



**PPA**

**Call**

# PPA Call

**September 14, 2022**

**The Time Is Now**

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The Practice Profit Accelerator call is where we dive deep into the most pressing questions we're hearing from teams across North America.

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# PPA Call

Scott:

Team, we got another special edition here of our great Practice Profit Accelerator call. And we have today, Maegen's going to be in with us and really leading the show here. So Kevin and I are gearing up for the big annual Doctor Retreat and Mastermind Experience where, everybody listening to this, long as, long as, your doctors do a good job, practice what they preach, lead by example, then after so much time in the DST universe and success, they get invited to a very special place. As I tell everybody, everybody in the DST world that the most unique part about your practices and the experiences that you have there—the culture, the environment, the daytime family—is that your doctors believe so much in you that they're willing to invest in your wellbeing and your personal development. And by the way, they do the same thing for themselves.

And that's really the testament you want. Wouldn't want to follow a leader who wasn't practicing what they preach, working on themselves every single day to make them better, faster, stronger, more positive and capable to help you achieve your goals and certainly help your patients. So we have that this week. We're really excited about it as always. And those listening, some day soon, your doctors will have an opportunity to participate as well and many of you, of course, they're here with us, and momentarily we'll be kicking things off. So Maegen, I'll just give a quick formal introduction. As everybody knows, I like to call Maegen "The Wizard of the Words." Kevin's not too shabby himself. If there's anybody I was going to listen to on communication and personal development, it would be Kevin and Maegen. Today, Maegen has organized a really special topic that will be very helpful and instructive.

It really stands the test of time. It stands the test of time, but it does tie into sort of this last little stretch and hurrah of the year where people tend to lose focus. School starts back, we're getting into fall, into the sports. We got all the busyness and the longer to-do list. And before you know it, we're thinking about the holidays even though they're far off in the distance right now. So Maegen, let's have a great call today, Practice Profit Accelerator call for this great September 2022. I'll let you say hellos and lead us into the topic.

Maegen:

Thank you Scott. And I like that setup of going back to things that we know are true, but maybe looking at them in a little bit of a different way. And the theme on this call is this quote that I came across. I've heard it a long time ago and it popped up again, and as soon as I heard it just reminded me of this great industry that we're all in, in dentistry. And I thought it was perfect to bring to the conversation. And the quote goes like this, it says, "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now." And I just love that saying, and I think this goes back to what you're saying where there's a lot of wisdom. We don't always have to recreate the wheel, we can look at things that we know are true and bring that logic into what we do every day.

And so where I wanted to start on the conversation is specifically with patients, with how this relates to patients. And this one, I'm sure you're already seeing how it connects, but this idea of no matter what state our patients come to us in, no matter what state of mind they're in, you're all so committed to helping them. And I think that's a really beautiful thing,

# PPA Call

Maegen: especially for people that maybe have lost hope or maybe have gone through some things in their life where they had to neglect their care for a little bit. And this idea that we never give up on them and just reminding them that today really is the second best time. We wish it never happened. We wish you didn't have to delay this. But now that you're here, second best time, let's do something now. And so it's something that we like to think about and I know we all are focusing on new patients and I want to spend a little time of this concept of existing patients too.

We want to talk about them as well. And Scott will probably mention a little bit about this, but you've heard us say it often, this principle that we really believe in of, "making existing patients new again." And this is the same idea. So no matter what they've said in the past, no matter how many times you've brought it up, and maybe they've said that now is not a good time, we just don't give up. We know that today may be different, today may be the day. So the specific strategy that I'll share, and then I'll turn it back to you Scott to hear your thoughts on this. But as an example, starting every conversation in the clinical space early on before you even begin the appointment itself with bringing up outstanding treatment to refresh the patient's mind on this, this is making existing patients new again.

And this is going back to that tree quote, where if we're starting where we left off last time, we can even use that language of, "Hey, we know last time we talked about this, it wasn't a good time, but we want to check in again today. We know people's circumstances change, we know their priorities shift. We're never going to give up on you on this. How are you doing? Where are you at? Let me remind you of what we really left off last time." So this is what you want to think about is, how can we help bring this concept to life for our patients, new patients, existing patients, everyone across the board, how can we help them see the next best time to do something is now?

