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**Podcast**

# PPA Podcast

**June 14, 2023**

## **The Three Rs for Halftime**

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

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Kevin: Good day everyone! Welcome to the latest episode of the Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator Podcast. And as always, the man of the hour, welcome Mr. Scott Manning.

Scott: Well, Kevin, I would say the same about you, so it's good to be here. Hi everyone. And listen, it's a beautiful time, middle of the year, which all time is good time, the fact that you still have time. Kevin, I'm looking forward to this. And we finished. I think we did finish last month. We did those great leverage points. It spawned off and created so many just incredible victories. So much record-setting. People looking at the worst month of their year is better than the best month of their year a few years ago. So it all comes back to those leverage points. And if you're not winning, you're losing. And that's what it is. So we keep winning and that's what this podcast is all about.

Kevin: I love it. And it's a really great way to transition into today's topic. Hard to believe we are coming up within just a couple of weeks of the end of Q2: halfway. Where on earth has the year gone already? And you and always love the opportunity to be able to take a step back, really reflect on what's happening. Now we tend to do it far more often than most. And coming into the halfway point, it always makes a lot of sense, especially because we use sports analogies a lot. And so clearly the classic football halftime, what do they do? They take a break, they take a breath, they assess what happened in the first half, and then they figure out what's happening next. And that's what we're going to do here today.

We're you're going to encourage you guys to spend the time on your first half efforts in your outcomes, so that we can update what it is that we all want to focus on for Q3, Q4. And it's too easy to let the momentum pass, especially because we're rolling into the busyness of summer and there's always a million excuses as to why we don't have time. This, that, and the whole deal. It's got to be important enough to make the time. So Scott, that's what you and I are going to do today. So why don't you kick us off and get us started?

Scott: Yeah, well listen, thank you Kevin, and I think it's beautifully put, as you said. And I guess we have the three Ps. We have so many Ps actually. But you came up with very nice three Rs: reflect, refocus, and reset. And I think that there's a couple elements, it's obviously early in June when we're hearing this, but this call is appropriate at any moment in time. It could be a halfway through a week, they call it the hump day, or we could call it halfway through a month. We could call it halfway through a quarter, halfway through a year. It just really doesn't make any difference, halfway through a day. Each of these Rs matter if we're going to do what I believe is the ultimate key to all success, and that's to have alignment, integrity between what we say and what we do.

It's so easy to talk, but very few people do and reflect what they're saying. So this reflect, refocus, reset is all about alignment and the ability to course correct and say, "Well, the goals have changed." Or, "We're crushing that." I tell you, Kevin, it's so funny, some people say, "Oh, we're not breaking through, we're not hitting bigger numbers." I say, "Well, okay, what's the daily goal?" They say, "Well, we're hitting the daily goal." I say, "Well, no wonder! Your

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Scott:

daily goal is too small! You're hitting the daily goal every day when your goal is not big enough. So no wonder your month is not better." And then you have other people that they're just crushing it beyond belief. But they're going for diagnosis, case acceptance, they're getting prepayment and their collections are through the roof. They couldn't even figure out how to get all the dentistry done, they're so good.

So I think it's all mindset. But if you do not hold yourself accountable, let me rephrase that again. The wimps and the losers, they say, "Oh...somebody babysit me because I have no integrity." But then you have the champions, they are self-accountable because they actually take seriously what they commit to. So if we say reflect, how are we doing? Here were our goals, here were our priorities, here were our commitments: how are we doing? When we say refocus, are they the same as what they were supposed to be? And what do we want the future to look like versus the past or the present? And then of course you have reset, which basically means take a deep breath and stop being "groundhog day" on yourself and make tomorrow the best day possible, regardless of what happened yesterday. Make this afternoon the best afternoon possible, regardless of the morning. It's just all these things. So I hope everyone takes these very seriously.

And what I would do, Kevin, is I would just say...you have some great questions I know you came up with. I would just say, how are we doing right now through the psyche? Just in terms of that accountability, integrity, and alignment? And use those three Rs, whether it's the midyear point, or whether it's whatever, right? Because that is the key. Before we go piling on stuff, we can just be talking about life, about health, about time and discipline, about relationships. And then of course, today perhaps we're talking specifically about your responsibilities within the practice. But those are my opening thoughts, Kevin.

Kevin:

Yeah, I love it. And it's interesting how we were coming up at this exact time of year. I've been writing of course, this entire year on excellence. And my most recent messages that went out was how I was leading people down this path to coming to this concept of "absolute harmony." And it's using your word completely in line with focusing on alignment. And not just in one particular aspect of life. Example: in the four walls of the practice, which of course is the catalyst for our relationship and where it all begins. Yet, those who pay attention and absorb and do good things with the efforts that we put into all of you, realize that it transcends the practice. It goes so far beyond the practice. Because in the end it's just about who we are as humans and how we treat other people. It just so happens we're in dentistry and specialty work.

