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Scott: Hi, everybody. So, we're going to welcome you to the August 2022 Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator Call, and we're excited to hit the ground running. I think Kevin and I took the gloves off last month, and this is another episode, as we call it, we like to think of as kind of the halftime, to get you fired up, keep you focused, and always doing a little bit of that back to basics, and time-sensitive reflection, and future-focused effort here. So, Maegen is with us today, of course, and we're going to let Maegen kind of open up the call here, tell us what we're going to discuss and talk about, and those of you live or on the recording, you're going to love the content and just returning back to where it all began, and really making the most of our opportunities every day. So, Maegen, thanks for joining us. I look forward to seeing what we can come up with here.

Maegen: Thanks, Scott, happy to be here. And where I want to go today is to focus on one of the most overlooked blind spots, that's been something we've been talking about lately, one of the most overlooked blind spots within the practices. And these are the little hidden gems that sometimes when we're going through our days and we're really focused on taking care of our patients, we can kind of slip back on, or we take it for granted, and we start to make these mistakes that we don't even realize they're creeping up on us.

So, we're going to take some time to explore one of the most important ones for our team, and let's begin with pace. You wrote this really great newsletter where you were discussing slowing down, which is a really common theme we've been talking a lot about, and we brought it up at two of our most recent events in Nashville, actually, and it was one of the biggest takeaways for almost every team, finding those opportunities to really slow down. So, why don't we open up there, Scott, and I'll let you give us some examples to begin?

Scott: Yeah. Well, thanks Maegen. First of all, everybody, we always have more to say, than time we have to say it. So, this is really relevant. It's always relevant, but I guess just in terms of where we're at. Every winter and summer, we do this Nashville double-header kind of event, where we have champions in advance. Of course, we're gearing up for our big private doctors retreat, coming up September, for those that have been successful through the transformative process. So, we love the events, because it just gives us a little bit of opportunity ourselves too, to reflect.

So, everybody listening to this, you're either on your way to, or just returned from, or you've been many times before to Nashville, and it's always amazing to me the insights people gain just from taking a break, from pushing pause, and from just having real conversations. And if you think about it, exactly what we're about to talk about here, this whole pace idea, and I think to be fair, Kevin probably came up with the word "pace," and we never worry about who gets the credit, he doesn't care, but I think he came up with the word itself, "pace."

So why, in Nashville, if you remember this stuff, is there always such a huge breakthrough? And usually it's like many long lists, and it's called because you slowed down to smell the roses. It's called you take a minute to just really

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Scott:

reflect and have real conversations. Maegen, there's just some feedback coming, I don't know if it's me or if it's you, but just if my audio's not great, tell me, but it's kind throwing it back at me, and a little choppy. So, what happens, team, is when you're here, there's no distraction, nothing else is going on.

So, I want you just to take this theme—and watch what I'm about to do with this—this whole idea of pace and slowing down, and the opportunity to really think deeply, to get beneath the surface. And that's why when you come, you know the magic. When you're here, you know the magic. Now, we take a little credit for that. I mean, you could slow down and stop, and you could have a meeting in your practice. You do that every month, some of you do it every week, some of you do it every day. I mean, you still ain't getting the depth in the conversation, and the stuff that we're able to facilitate and create, and that's good, it's nice to be needed. But when you look at the practice, we're just so busy, we're moving so fast, and the pace gets the best of you, the busyness gets the best of you.

And last month's theme that Kevin and I really brought home, I mean, gut punch, right between the eyes, was just not forgetting the accomplishment and the objective, and the range of the activity of it all, okay? So, when you think about it, we want to be on time, we want to get through the day, we want to see all the patients, we don't want them to wait. All these things happen, and we get caught up. And by the way, I'm like speed, okay? My life is speed, because I just believe you got to get a lot accomplished, but pace is different than speed. Controlling the pace and slowing down doesn't mean move slower, it doesn't mean accomplish less, okay?