Scott: Yeah. Well, Maegen, thank you so much. It's just such a great topic. And maybe someday, we'll have a theme of the month because we could really revisit the same stuff over and over again. What I love about where you took this, the quote is powerful of course, and who doesn't love the trees? But at the end of the day, what often happens is we just get in a rut of complacency. And I think what people don't understand is that complacency doesn't mean you're not busy. It doesn't mean you're doing poorly. It doesn't mean that there's anything wrong or negative, it doesn't mean any of that. It simply means that you are not on top of your game, you're not being as proactive as you could or should be, or maybe you once were. And this can come with life, with seasons, with all kinds of challenges.

And what happens is the human mind then lies to itself and it starts making up all these excuses to justify the lack of action, the lack of productivity, or to validate the excuses of obstacles and challenges being real and then therefore we can't do something else. So I would just say that, understand that the planting retreat today is avoiding procrastination, avoiding all the reasons why it can't be done or waiting for the perfect time. Everybody knows there is no perfect time, you make the time perfect.

# PPA Call

Scott:

I had this little teeny tiny books so long ago and they're out of print, I need to find a way to get them again. But I just bought it for the title, it was cute, it was nice and all that, but I really just bought it. It was a theme of my life, it still is, but I had this book and it was called, "The Time is Now."

And the point is that now is the only time that we have to take action on something. And if you wait for the what-ifs, or the wins, or this stuff, then you're always going to keep waiting. And so this is the attitude of action, the mindset of motivation, of movement, and creating motion.

So I would tell you that there's a famous general that had a quote, "Motion beats meditation." Now Maegen and I and many people listening here, we happen to love meditation and you should do it. But the point of the motion beats meditation is that nothing new happens until something moves. You have no new data. So I just want to pick up on really one major point to what Maegen said, and really the patient's spin, and then I'll give you one more for your practice.

So probably the single number one reason why patients don't say yes, or don't say yes to more, and if we remove you not asking for the order, okay. So, you know, Maegen and I always say, you don't want to be order takers, you want to be leaders and guides, no, but you don't sure want to ask the patient to buy. And that's the clinical yes, that's ultimately the financial yes. You have to be the one to deliver the deal. If the patient is left up to decide on their own or flip a coin, it's a no. So facilitating and leading and guiding the patient to the outcome that you know is in their best interest.

So everybody wants to point to insurance and money. Those are total cop outs. It doesn't mean they're not real. It doesn't mean that there isn't an insurance implication or doesn't mean there's not a financial challenge or even obstacle. But ultimately, the single number one reason why a patient doesn't say yes is because they don't have to. They don't have to.

It is the no urgency. It is because they don't think about planting the tree today, they think about waiting until. And so we have to bring into the forefront of their mind that the sooner the better, health matters, it only gets worse, time is of the essence, you're worth it. We know all this, we know all this, but we give people too much wiggle room, too much easy ways out, instead of driving home the urgency and the time sensitivity. And maybe not because it's life and death, we understand it isn't, but it is your responsibility to make it such a compelling thing that the patient is salivating for the benefits. And sometimes you are sharing about the long term benefits or the short term consequences. We give you tons and tons of ways to overcome all of this, but this quote is a good one because it ties into the philosophy and the mindset and attitude of the patient.

And it allows you to not have to be the bad guy or girl to push the patient to a decision and then to move to something that no one can possibly disagree on. Planting today. Best time, except for yesterday. So tomorrow, no good. Okay? Still, that is negligence. Still, that is waiting.

# PPA Call

Scott: So I'll stop there Maegen and flip it back to you here. And then of course there's some homework, some questions, practice-wide and team that lead to this, what have we been putting off? What did we use to do? And I'm going to let you spin that over. But any more you want to say about patients or run this forward into urgency in making things matter?

Maegen: I think it's a great point, Scott, and I think everything you're saying, it boils down to telling them the truth. Really just being honest with them about the reality of their mouth. It is the best time now. We know if you wait, it's going to get more complicated to fix and it's going to get more expensive. So we want to help our patients really understand that and that's what breeds trust and transparency. That's where the patients feel like when we're actually putting that information right in front of them, not sugarcoating it, being really honest, trusting they're an adult and they can handle it and they can really grapple with that and justify it to themselves, that's all this is. So this is where we always make the comment of, don't give up on your patients. Keep being that good voice in their head, that good conscience that's reminding them that, yeah, it makes sense to fix this. I shouldn't leave an active problem in my mouth, it's going to get worse. And so that's the voice we want to bring up.

