feel would make sense to you right now? What's comfortable? You can think of all different questions. So questions, not defensiveness, right?

Questions, not validation to their points. You can agree up for them, but you don't bring it back to you when it comes to like, yeah it's expensive. Yeah, everything's going up. But you got to remember to stay...the best thing you can ever do is stay a proponent of the positive and that's really critical. So remember to ask clarifying questions, to go beneath the surface of what people say, and make sure it's a real issue because they can use this as cop-out excuses and they may...listen, the people with the most money still make the most excuses they'll say all the stuff, and they may or may not even be impacted. Whereas, other people may really super value their health and they're willing to sacrifice other things. So there's no correlation between their actual situation and their emotional commitment or decisions to what's going to happen.

Now, the other thing I want to play off Kevin's abundance and just, I got to tell you in case I forget in nine minutes, one of our most consistently successful, big case, generally speaking, single doctor practice that just crushes it month after month after month, no matter what's going on. And he does a lot of great marketing, but he has a famous saying, it really is, because he wrote a book about, but, "Some will, some won't, some wait." And you just got to remember you are there for the ones that will, and so you can't be distracted by the ones that actually won't, you got to be there for the ones that actually will. However, you can't give up on people. And so the key is not for you to guess and not for you to accept on face value.

It is to, as Kevin said, be their advocate, champion them so that you are helping people get to a yes and then helping them through it, which really brings me. And I was going to say abundance, we don't need them all! We ain't got time for them all! And so I don't care if schedule's empty when you got people, that's not the people's issue on this call, when you got people showing up focused on the ones that are there doesn't mean don't reactivate, don't follow up, follow through, do all the things just don't be desperate. If you do a great job with ones you've got, you'll always have more than enough to achieve your goals. So you pour into the ones that will, you pour into the ones

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Scott:

that are there. You don't give up on people and you nurture people, but you just got to remember that this is a value over volume, quality over quantity play at all times.

And there will always be enough that will, as long as you lay the playing field and set the groundwork and do what's necessary to be the guide and leader and facilitator of that. Which brings me to the second, the third point. And that's also that you, in staying with a real esteem you also have to be flexible. You have to sometimes be creative. You have to make sure that you look at patients and don't take their expenses, or don't have the money or not right now statements literally. And you have to find common ground. Common ground is, well, what can we agree to today? Or where would you like to start? It's asking questions that get them back to yes. You got them to yes once clinically, you get them to yes again, and sometimes that's a small yes.

Sometimes that's an awesome cleaning. Sometimes that's perio. Sometimes that's basic restorations into Invisalign. Sometimes that is sleep payments on an appliance and layaway into a start. There's so many things that it doesn't have to be all or nothing. And you got to learn to toe the line. And this is every team member, not just the treatment coordinators, although the buck stops with you and you have to make sure in the evening huddle you're going through every patient and you're giving good feedback because this is where it can be unwound by doctor, by assistant, hygienist, front team member, phone! On the phone! We even have people fall into habits of when they're desperate, they're saying, they're screwing up on insurance questions, or they're ruining the ways people are scheduled into the practice even.

So you just have to make sure that sometimes you got to start somewhere and get the patient in motion on the pathway to health. That might mean comprehensive exam to hygiene to then present full treatment, to then move. It might be don't satisfy the patient with an emergency procedure, but solve an emergency that's in their mind and then move in. We never break our principles of complete diagnosis and present it all, right? We never break those rules, but we also don't allow the patient to bail on the entirety of the plan and not move down the game board, okay? It's a very important thing. You got to keep them in the field of play.

And then I'll just throw the last one, Kevin, and give you the close here. And the finally, which is really what the whole call is about. And hey, by the way, we have real tactics here, but I've always had those. For 20 years I've shown the breakdown of money, not the breakdown of treatment. So in times like these, it's the same stuff. It's okay. Totally got that. We're committed to your health. Are you? Yes, we are. Okay, fantastic. So what would be affordable for you today so that we could then figure out the best place to start on your pathway to health? Fantastic. Great, well credit card, I'll take it. And then we say now, where would you like to go from here? What would be remaining on your investment would be this committed to getting you to a finished point, okay? We don't want you to stall out along the way and be halfway healthy. So how would you like to take care of that? I mean, it truly is the same things, okay?