And there's this concept, I actually just gave this book to Maegen. I'm going to tell you what it is, and everybody's going to go get it. Don't go get this book, because maybe we'll do something with it. So, there's this analogy around an ant and an elephant, okay? And how an ant can run all day so fast, go so fast, and an elephant can take one step, and it can get further than an ant can, okay? So, it's all about leveraged movement. It's not about how many steps, it's not about how fast the movement, it's not about any of that. It's about leverage. So the pace in your practice matters, okay? And we catch ourselves constantly rushing—constantly.

So, that makes you miss stuff, and it's no different than how you can drive to the practice every day, the exact same way, and on the way home, if you slow down and you pay better attention, you'll see stuff you never saw before, and it's been there all along, and this is all the time. I think one of the most special things is go walk around your neighborhood, and just look at what you've never seen before, because it's this kind of insight that we can take, and I can throw that down any path in the practice.

I can talk about phone calls, I can talk about diagnosing, I can talk about patient engagement, photography, I can talk about the confusion on treatment, I can talk about people screwing up the schedule, and it's not because anybody wants to do a bad job, it's because we're moving so fast that we make mistakes, we don't see the big picture, we think we're doing it right,

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Scott: but we're just missing things. And in order to have real awareness, you have to be dialed in, in-tuned, you got to be aligned, but you also have to be really freaking observant, and that requires you slow down a little bit to not miss things, and especially to be able to do what Kevin and I talked about, to drive outcome and result, not busyness and task, and just getting through things.

So, Maegen, I'm going to flip it back to you, and then I have just a few really immediate examples of things that just came up of where people thought they were doing such a great job, just this very past six or eight days that we have had some company here in Nashville, and just bringing to light how extraordinary practices can still be sabotaging themselves with this very, very, very basic, but always, always present idea around pace, speed, busyness, and slowing down.

Maegen: Thanks, Scott. I'm sure it's no surprise, but I have an analogy that I want to bring into the conversation, that I've been thinking about. At our events, I was thinking about it, and I think it's a good time to mention it, and that analogy is if you remember walkie-talkies, I don't know if anyone ever had these growing up, but we used to play with these all the time as kids, and the thing with walkie-talkies is you can communicate back and forth, but at a certain point, you've got to let go of the button to let the other person talk. And that's something that I think when we're not mindful of pace, when we are caught in the trap of rushing throughout the patient experience, we never really let go of the button. We ask questions, but we don't wait long enough to even hear the patient's response, or the patient will say something and maybe they're expressing some pain, for example, but we're already on to the next item in the checklist before we've really explored that, or given the patients space to share more about that.

So, I want to really bring that image into everyone's minds as we're talking through these examples, because that's really what it is sometimes. It's not about doing more, it's about really just taking your finger off the walkie-talkie, and letting that feedback come through so we can really give that patient that engagement, and having them lean into the experience with us, doing dentistry with us, as opposed to doing dentistry to them. So, as we dive in, that's the visual I wanted to bring in, before you kick us off here.

Scott: Well, listen, I mean, we need to create some kind of flashcards or something, or we need to do dental charades, I think, and come with a game, or a win, lose, or draw. Maegen has the absolute best freaking analogies, but we got to turn it into a game, and I want this. So James, we're going to hand this off to James. He's going to listen to it anyway. I want to get a DST Pictionary, or charades because I can just have this vision now of how we correlate the walkie-talkie picture, and what does it mean to the patient experience? I mean, it's just genius. So, I want you to take Maegen's analogy and your idea of taking your finger off the button, okay? Now, what I thought Maegen was going to say was when you had a walkie-talkie, you had to listen really damn carefully! Because you never could hear anybody, and there's static, and you got all that stuff. So, I would say both, cut through the noise, take your finger off the button.

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Scott:

So, here's what I want to start with, because we expect at this moment in your life and your development, you all know best, and so, we could just ask you some questions and get out of your way, but I am going to give you some examples. Before I do that, I want you to think about in yourself, your position, within the practice, when you walk to the door, where could you slow down? When you're doing activities, where are you getting messed around, going too fast, that you're making mistakes (too fast), you're missing the point (too fast), you're not engaging the patient (too fast), you're not really focusing on the outcome of it all?