And people in our Dental Success Today universe are pretty good at wanting to be the patient's guide and not shying away from that. But just in case that's still something that anybody is struggling with of feeling pushy or feeling like you might be going a little bit too aggressive with the patient, just remember this: it's up to the patient whether they plant the tree at the end of the day. It's totally up to them, we're allowed to make it look good. We're allowed to give them reasons why. And the magical phrase to use is, "Please consider this and here's why." That's it. We don't have to ask, "Are you ready to schedule right now?" at every stage of the appointment. But we build the case, we keep giving them the good reasons of why it's worth it to plant the tree now and not wait.

So I think it's a really great point that you're bringing it all together and I think that's good for patients in terms of looking at where can you...I guess this would be the takeaway, the reflection, is where can you help the patient see the benefit of planting the tree? And I'll share one last phrase, it's the word "investment." It's a very powerful phrase, the word investment. It has such a high-value energy to it and we want to use that word as much as possible when we're talking about planting that tree for our patients and getting them to consider investing in themselves, especially with bigger treatments, things that are going to have a big lifestyle impact on them, this is where we want to really help them use that word, help them conceptualize moving forward as an investment, just like a tree: something we plant now because we know it's going to be worth it later. It's going to give us much more back in the future, and that's how we want them to think about it.

So with that said, for patients to flip gears over to you, to the team, that's another way that I thought this quote really stuck with me was this idea of the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second best time is now.

# PPA Call

Maegen:

This comes up in team meetings, this comes up on our calls where we talk about, oh, we used to do something like that a while back, maybe even before COVID and we kind of got off of it and now we haven't gone back. Or maybe it's something we always planned to do and we never actually got it off the ground or never had the meeting to make the next steps. This is where as a team, the second best time is now.

So if there's anything in your discussions where there's a loose end or there's something where there's not crystal clarity, the number one piece of advice I have is you write down your decisions, you write down what our next steps are, that's doing it now. And so something that I would encourage you to look at is, review your past few meetings. Were there any next steps that kind of had those loose ends? There was no tangible action item, there was a decision that we needed to make that never got made. Revisit this and make those decisions, make it happen today. This is how it's going to pay off later.

And the example I want to share on this is anchor blocks. I was talking to a team recently and they're a little bit newer to this process, so they're getting it into motion and credit to them at one thing they brought up. And it had been a while since we had talked, a month or two since we talked. And so the last time we had talked, we'd discussed putting anchor blocks in and going to the schedule a little further ahead where there's still some white space. So it wasn't going to disrupt the patients they already had.

Well, busy summer, vacations happened, some people were sick, they hadn't done it. And now what happened? Well, now we're looking even more months out. We missed that window to plant the tree and now we're hurt, we're delayed another few months. So it's this idea of, if as a team we can use that example, if in the next time the schedule's open is January, let's go put those anchor blocks in now from January until December next year so that we don't end up wishing we planted that tree and we're back in January and nothing happened.

So I share that example as a very tangible one. It's fresh from the conversation, but maybe you can relate to it. Maybe there's things in your own meetings where you're back in discussion and the mark hasn't moved. And this is where really think about it: what can we decide today that's going to help us in the future? Just like that tree. So Scott, I'll pass it back to you. I'm curious to hear what you have that's specific to the team.

Scott:

Well Maegen, thanks. Awesome stuff. And so, the team, I would just challenge you to all be on the same page of your patient urgency approach, first and foremost. So how do we bring things to life? Remember, don't be the weak link and it only takes one weak link. You all have to believe in that, "the yes today matters," to the patients, obviously, to you. And you don't have to lie about anything but you can, again as Maegen said, tell the truth about the benefits.

And also, I'm also very happy to be blunt about the fact that listen, most people put off what's good for them. Most people have a life of nonstop

# PPA Call

Scott:

procrastination. And here as your leaders and guides for your health, that's not something we can advocate for. As a matter of fact, we take it as our responsibility is to be proactive with your decisions and with your health so that we are not cleaning up messes reactively for you if there is a problem.