And so part of the journey that I've been on for the better part of the decade is really revolved around three questions that I use in many different forms, written about it a lot, which is, what do we keep? In other words, reinforce the good! People do not spend enough time reinforcing the good, reminding themselves of the good. So then that way we get all of the value behind remembering what to stay focused on, rather than mistakenly moving on and changing something that is working well or close to working really well.

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Kevin:

So what do we keep? What do we eliminate? This is one that most people don't spend enough time on. They think it's always more, more, more, new, new, new, this on top of that. I'm in this state of elimination. And through subtraction, my life has so much more addition. It's like clearing the clutter, getting rid of stuff. Getting stuff out of my mind that's not useful so that I can be the best version of myself for everyone else in every given moment of my life. And that's why I've been talking about, this absolute harmony. It's about me serving all of you in the Dental Success Today world, me serving my team that I'm part of with Dental Success Today. My wife, my kids, my faith, like on and on and on.

Then the last question here is, what do we add? With the caveat, when we're going to add something, it needs to be a smart choice. Not adding something out of obligation or out of, "Well, I don't know what else to do, so let's just do something else." That is not a smart way to go about it. If we don't know exactly what to do, then let's just pause and dig a little bit deeper and figure out what to do. Please just don't pile on for the sake of piling on. Nobody benefits from that. And so, Scott, those are the comments I have coming out of what you were focused on with the reflect, refocus, reset. And again, I can't emphasize enough to people how important it is to make sure that you're paying attention to all aspects of life so that you can feel good about all of it. Thus giving you the platform and the ability to be the best and to maximize your talents within the four walls of the practice, which is obviously why we first are here together.

Scott:

Yeah. Well listen, friends, I hope you took these three questions: what do we keep? What do we eliminate? What do we add? And I would challenge you to do that for your life as Kevin did. And then I think you also can do that as a team as we near to the midpoint of the year. And I would also pull out, you should, but if you don't, have your goals written up on a whiteboard or something, and even each person's top of mind focus point or priority. But as a practice, what were your core commitments? And then using those same questions to help you to strive for the future.

The idea, Kevin, to apply those same questions, oftentimes we say we doing great photographs, but we're not engaging patients, or we're taking photographs situationally. Or, I can think...a while back, they said, "Oh, our patients are healthy, we've done all the dentistry." And then some new team member, they said, "Hey, I saw existing patient in hygiene; they haven't used a new scanner." Or, "Their photographs are totally outdated." Or, "There's still a lot of unscheduled treatment here." And so it's every day we prove our preconceived ideas wrong if we look out ahead and we remove the limits. And oftentimes, all the time we're putting limits on ourselves. Now you want to put limits, you put limits around your time. You put limits around what you're going to not waste your attention or your focus on other things. You don't put limits on your potential, on your possibilities. And as Kevin said, I believe he used it this way, he said, the more he eliminated, the more subtraction that he did. Actually, the more addition, the better life became, the more fulfillment, the more 80/20 rule.

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Scott:

People get that 80/20 rule wrong. It's supposed to be the top 20% equals 80%. And that's the key. It's not about what are we doing with the bottom 80? It's about the fulfillment, the focus, in this case, dentistry, the value, the money comes from the top 20%. If we are constantly consumed by the busy, by the clutter, by the volume, by the 80%, which by the way is the easiest stuff because it's omnipresent, then we missed the 20%. You understand? I always say life is like a sponge. You wring it out and it fills right back up again. The key is, to use a very stupid analogy, the key is you've got to put pure water back into it. It's going to fill up, one way or another, going to fill up. So the key is that 80/20 rule. Wring it out, and then fill it back up with the good, alright? And then you wring it out and you do it again.

And the more you do that with yourself, first of all, you should be doing it every day. It's called: empty the bucket, empty the mind every day. But when we're talking about this midyear reflection point and refocus point, it's really about that, we're wringing out the sponge. It's going to fill back up again. But everyone accumulates baggage. Instead, let's accumulate the memories, experiences, valuable outcomes, significance. And the only way to do that is by making room for it and by decluttering and removing the baggage. So Kevin, I'll just throw it back to you here and then we can certainly talk about some dental-specific things that are apropos for where people are here midyear.

Kevin:

Yeah, I'd love to just share a few examples of conversations I've had of late that apply very specifically to this. The first one being...and I love every time that you say this and you write about it, because you do it more often than me. And you say, "Well, how often have you played patient?!" And I always love that because it's one of the easiest ways to be able to glean very good information about what it is that we do for our patients, rather than relying on segmented aspects of the experience from each person tucked away in their department to try to be able to see it from a total standpoint, from a connected, full-circle standpoint. And of course, we don't always get the truth out of patients: we've got the ones who love us, they're going to say all good things about us, of course, and then we've got the ones who just want to complain because they complain about everything. And so you don't really know what truth lies there. And then somewhere in the middle lies all the opportunity.