Now, remember a pace is like, take a breath, stay in the moment, all that. It doesn't mean don't move fast, right? It means you can still, multitasking is overrated, as we learned in the brain blocks, and among other things, but you all have to multitask at all times and you have to balance yourself to be conscious with what you're doing, and even if you're subconscious is taking care of the next steps that you're about to move on to. So, where do you need to slow down? Plain and simple. The second piece of that, I would say, as a team, in our experiences as a whole, in our schedule flow and dynamic, in any of these things, of course, in patient diagnosis, where do we need to slow down? Where are we leaving the patient behind? Where is the patient getting left back on first base, and we're rounding third to go home? Some of this is not as much like elongate the process, it might be do a better job of keeping the patient at the pace with you, right?

So, these are the types of things I want you to think about. I'm going to give you three examples really quick, and I'll let Maegen attack this here, okay? And then we're going to give you, I think, five things or whatever, a lot of this was in the article that Maegen is referencing. So, you got to be studying your Monday huddles. For goodness sake, I could care less. I mean, I do care, but it doesn't matter. I mean, I write it, whether you read it, right? I don't mean that I don't care about you, I mean that whether you do or not, ain't going to impact me, I'm still going to write it. You got to do the Monday huddles. I mean, they should drive the theme of the week, and just keep constantly elevating up your awareness, and your periphery, and your ability to execute at a super high level. And the whole point of those Monday huddles are to get you back on track for the week and focus, but also to not let you become complacent or familiar.

So, number one, we had a practice that was all about schedule patients, schedule patients, schedule patients, and they were bringing them all into hygiene, and they were then finding out if a patient needed more diagnosis, more whatever, then they would bring them back for a comprehensive exam. And I said, "It's all fine, it's fine, especially if it's working. However, if we slowed down the phone call, if we gathered more information, if we did a better job, we could put them into a comprehensive exam on day number one, and we could speed up, speed up the outcome. By slowing down one part, we could speed up the other part." Now, look at that, that's sexy, okay?

So instead of two-stepping every patient, which, number one, most won't come back for a comprehensive exam, most will do a little bit just shitty level

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treatment, because that they won't come back and they now just want immediate gratification, okay? And we end up with too many visits, and so, now we're creating lots more clutter in our schedule, than if we just slowed down on it from the first place. So, it comes back to this: begin with the end in mind, what are we ultimately trying to achieve? Is it comprehensive treatment plans? Is it complete health dentistry? And whatever it is, it strong relationships? This is, by the way, same thing, our specialty practices, they want turn an implant consult in real time, or they want do wisdom teeth off of a virtual consult into a same-day procedure, they want to do sleep, TMJ, ortho in a same-day start, it's all about slowing down the pre-work, to speed up the clinical execution. And I could go over many things like this, okay?

I'll give you a common example: people get excited about turning same-day dentistry out of hygiene, out of emergency patients, out of other things. There's nothing wrong with that, but again, if you slow it down and do a better job, comprehensive diagnosis, and attaching the patient emotionally to you and to themselves, if you get the patient to take responsibility, then you don't get the treatment in the moment, but you get a much bigger, I mean, a multiple, and add a zero, add a zero value to treatment down the road.

And the same thing goes for people, I'm talking about patients, understanding and having clarity, okay? All the time, we see people rush to diagnose, rush to present treatment, rush to a treatment conference, and all this stuff, there's so much movement and haste, that the patient, the most important part, isn't cultivated, the trust, the buy-in, the emotional sale, all those things. And especially, especially this is true of just not building really complete pathways to health, all right? Leaving off the cosmetic enhancement, missing when fillings could be crowns, missing the worn dentition, and missing the alignment and the bite, and all of these things. So, and whatever your version of all this stuff I just said, rushing to do an impression and appliance, and not bundling in a higher fee, or more ortho, or therapy, or laser, there's every example.