Now all of this changes if you just begin with the end in mind and you stay focused on optimal health anyways. So if we have a culture of proactively planting the trees, you know what I'm saying? Then you take that literal and you follow my, really, not my requirements, but state of ideal for our doctors of having a clinical philosophy, having pillars of health, having diagnostic principles. And if all these things are followed and there is a vision of optimal health that we set as a standard for every patient—objectively, not subjectively—well it's very easy then to plant trees. And we could take this analogy to the literal sense of planting the seeds in every patient communication. So it's just again, very important.

When it comes to the team, Maegen and for all-star teams out there, you're the only ones by the way who listen to this. So you understand that you're not waiting for problems. The entire reason why we coined the term, "champions," and you all are the champions, is because of the mentality of not waiting to lose to get better. With that constant never-ending pursuit of continual improvement and advancement forward in your skills, in your practice with your patients, in every aspect, including your personal lives, and personal lives.

So we want to double down on, first of all a culture of positivity always, always. But also one of action: that we are doers, not just talkers. We don't have meetings of complaining. We have meetings that are focused around what we can do to be solution-oriented. We don't wait for problems, we're always chasing ahead of it to the next possibilities. And we believe that if something goes on the to-do list, it's going to get implemented.

So first and foremost, we all have to set the standard for ourselves that we are action-takers, we are doers, we are result-getters, we are outcome-creators. Now that matters because then you can call people out if you have to, you can call people's bluff. And also, we just simply now move our minds to more solution-focused, proactive measure instead of looking at the rear view mirror, trying to figure out what we should have fixed or done better. But we're constantly in that mode of creation. And I think to me, that's what I think of planting seeds and building the forest. We happen to be out here in a special place with lots of trees. So all of that really is about looking ahead at the future, not dwelling on the past.

Now tactically, as Maegen's point, there's got to be a list of things that are your daily success system and that you're saying, "How are we doing? Are we following through? What are we start doing and stop? What have we never started that we said we would? And then is there anything that we've been wanting to try that we just haven't got around to yet?"

# PPA Call

Scott: Having space within your practice, to use a Maegen term, and I don't mean physically by the way, although that's good too, like a whiteboard in the team room or the lunch area or the back office that is filled with the ideas turned into actions and priorities with people's names on them and deadlines and "buy wins," to use a famous term. That's all good stuff. At the same time, I'm talking about space within your meetings, within your communication, that are all talking about planting seeds and trees and growing the future opportunities. You have to have time for that.

It's exactly why in our morning huddle, it's all about opportunities. It's about creation and what can't we see that we need to get out ahead of. It's not just about dealing with facts and figures of the schedule, but really dealing with those things that are so much greater and more meaningful than that, that you must take action on and take initiative on, and ambitiously want to manifest throughout the day.

So Maegen, I'll let you clean that up and make it a little bit more specific and tangible. This is not for us to tell you what that list should be. It is of course proactive conversations with every patient, like Maegen already said. It is rolling existing patients back into the new patient stream, is bringing old treatment up again in different ways, it is digging deeper into the expired exam and the reactivation list to cultivate patient opportunity. But it really goes to that list of, what do we need to establish more urgency and time sensitivity with? And where do we see in our practice we could do a better job of planting trees in the minds of our patients with our procedures, with our five buckets, with everything that gives us a rising tide. I need to find a forest analogy, I suppose. But gives us an ability to create our own growth because we are proactive in nature and getting out ahead of it.

Maegen: Good list, Scott. I think that's a great list. So the one thing I'll just add, because I think you covered it while there and as you're reviewing and as you're looking back at some past meeting commitments or maybe some things we never even got to that we want to, it's always clarity that's step one.

So use that as your marker of planting trees as a team. The whole concept, this analogy of planting the trees, what it really means is we make decisions. We're going to put some tangible metrics, we're going to make some decisions of what outcomes we want to see happen. Those are the loose ends that sometimes there's a lack of clarity around. And the way we get clarity is by writing it down. It's that hand-to-brain connection that happens once we actually put it on paper and we can all see it and we're all making the commitment, it really does lead to clarity, and that's called planting the tree.

So that's something that I'll just say for the team. And the last thing I just want to end on is to go back to something you mentioned, Scott, with this philosophy of care and the idea of just planting that tree in our patient's mind. And this was something that came up on a call where a comment came up that the community where this practice was, a lot of the patients didn't have good models of dental health in their lives. It was an older community, they didn't have the education that patients get now while they were growing up.

