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**Podcast**

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**October 9, 2024**

**The 90-Day Challenge to Finish Strong  
and Start Again Faster Than Ever Before**

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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 and welcome to the latest edition of the Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator Podcast. The one, the only, the mighty Scott Manning: welcome to the show!

Scott: Well, Kevin, as I've always said, I could never have been a pro athlete, but I get to make it up by listening to your announcing; because I know you could have been a pro announcer, but every time I feel like I'm a star, so I really appreciate that. And also something else, I notice it every time, but today it just stuck with me, Kevin always says, "Good day." I love that. It's not because he's Australian, 'cause he isn't, but it's because he thinks bigger. Some people, they say, "Good morning." "Good afternoon." "Good evening." Kevin says, "Good day," because it really is about every day being amazing, and that's why we show up here with this meeting. So let's see what you got, Kevin.

Kevin: That sounds good. And by the way, you are an important human being who deserves the highlight, the pomp and circumstance, the whole deal, my friend! It has always been an honor to do this with you and continues to to this day. And so as we get into this and given the timing of the recording of this particular podcast, we are, believe it or not, 84 days away from the end of the year. So we're six days into what I like to call the most critical 90 days. And the reason for that is, this is our opportunity to end strong so that we can set ourselves up to begin fast from the turn of the calendar year.

Because unfortunately, too many people wait until the calendar turns, then they decide to put in some focus energy and effort, and they're already behind compared to all the superstars who are in the DST Universe. So, you have been focused on helping many of our teams to take this 90-Day Blitz, as you like to call it, as an opportunity to have some new breakthroughs by focusing on four key areas within the practice as a team, and most importantly, as a personal commitment to what we all like to say is, "bettering our best." So Scott, let's begin to help everyone direct their focus to these valuable principles to aid in their end-of-year efforts. And so if you're all right with it, my friend, why don't you take it away and let's get us going.

Scott: Well, Kevin, thank you. So I know actually you're bringing a special guest to our event today, so I'm excited for you sharing these principles. But look, the final quarter, it's just like at the games, they have that final two minutes, they have all these things, but that only matters if you're within striking distance. To be clear, if you got your ass handed to you for three quarters, probably the fourth quarter is not going to make much of a difference. But I always say starting is important, but a lot of people can start. Almost everybody starts something every day, but very few people finish. And we talk about running through the finish line, and we could discuss that running through the finish line on the phone calls, or on the presentation, or the case acceptance, or prepay; or life in general, in the marriage with the kids. There's so many different ways that we do this.

But today, because it is the culmination of the year and the fourth quarter, it's just an important moment to look not at the last nine months, but at the next 90 days. And, of course, we're a little bit deep into it at this point. And really

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Scott:

challenging yourself not to just do more of the same, by the way, no matter how great the same would be. But using this force built-in, not self-imposed, you might say, God-imposed, a deadline on the calendar to compel you to rise up and to really drive, to achieve at a much greater level than throughout the entire rest of the year. And you have so much momentum because people are culminating decisions. There's other things which we're not going to talk about today 'cause it's not the point. But there are literal strategies, whether it's holidays or taxes or health savings accounts or...there's so many things that naturally bring about this rush, blitz, finish to the year, that you can use to your advantage. But you will never achieve anything that you don't set the expectation and the intention to do.

And that's why right now we are really imploring you to take a hard look at: what are your priorities, what are your goals, and what are you going to do? Not more of the same, but dramatically with more intensity and with more focus than ever before to make the next 90 days the best 90 days of the entire year by far. And that will set a trajectory towards the culmination of 2024. And I would say, by the way, a start to the new year, which is too far away to talk about, but the way you finish will be the way you run into the next year. And in our lives there is no stop and start, it's all one continuum. So that's a little bit back to you, Kevin, I guess. And then I'll be happy to talk about what I see...critical factors that will allow you to achieve at a high level rest of the year.

Kevin:

Yeah, I love it. And thanks for the little tease about our special guest. And our special guest today is actually in honor of and in the spirit of someone who I respect given all that he accomplished in life: in college athletics, in his desire to teach leadership, teamwork, what does true success look like, and most importantly, personal responsibility. And that is the legendary, top men's college basketball coach from UCLA, John Wooden. So again, as I say in the spirit of, and I have chosen some very specific excerpts to bring today to tie into what Scott and I are not only preaching today, but preach on a regular basis, friends, and to support it with somebody who's done it as well as anybody has. And so, in John Wooden's book, "Wooden," he has this one very specific section called, "Details Create Success."