So Maegen, you can take any of these parts or pieces, or make it your own or change it up, but I would just say, team, these are really great people that we're all making really crazy mistakes, and completely sabotaging their ability to create more from less: to hit bigger dollars, bigger days with fewer patients, and ultimately, to cultivate growth in the practice in a way that's that theme we love, which is, "Work smarter, not harder." As Maegen loves to say, "Have more influence, less stress." I just love the way she says that, and it all comes back to this: controlling the pace, slowing down where you can, so you can speed up outcomes where you need to.

Maegen:

Great, Scott, and I think that the biggest thing that I hope, just to make sure it's a clarifying point, we know your days are busy, we know people are moving fast in the practice. So when we say slow down, we don't mean add an extra, or double your intake time, or sit there and talk to patients and really take up time that you don't have, it's about finding the moments. It's about getting very laser-focused and intentional to get those human to human connection points with the patient, where we slow down enough that they

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Maegen: really know we're with them and we're not running them through a checklist, or running them through our system, and even if that's how it feels sometimes, we got to find those moments.

So, I want to share a few tactical tips that you can hopefully start using right away, and one of the best things I can offer is, encourage the patient to keep going. As they're sharing things, as they're kind of talking themselves into justifying the solution to them, as they're maybe even saying some objections, as people call them sometimes, some things where they're not so sure, they may be having a little bit of doubt, take those moments and really ask the patient to share.

Take your finger off the walkie-talkie, let them have a turn to talk. So, statements like, "That's really interesting. Tell me more about that." "When did that start? How long has that been going on for?" "Oh, wow. That sounds really painful. I'm so sorry to hear, what has that affected in your life?" "On a scale of one to 10, what do you think?" All these little moments, right? All these little extension statements, the more the patients talk, the more that they can share what's going on in their head, the less you have to guess, and the more information we have to work with, to be able to continue to help guide them. So, find those moments, wherever it is. It's not about extending everything and making everything twice as long, you just got to be intentional when you have that chance.

So, that's one thing I wanted to emphasize, and the other really great tool is to bookend it. So after your patients have shared what's going on, especially, and these are the moments, so I'll share the moment right here, in the triangles of trust, when we're handing the patient off to our next team member and there's that hand holding to the next hand, this is where we can find that moment to really let the patient back in.

So, at the end, after you give your triangle of trust, take your finger off the walkie-talkie, let the patient have a turn, let them come through. "Patient, did I get everything? Is there anything you'd like to add? How does that sound? Does that feel right to you, based on what I just shared?" And we just give them a chance, most of them just say, "Yes, that's great. Thank you for getting all that. Wow, I can't believe you remembered it all." So, it's really wonderful and impactful for the patient experience, for them to really feel well taken care of, is to find that moment to slow down with them, and let them back into the conversation.

This is all part of doing dentistry with them, not to them, and that's really a key thing. You can take that on the phone, you can do that in treatment presentation, you can do that in the clinical space, where I know when people are in the clinical mindset, sometimes you get really focused on telling the patient what we see, as opposed to asking them. That's another really good tool. Slow down in your clinical moments to ask them, "Hey, how are you feeling about all this? Is this making sense? Are you seeing what I see in the photos or the x-rays here?" Just checking in, finding that moment, not slowing down your whole clinical flow, just really being intentional there.

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Maegen: So, that's what I'll share for now, Scott. I think like you said, this is one of those topics we could do a whole series on, but hopefully, that gives people a few tactical things they can take back and start putting into action right away.

Scott: Yeah. Well, I mean, first of all, I think it's just great. So, it's great. So, everybody gather that, and I'll throw it back to vague ambiguity, because Maegen is the master of the specific tactics, and sentences, and words to use to do it, so I hope you got that. So, I would say dig deeper in every area, go beneath the surface, it's just vital. Okay? Restate and check in, bring the patient along for the ride, and the same thing as I would do with each other, okay?