# PPA Call

Maegen:

A lot of their parents didn't do anything about their teeth until they were in pain or they would just lose their teeth and that became normal. So for these patients, planting that tree for them, it starts with your philosophy of care, it starts with phrases like, "You deserve to deal with this and not have to deal with pain." Or, "You deserve to have all your teeth and have a fully functional mouth."

These are also planting that tree for the patient. And they might not be ready to say yes on that first conversation while the tree is small, but we trust that as you continue to work with them and build the relationship, it becomes more normal. It starts to become a new normal for them that they can lean towards your definition of that instead of what's been modeled for them in the past. And that's pretty special stuff right there. So I just wanted to share that because it's something that I know that we all work towards and we all want to help our patients. And this is a way where for people where it's not normal, share testimonials, talk about how you've helped other patients, talk about how we help people in all situations, all walks of life, all circumstances, we can help you too, and just reignite that hope for them. That's very much planting the tree, especially for someone that isn't used to your philosophy of care yet.

So that's the last thing I wanted to mention, Scott. Otherwise, I think this analogy, it's really cool and I hope a lot of people, it sticks with you too because it's very powerful stuff and it's got a lot of hope baked into it.

Scott:

Yeah. Well, there you go, Maegen: hope. People love to move towards hope and you want people that have a positive mindset in the first place, but it's your job to do it. And what I love, Maegen, we could do an entire call and perhaps we should on this. What Maegen basically said was that people came from...they don't have a good model. Here's the deal. We want to be the model, okay? We are giving patients the model and we are reprogramming their minds, we're changing their paradigm, we are literally, as I love to say, elevating their view and value over dentistry. Period, plain and simple. And insert: oral surgery, ortho, TMD, sleep, airway, whatever, doesn't matter. We are reeducating, reprogramming, pretending we have a blank canvas.

And this is why if you study Maegen's verbiage flow, if you study Kevin's examples and redirections and all the empathetic question asking, but then also the ways to move people's minds to a higher level. All of this is about shaping human behavior. First of all, by emotionally connecting and then by mentally or logically feeding into the things they need in their minds to be able to move and make different decisions.

So that's advanced stuff, but you all have to be solidified and unified around your model for health. And by the way, you wouldn't be here with us if we were telling you to be somebody else's model. It is about your fingerprints on your own modus operandi means of execution, way of dentistry, of patient care and engagement. So that's a powerful, powerful thing that also brings incredible responsibility.

# PPA Call

Scott:

So I go back to: don't be complacent. It's not just another day, it's not just another patient visit, it's not just another month, not just another dollar, or treatment, or whatever. Every time's an opportunity for you to make an impression on the people you care about and serve, but also day by day, patient by patient, you're building your own masterpiece of your own life.

The most important part of the whole deal is that clarity over the model and your way of going about things, and then everything aligning with that, with your interaction with patients.

So the last thing I'll leave you with and let Maegen sign us off here, is I would just make sure that you take this quote, put it up on your board and play with it. Figure out what it means to you and your team. How are you going to apply this beautiful idea? "The best time to plant a tree's 20 years ago, next best is today or right now."

And again, remember, that's all about killing procrastination, removing the single greatest excuse and obstacle in the way of the patient, which is, they're not going to say yes unless they have to, right? Now, we want them to want to. Remember: need, want, deserve. Need, want, deserve, do your homework. At the same time, if we don't give them a compelling reason to say yes to plant that tree today, then they're going to wait. Same as you do with everything in your life too. We're all human, we get it.

So it can't be about yesterday. We can't be waiting till tomorrow. It's got to be about take action today. And that has so many, so many things that it unfolds into your life, into your focus, into your priorities and actions. So a lot of stuff here in today's Practice Profit Accelerator call. Make the most of it. After all, you only get 12 a year. That's not too many. Make one of these dozens count, and make it this one. So Maegen, I'll let you close this out. Thanks everybody. Let's keep on keeping on and making the magic happen in the way only all of you can.

Maegen:

Thanks Scott. Thank you everyone for continuing to better your best and can't wait to hear how you make this your own, and we'll look forward to hearing from you next month.