And this is going to set us up as Scott then takes us into these key principles and he says this: "I believe in the basics, attention to and perfection of tiny details that might commonly be overlooked. They may seem trivial, perhaps even laughable to those who don't understand, but they aren't. They are fundamental to your progress in basketball, business and life. They are the difference between champions and near champions." He goes on to share a very particular story. That's for another time. He wraps up this little tiny excerpt by saying this: "These seemingly trivial matters taken together and added to many, many other so-called trivial matters build into something very big, namely, your success. You will find that success and attention to the smallest details usually go hand in hand in basketball and elsewhere in life. When you see a successful individual, a champion, a winner, you can be very sure that you are looking at an individual who pays great attention to the perfection of minor detail."

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Kevin: And Scott, I'm leading you into this because I believe one of the single most greatest overlooked opportunities is becoming so good at the simple and the mundane that set us up to create something that is replicatable and relatable to our patient experience, and most importantly, to us as "team," so that we interact and perform as a well-oiled machine, a completely connected unit in the mission of one thing, which is, get patients to their most optimal state of health. And what I love the most is, I want you to keep this in mind, friends, when you get ready for the day, I want you to ask yourself one question based upon John Wooden's words: "Today, do I want to be a champion, or am I going to settle to be a near champion?" What will you choose? What will you say when you go home today and say, "Honey, man, I crushed it today. I was nearly a champion." Scott, what do you think?

Scott: Well, I love that. That's old second place, right? First loser. Well, I think, that's funny stuff. I really love, Kevin, the references and, of course, we love John Wooden. So look, I'm going to just jump straight into that point and I guess take that question and say the most significant thing to do right now is to have absolute—and I mean that in every sense of the word—consistency. Kevin, nobody on this call, at least they shouldn't, need to understand the basics, I mean needs to know the basics 'cause they should know the basics. We don't need to tell them, "Do this." We don't need to say, "The point of the phone call isn't the appointment, it's proper screening and education." "The point of the first visit isn't the cleaning, it's the comprehensive treatment plan, relationship and trust." We don't need to say, "That you shouldn't be breaking the treatment plan down into visits. You should be collecting the full vision of the outcome and giving incentives to prepay."

All the things are the same. It is the consistency of it. And I guess I would add the word, 'cause I suppose they go together, although I mean them both separately and together, and that's execution. You might say the consistency and the execution, or the consistency of execution. But so many times people are getting through the day. Literally talking to a doctor today, saying, well, "Their number's a little bit off. He wasn't at our retreat, which is probably the reason. So they said, "Well, but he's booked out 30 days with no room to put a patient." I said, "Well, we have a problem. Oh, we're not executing, because the schedule's full, but you're obviously doing the wrong shit." So you have to reassess what success is, how you define outcome, and then what is the execution that we're after? So many times people are busy doing the wrong things that are not going to matter.

They think they're doing a great job, but it's stuff that is, if anything, it might even be losing us money and not impacting the patient experience. So, the other thing is the consistency, because if I said, Kevin, you know, you talk to all the teams, if you say, "What does success look like?" They could all tell you. And then you say, "Are we doing that every day?" "No, we're not." "Are we doing that with every patient? And is every team member being the rising tide or is it just one or a few?" And so consistency and execution are ultimately the key to a record 90 days. And I can always stump people, because either they don't have answers, or it's obviously that they're getting distracted. They're not following through. They're not moving the patient forward beyond all-or-

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Scott: nothing decisions. They're not helping facilitate the financial strategy. They're doing a diagnosis and dump on the patient and then leave it up to chance and hope.

There's always something: consistency of scheduling, consistency of communication, consistency of photographs and triangles, and then the execution. So okay, we take pictures every time, but are we executing the psychological strategy of patient engagement? And we've been really this whole half of the year, second half of the year, Kevin, we have been taking people step by step through more consistent execution of patient communication, influence and impact. So it's like you're not short strategy, but you sure might be coming up short on execution; or you might be doing a bang-up job, just not with every patient, or, not with every team member. And so I just bring it back to this, and you actually created, the original 90-Day Challenge came from you long before all these internet wonders and these social media, toxic people, and you created the original 90-Day Challenge for entrepreneurs.