All of this boils back down to, and I mean, I say this every day, it's the theme of my life, it's a theme of dental success, it's a theme of everything, and that is more proactive versus reactive. And what happens is the more you rush, the more that you blow through things, and tasks and activity, the more mistakes that will be made, the more opportunities will be missed, the more holes and gaps that will be left behind, and therefore, it ends up creating a whole lot more work on the backend reactively, and most of all, it diminishes the value of the work that was done.

And so, this theme of slow down and control the pace, and have a pace that facilitates your goals and outcomes, is all about that proactive nature, and making sure...the point of last month and the point of this month is focusing on the outcome, the result, to begin with the end in mind, where we're headed, not where we've been. And I would also say that this goes with your morning huddles, this goes with your end-of-day debriefs, your team meetings, all the things, okay? 80/20 rule. Very, very little about the past, the majority about the future, and take time enough to have a conversation and communicate, to have clarity, and the confidence in each other comes from that.

So, I think Maegen gave you the most important parts, and maybe we're actually going to end on time here, but again, every area of the practice, it boils down to this. So, our reflective questions of where you can most do work, is you personally, where do you slow down the pace, drive a better outcome? Okay? How can you dig deeper beneath the surface, work on a more meaningful connection with the patient, more data, more information, in order to make better decisions and have more control over next steps? And in addition to that, as a practice and a team, where do we see ourselves getting caught up in the busyness, in the way we schedule?

And it could be in the way we intake, check in, check out, exit, doesn't matter. Where are we rushing the patient experience in any capacity, especially, especially, not just new patients, especially in these areas: the diagnostic approach, the pathway to health development, the treatment plan building, the patient engagement in that experience, the clinical arena, all that, building trust and getting to know, and then most of all also, the triangles of trust, and then ultimately, in the final presenting, closing, collecting, scheduling of the pathway to health, all of those things.

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Scott: Now, by the way, if you apply the 80/20 rule to all this stuff, you will then free yourselves up with less reactivity, with less errors, with more value-build along the way, every minute, every patient, every team member position, to do the other things that matter, such as the follow-up calls with patients to check in, such as the treatment plans follow-up, and continuing the experience when the patient walks out the door, the referral things, all these other things, the training, and the time to onboard, and develop new team members, all the other things that matter. More preparation, slow down the pace, drive more outcomes, less reactive, more proactive. Maegen, I'll give you the last word and finish up.

Maegen: The last word I want to share is make sure you're slowing down with yourself as well, and never underestimate the power of a deep breath. That's really finding that moment with yourself, and it's important because you're taking care of your patients, you've got to be good to yourself too. And you might just find that that ten seconds that you take to pause and take that deep breath before you answer the phone, or go into the treatment presentation, or go from your next clinical room to the next one, that might just be the most productive ten seconds of your day. So, make sure you find that moment, breathe, take good care of the patients, take your finger off the walkie-talkie, and slow down where you can. It'll make a big difference.

Scott: Yeah. Thank you so much, Maegen, that's great, and I mean, I'll just finish this up here and just say that you don't need to be in the mind reading business, or the convincing business, or the defending business, it's all just about the truth, and transparency, and trust building business, and just be real with people, and the only way to know how you're doing is to ask, and to know how they're doing is to ask. And so, you have to prioritize clear and effective communication, and this is how you get it done.

So, let's build a list, priorities, commitments, take some action here, and I'll sign off since Kevin is in here with us. Maegen, thanks so much for being here, and to our DST universe, listen, we think the world of you; you're doing meaningful work, you're on a mission every day to make an impact. Remember that we're here for you, we believe in you, that you're capable, your potential, you're just scratching the surface of what's truly possible. And it's things like this, and our Practice Profit Accelerator calls, that take it to the next level, that pull out the gold.

Remember, be positive, stay positive, it's all attitude, and make decisions from strength, abundance, prosperity, and belief, and control, and no fear, okay? And just go out there and have fun, and keep being the best, because that's what you are. We'll talk to you soon. Thanks, Maegen. Great call.