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Scott:

And you just got to know that now you may have to be tougher on financial plans and structure. You may have to see through to the finish some of the things that you've been getting an easy street, shortcuts and you've gotten more people paying up front. I'll tell you what's wild is that every, people within our top tier, in our wealth group private client stuff in even in the 12-month transformation phase, post-blueprint, all those things, everybody says more people are paying upfront, cash, in full, more people. They're getting discounts. We're raising fees, we're giving bigger discounts, we're still getting more money. Everybody says our schedule's out so far. So you're in a position of power so that you don't need to focus on the desperate-minded outliers of those few patients that throw wrenches into plans, or they seem to be negative, or they get upset at certain costs or investments.

And that's the number four-piece, is remember, what you focus on so will the patient. No different than we remove insurance, we remove economic woes, we remove uncertainty by being the most certain place in their life! We remove financial challenges by being creative and flexible to still find a way. So when we remove all the exceptions, we stay true to our compass of state of ideal. And your focus drives the patient's focus, not their focus driving yours.

And inside of that, it's called magic. It's called planet alignment. It's called seeing things from problems instead to possibilities. It's about not giving into obstacles but turning them into opportunities. And that's why we stand by our statement. That every time anyone ever gives you an excuse as Kevin did so brilliantly, you turn it into the reason why they should. When they say, "I shouldn't because..." you say "Oh, but you should because..." exactly the same thing, okay? And that gives you power to stay a leader, to stay the authority, to stay a guide and a facilitator to health. Never an order taker. Never at the mercy, okay? So, Kevin, I'll let you bring it home. Sorry I ate up four of your five minutes.

Kevin:

Yeah, that's okay, Scott. I mean, what you're you're talking about is important. It's relevant with what we're all dealing with. And so just to give you a couple of things before we wrap this up here, with Scott's concept of starting somewhere, which again is not anything new, it's just in different context now, is you still manage it and take control of it.

So you say "Patient, I understand that you're a little bit cautious..." again, let's take whatever their words are, I'm worried, all those negative things, and let's turn it into a different word... "Mrs. Smith, I understand that you're cautious, and I appreciate the fact that you're willing to be such a good steward of your money. So let's do this, let's map out the steps that we're going to take to get you back to your optimal state of health. And then what we'll do is we'll use each of our scheduled appointments at completion as our check-in to see how things are going to make sure that we're going to take the next step and that we're doing it at a pace that's going to work for you. What do you think Mrs. Smith? This way, we've already got it mapped out. We don't have to worry about that anymore. Everything is scheduled, what say you?"

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Kevin: That's taking ownership of it and control of it and managing it and still creating the possibility of them doing it to completion in a way that's respectful and not dismissive to a concern a patient has. And then the final part of this is that, the whole concept of "remember what we focus on" is something really powerful as patient is, or concerned, complaining, whatever it is about inflation economy, whatever the case is going to be.

You can say, "Mrs. Smith, I appreciate the fact that you're being very mindful of what's going on in the world today and how it's impacting you. And let's face it. What's going on, way above our pay grades, totally out of our control. You know what Mrs. Smith? The one thing that is in our control is what we focus on, which is getting you healthy and getting you back to an optimal state of health, so that the investment in your health doesn't grow like the inflation is growing right now. Let's get this locked in now. Let's get this taken care of once and for all to minimize the investment that you've got to put back into it. Let's get you healthy." Again, some version of that allows you to take ownership and control of the narrative of conversation the patient is bringing you and turning it into a more productive conversation. So, Scott, that's what I have just to add a couple of points. Why don't you maybe just give a bid adieu and then we'll get this wrapped up.

Scott: I'll do it with a click of a button and just say goodbye to everybody. And thank you, Kevin, for organizing this and making it so much more effective and better, and letting me jump back in here this month. The one final sentence is real simple. We all just have to agree, believe in like never before, that anyone including yours, Kevin, me, you, everybody on earth, that their health is always their best investment. And there's absolutely nothing that leads to a better quality of life that should be put off till tomorrow if it can be started, initiated, invested in today. And that's the deal. Thanks so much Kevin, take care, everybody.

Kevin: Well said Scott, and thanks everyone for being on the call today. This is another edition of the Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator team call. Keep up the great work, keep up the good spirits, positive mindset, management of what's going on and all is going to continue to be well as you get more patients healthy. Till next time everyone, we'll talk to you soon.