And in that 90-Day Challenge, I would have every team member individually, every department within the practice, and the practice as a whole, I would come up with a specific 90-Day Challenge that would say, "Where can we be more consistent, and are we going to check in every morning and every evening?" "Where can we execute at a higher level?" Specifically, write it on the whiteboard, attach a person's name, and gold stars for every time we do. And if you really want giant extra credit and you want to make this whole thing a whole lot more significant, you really should be giving patients 90-Day Challenges to optimal health and using the end of the year as the built-in deadline to really do amazing things. So I'll flip it back to you, Kevin, on those first two principles and lockstep integrated in one.

Kevin: Yeah, I love all this and interesting you brought up the 90-Day Challenge because that was on my mind today when we were going through this. I actually called it the "Critical 90 Days." and I basically challenged every entrepreneur who I had the pleasure to be leading and coaching and training with an organization that I had built back in Milwaukee when I was there. And I said to him, I said, "We're going to go back to the basics and fundamentals because I promise you this, whether you're starting new or you've been doing this for 30-plus years, I guarantee you're missing out on it." And it was such an incredible transformation for those who came along on the journey. And we're doing that exact same thing here in recreating that for you, friends. And there's so many things that Scott said there, but I want to just piggyback on with some reinforcement of points.

Number one, Scott said, "significance." That's my word of the year, "simplicity and significance." And it's about being intentional, not just checking off the box. "Yep, I took the pictures." Okay, great. That's not enough. First of all, I appreciate you took the pictures. What are you doing with them? The pictures are a means to an end, and if we're not using them appropriately, then they're worthless. You might as well not do them at all, so it's with intention.

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Kevin:

Remember friends, it's about pace, not too fast, not too slow. It's about where do you slow down to make connections and be meaningful? When do you speed up in order to be able to get through all the things that you want to get through today? And there's a delicate balance that comes with that. And I have a message from Wooden to support that. And another thing that really came to me is, Scott, when you were going through that, you didn't use this particular word, but what came to me was there's always an excuse.

"Well, we didn't execute the schedule today. We didn't keep the anchor today because..." There's always a reason. And, of course, friends, I'm sure it's a fairly reasonable point that you're going to make regarding it. Yet did we really put in the effort? Did we really push the limits to say, "I'm going to hold and hold and hold and hold and hold to try to fill this anchor until the very last minute." Are we pushing ourselves to those boundaries? Because the thing that I will say to you is this: if you are not feeling uncomfortable every day, then we're not pushing ourselves enough. There's got to be this sense of, "Oh, man, we are really, really, really, really pushing it." But that's good. It shows you, it proves to you your abilities and what's possible and all those kind of things.

And we talk often about elimination. I have been talking about this again in my presentation that I gave at the Doctor Retreat and then continued on with distractions. What distractions are in the way that are throwing you off track? Because those are the things, friends, that we have to be able to manage and put in a little box so that they don't disrupt, ultimately, the things that we're doing. And Wooden ties in this concept that I like to call, "pace," that we all talk about a pace is he says, "Act quickly, but don't hurry. When you hurry, you tend to make mistakes. On the other hand, if you can't execute quickly, you may be too late to accomplish your task. It's a delicate but crucial balance." What I love about it is because you might just say, "Oh, Kevin, see there he is. Even John Wooden is saying he doesn't know the answer."

Actually, what he's saying to you is you have to use discernment to know when it's appropriate to go quickly and when it's appropriate to go at a slower pace in order to make steps towards the ultimate outcome, and that's what champions do. Near champions just run. Near champions, get lazy and just do it, "Eh, we'll get through it." And then they accept whatever the outcome is. And I know that all of you listening here have the champions mindset. That's what we love about you and why we pour into you and push you and give you so much tough love, is because that's ultimately where we want to be. So Scott, I'm going to turn it back over to you so that we can dive into these last couple of points. But man, let's use this, friends. Let's use this concept of making smart decisions as a team in order to help patients make smart decisions about their health.

Scott:

Yeah. Kevin, thank you, and it's really inspiring. I love quotes, and you write usually your life story, or a book inspiration, or a combination thereof every week and Thursday leaderships. You know what? Most important aspect of the week really is Monday Huddle for the team focus. We send Thursday Leadership; Kevin provides. Our doctors have a couple other things, a Tuesday, Friday, but really every day we're providing something to you every

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Scott:

single day because that's what champions do. They eat things for their mind, the body and their soul. And so here's the thing, Kevin, the goal will only be probably short of what you desire. Honestly, that's what goals usually are. So most people, they need to feel good about themselves. So they set a goal teeny tiny, and they hope they beat it. But the champions you're talking about, not the maybes, not the losers, the first or second place.