And so I had someone like six weeks ago who said, jokingly, because I was bugging her about this, and they finally did it as a team. And she goes, "Kevin, I got to tell you, I feel so bad that it took us three years to finally do it, yet we did. And what we got from it was really incredible." This particular person who actually was an assistant, so the assistant actually would play patient, went to through the whole deal.

Anyway, so this person was selected because she had some experience in the front, mostly assistant, but yet still understood it from the total connected experience more than others. And it was really incredible the opportunities that they recognized.

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Kevin:

One, in screening, two, how they set up patient for the first appointment and what that was going to be like and all those things. And then the other big one, there were three main ones, those were the first two. And then the third one was that they really weren't getting a solid triangle of trust at the end. And so that's where they focused.

And I said to them, I said, "Here's the good news in all of this! Nothing to take personal, excited about finding the opportunity. And guess what? You've only got three things to work on (supposedly) where you can put all your focus, rather than the 72 different steps that go all along in the new patient practice, which is very difficult to do." So by trying to distill it down into the best moments of opportunity, they were able to find major leverage points. So that's just a tactical suggestion of things to do, especially at a moment where we're trying to make smart choices about what to do, what to keep, what to eliminate, what to add. Because it's a combination thereof that really matters.

And then the last thing that I want to share is also in the concept of what's holding you back. Now, this is more for people I would say, who, well, let's just say aren't trying hard enough or making the excuses as to not doing A, B, or C. And I had a hygienist who, to her credit, admitted to me that she kind of got stuck, got frustrated, and so just threw her hands up in the air and did nothing. And well, guess what? Doctor got frustrated with that, had a conversation with me. I had a conversation with her. Long story short, I said, "Can we do this? Let's erase it all. Let's start from scratch. And will you make a commitment to do just three things?" And she says, "Okay, I'm open to that." I said, "Okay, great." So I just said to her, I said, "Will you bring up treatment within the first few minutes of, and this would be for patient's record of course, within a visit. Then, take every picture, scan that you can and plaster them all over the place. And then have the best summary triangle of trust that you've ever had to set up the doctor to get the clinical yes. Could you do that?" She says, "Yeah, okay, I'll do that."

Long story short, month later, she gets back on the phone and she says, "Well, they weren't perfect, but I've got to tell you, I got more patients saying yes to the dentistry than ever before, which means we're getting them healthy." She goes, "I feel bad, yet at the same time, I feel good because now I see it. I was overcomplicating it. That got me frustrated, so thus I did nothing. And that's my fault." And again, this isn't about blame or shame or anything of that nature. It's just about finding opportunities so that we can expand our level of excellence rather than being stagnant, or god forbid, we're declining.

Scott:

Man. Well, listen, Kevin, you just gave blow-by-blow the exact way to best use that experience and that team exercise. And so what I'd like to do is just throw out a couple other things as well that everyone can do. Now, team, this is something that can be done repetitively, but it's also perfect time for midyear review. So you should take at least the last half of June, first half of July, and I can make the case for a week before and a week after the end of a quarter. But you really use this as a time to work smarter, not harder. And the only way to do that is to have self as well as team assessment across all avenues, and particularly the connected patient experience.

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Scott:

I would challenge everyone to also do the schedule review, which minimal two weeks before, two weeks after, two weeks past, two weeks future. But you could do more. You could take a global view and say, "Okay, where is our schedule on fire right now? It's working so well, we're so happy. And then where is our schedule Achilles heal? Where are we throwing a wrench into the middle of things?" We could also say, "What's holding us back? What does our next breakthrough look like? And what's holding us back?" We went through value-based scheduling last month or month before about how you have to increase anchor value. There's very particular things that have to be done if you're going to break through the barriers that you've built around yourself when it comes to value-based schedule. But more talking about the experience, the flow, the opportunity to diagnose, the team communication, all of the things that Kevin and Maegen talk so well about and consistent on.

The second thing I would do is I would make sure that you do, and this is in addition to Kevin's "play patient" and go through each person's roles and responsibilities throughout that, which is adding the element of the triangles of trust, is get two-way feedback from anyone that you're involved in triangle of trust with. And making sure that you recommit going forward, mid-season, okay, that we're going to become even better at, more effective at our plays that we run together. So into operatory, exit operatory, moving to clinical yes, moving to treatment summary, all those things. But I would like to add another element of that, which is really doing a deep dive on the clinical tag team triangle and the case building. Making sure that you have, if at least monthly, an opportunity to share success stories for patient outcomes. Got to remember our why. Then also do some assessment over what patients did not go through, we thought they would. That technically should be done on an end-of-day huddle basis. And then let's assess our treatment planning...what's the right word, Kevin? Continuity, or the congruence.