The champions, they set goals that are so audacious, so motivating, so inspiring, so big and bold that it would be a giant victory on the planet Earth, even if they fell substantially short. And those are the people that have fire in their belly, they're hungry, and they wake up in the morning on a mission. And so what I'm asking today, everybody, is to set 90-day goals that scare the shit out of you, 90-day goals that you don't think you could actually even achieve and that you look at this thing and you say, "Okay, what..." So Kevin, we hear all the time: "Is it realistic?" I say, "Well, it depends. Is it realistic for you as the past loser, or is it realistic for you as the greatest champion of the future?" Those are two totally different realities.

So I want things to be big and bold, and I will say this because when it's more of the same, meaning: diagnosis, case acceptance, prepay, schedule control, Kevin, what do we do? Well, the losers, they say, "Okay, well how do we do something different?" But that's actually not the way you do it, because it's the same four things. So the only way to achieve greater is to be bigger and bolder. So how can we diagnose bigger and bolder? How can we get case acceptance, you actually just gave the answer, by the way, with patients being bigger and bolder? How can we get patients to want more for themselves? I was talking to somebody else recently, they were sharing they feel like case acceptance has waned. Well, we see all the time, I say, "Okay, well, the patient, do they even want what you're telling them they should buy?"

And so a lot of times people miss this step of building patient desire. You have to get the patient to want to be bigger and bolder too. So how about prepay, bigger and bolder? If we're getting prepay on a visit, get a prepay on a half a month. Get a prepay on the entire treatment plan. You have to decide what's the next level up for you. Of course, we'd love for you to leap over the good to the great. We'd love you to do that. But even for you, if you just took your status quo, if you just took your nine-month average, and instead of do it by a little bit more, do it by 50%. Not do nine months in three months. That's exciting to me, but I'm saying do 50% better than your average. So if your average days are 10, do 15. If your average case is four, do six. Something that's bigger and bolder.

And the same deal on the schedule. It's so easy, though, honestly, it's just more bundling. That's what it is, more bundling. And for our specialists, it's more bundling of fee, more bundling of the pieces and parts and procedures into one lump. It doesn't have to be more teeth, it can just be more things. So again, Kevin, because the fact is I said I don't want more of the same of the last nine months, but the playbook isn't changing. It's the consistency in the execution and it's being willing to be bigger and bolder at delivering on results.

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Scott: So same goes for people, Kevin, in their lives, their goals, their health, in every way, it has to be exciting. Okay? It cannot be timid and meek because you will fail because you'll sabotage. You have to be all in. Alright? I'll let you piggyback off this and then we can quickly hit the last most important part of the deal, and we'll let you and Coach Wooden bring us home.

Kevin: Yeah, I love it, and just two really quick things. The first one is, I believe the biggest hold-back in regards to this making bigger, bolder goals, is people's fear of failure. And it's because I believe people have the wrong definition of failure. You know what failure means to me? And I'm not saying I'm right, it's just about how I am positioning it so I can stay motivated, is this: if I put in the effort, energy and intention to do my best, to give it my best and to try to achieve a particular outcome and I don't hit it, that isn't failure. You know what failure is? I give up. I gave it one shot. I didn't get it. I'm going to pout. I'm going to slouch over. I'm going to say forget about it. I'm going to move on. That, to me, is failure.

That's not who we are. We are in this DST Universe together because we're going to go for it. We're going to keep trying. If you keep trying, you haven't failed at anything. Let's face it, you've got to do big, bold, and be prepared to achieve, "success" as it arrives. Most of the time, though, it takes steps to get there. So as a reminder of that, and the other thing too is that we're so worried about getting credit for things that we forget to just go. Let's just go! Let's do our part. Whoever wants to take credit, let them have it. All that matters is this: did a patient say yes to getting back to their ultimate state of health? And I was part of that? Man, that's something to be proud of, and Wooden shares about that. He goes, "That's the greatest joy."

He says, "Happiness is in many things. It's in love, it's in sharing. But most of all, it's in being at peace with yourself, knowing that you are making the effort, the full effort to do what is right. True happiness comes from the things that cannot be taken away from you. Making the full effort to do the right thing can never be taken away from you. I believe the greatest joy one can have is doing something for someone else without any thought of getting something in return." Friends, full effort to do the right thing, to be the right part of this team, this connected team that we are building, not worrying about the acknowledgement of it. If you are worried about how people are perceiving your performance, it's likely that that's your gut telling you you're not giving enough. Scott, bring it home with your last point.