So not every team member should diagnose, let's say, as thoroughly or as perfectly as the doctor. But every team member should understand why something is what it is when it comes to the pillars of health, the diagnostic approach to building treatment plans, pathways to health. Because it comes down to a level of conviction. And if everyone is not on the same level of conviction, and that comes from clarity and understanding and belief and value, then there's going to be some inconsistencies. There's going to be things that become incongruent. And those are the places where we find ourself having to fix mistakes, just missing opportunity altogether, or back to our word, being out of "alignment." And I would say Kevin's better word, "harmony." So the harmony of the practice and the patient experience, it's really all these things.

It's Kevin's, "play patient," connected patient experience, role-play all the way through. It is the schedule review for flow, for harmony on the field, what it looks like on the field. And then it is the triangle of trust, tag team approach, as well as perhaps more important than anything else, the harmony of how we engage patients, educate, elevate, conference, diagnosing complete health treatment plans. Okay? I'll stop there. But all of those things that we can assess midyear.

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Scott: And Maegen does this really effective way of saying, “Do not fall into the trap of saying, ‘We do it or we don’t do it.’ You say, ‘How well are we doing at?...’” And maybe you rate yourself on a scale from one to 10. And we say, “We’re seven and a half, or we’re usually an eight.” And we say, “Well, what are we when we’re not an eight?” And then we say, “How do we get the 10? What does a 10 look like?” And then you close the gap. That’s where we’re at, okay, right here, midseason, at the halfway point of the year. Kevin, I’ll let you make it all so much better, and applicable, and take us home.

Kevin: Yeah, I love it. And I always appreciate when we have the opportunity to be able to match philosophy, mindset, approach, with tactical, boots-on-the-ground, what are we going to do? That’s super powerful. They both are independently powerful too, when you combine them together, it’s really fantastic. And so as I was listening to you, as you were summing up your responses, I keep coming back to on a regular basis of late to this whole concept of the five why’s. Because a lot of times people say to me, they say, “Kevin, I hear you say, how do we know we’re making smart decisions? When I hear Scott say this, how do I know that we’re headed in the right direction?” And I say, “You’ve got to take time to recognize, am I just resolving a surface level problem, or am I actually solving, working on the source of said surface level problem?”

And so if your problem is X, you say, “Okay, well why is X happening?” And then we get an answer and we say, “Well, why is that?” We get another answer. And we say, “Well, why is that?” And again, this came from a tech founder who is very well known for his ability to solve problems and take action very quickly and correct course. And he just said, I don’t know, randomly he came up with this “five why thing,” five just seems to be the magic number, sometimes three, sometimes four, but usually it’s five. And in the end, we finally get to the real problem. We fix that. Everything else magically is better, on top of other good things come from it too.

So I just want to finish up what we’re doing today by also giving you a tactic of how can we question everything, recognize the opportunity to be good, smart opportunity, and then make smart decisions thus following, so that we don’t just go through the exercise for the sake of it. And actually do it with quality and depth so that you’re pleased with it and not frustrated by, oh, here’s another round of changes. That’s not what it’s about. It’s about being smart. It’s about being observant, and doing things that not only expand and elevate the patient experience, but also for you all, selfishly, you’ve got to have a connected team experience too. All right, Scott, final words and then we’re going to wrap it up.

Scott: Oh my Kevin. Well, listen, Kevin, I just love those why’s. They get me fired up just thinking about it. So we never ended on time in our life, I don’t think. So let’s...I’m sure we’ll talk over the next 30 seconds. But what I would say is everyone really take an opportunity to celebrate where you’re at. Express gratitude for yourself and also for each other. Remember your most meaningful mission and worthy work that you do.

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Scott: **And look at where everything is for this year, and then celebrate, and then reinvigorate for the next half of the year. And know that we are here for you, we have your back. We are your champion. We're your advocate. And we are on fire for your success and your potential.**

**But it's up to you to do the work. And not just to do the work as a reflex and as a habit, but also to assess the work you're doing, so that you can level up, you can better your best, so that you can reflect, refocus, reset. But I say celebrate, reinvigorate, and that's what this is meant to do. So Kevin, thank you so much for a wonderful and powerful call. Everybody, we'll be in touch soon, and go get 'em.**

Kevin: **Thanks, Scott. Great way to wrap it up, and look forward to hearing more of the stories. Share, please. Ask, please. You need help, you want some guidance, you want some inspiration, whatever it is, we are here to serve, and love doing it. We're actually honored to be able to do it with all of you.**

**So this has been the latest episode of The Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator Podcast. Let's wrap it up and head into Q3 with a ton of momentum, smiles on our face, and the future looking bright. We'll talk to everybody soon.**