Scott: Oh, wow. Well, it's funny because I just gave our Wealth Group a book all about not caring about the people's opinions and trusting in your gut and your own intuition and your objective. So, Kevin, just the final point, my man, and you've already said this throughout the call about smart decisions, smart choices. But here's the thing: just because it's on the to-do list doesn't mean that it's worthy of being on the done list. So many times people fill their life with things to do and we wake up in the morning, walk into the Morning Huddle, we have all this stuff. And we fill it because that's easy. What isn't easy is to get rid of all the shit, throw the 80% that's not going to matter off the table and open up space in your life for the things that, by the way, are

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Scott: probably not easy, and probably a little bit challenging and require a lot more discipline.

And that's the top 20%: that it's going to deliver the greatest amount of leverage, the greatest amount of impact, the greatest amount of results. So Kevin, what I'm saying to people, for the best 90 days of the year, you're going to have to self-impose discipline and choose wisely at the priorities that you give yourself, or you give your all self, whatever, you say that to yourself. You give all of yourself, that's what I was trying to say, to the priorities. Because by the way, you take yourself and you spread it over 10 things, you do all of them just a little bit, you're going to miss out on all the opportunity. But if you can have the wisdom, the focus, the discipline, and I'm going to let you say the special word, then you will see that in 90 days we can create dramatic results, bigger and better than anything ever before.

And I would just say most of all, fulfillment, because we're not even talking about...sure, numbers are easy to measure, but we're talking about in other ways too. Could you land the biggest number of cosmetic cases or case starts of any month in the next three months than you did this entire year? Could you land the biggest number of full arch or implants or could you get the highest level of A Patients? Could you have your best team meetings ever? Could you have the greatest daily averages and rallies? Could you secure your biggest cash days or prepaid checks? I could pick 25 different things, okay? But it all comes back to each team member being dialed in.

Maybe we say in the Morning Huddle, "How can I focus on the most specific priorities that actually matter? In my patient experience, with new or existing, what is the one thing going to ultimately make a bigger impact for the rest of the year?" So you get to drift, Kevin. I would say the same thing in the marriage, same thing in the parenting, same thing in the health, same thing in the savings, the budgeting, the financial goals of the team member, not just of the practice. So that's what I would say, Kevin. Not all goals are created equal or even worthy. Not all to-dos deserve to be done. And this is the key difference between, as you say, the champions for sure, or the maybes, the losers, second place, is they chose the wrong things to chase down. And so I'll leave that with you with the finished words and the wise words from Coach Wooden.

Kevin: Scott, thanks. Powerful message again, as always, always on point. Motivational, structural, all those different kind of things. Friends, listen to this again. There's a lot of wisdom that Scott has shared in here, and I'm going to boil this down to one thing, which is where Scott ended, and that's about discernment. Friends, you have the opportunity to make your own smart decisions every minute of the day. And with this fast pace of lives that you all live, probably in your personal life as well, making smart decisions is so important. And so, I'm going to leave you with John Wooden's words in a story that he shares, and it's about this: Are you looking for the right things? That's another piece of discernment that's super powerful, is that we've got to be managing and aware of all the stuff that matters. And so here's the story, and then I'm going to wrap it up.

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Kevin:

“There’s an old story about a fellow who went to a small town in Indiana with the thought of possibly moving his family there. ‘What kind of people live around here?’ He asked the attendant at the local filling station. ‘Well,’ the attendant replied as he checked the oil, ‘What kind of people live back where you’re from?’ The visitor took a swallow of his cherry soda and replied, ‘They’re ornery, mean and dishonest.’ The attendant looked up and answered, ‘Mister, you’ll find them about like that around here too.’ A few weeks later, another gentleman stopped by the gas station on a muggy July afternoon with the same question, ‘Excuse me,’ he said, as he mopped off his brow, ‘I’m thinking of moving to your town with my family. What kind of people live around these parts?’

Again, the attendant asked, ‘Well, what kind of people live back where you’re from?’ The stranger thought for a moment and replied, ‘I find them to be kind, decent and honest folks.’ The gas station attendant looked up and said, ‘Mister, you’ll find them about like that around here too.’ It’s so true: you often find what you’re looking for.”

Friends, let that story sink in. Let that marinate a little bit and focus on your professional and personal life choices and see how that applies to the wise words of our special guest, the spirit of John Wooden.

Friends, thanks for listening in on the latest episode of Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator Podcast. Let’s make it an extraordinary 90 days. Until next time, friends, we’ll be with you.