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Using Holiday Excuses to Our Advantage

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Kevin: Good day, everyone! And welcome to the latest episode of the Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator podcast. The one and only, Scott Manning, welcome to the show.

Scott: Kevin, great to be here. Fired up. Let's get 'er done. And yeah, to me, it's all about offense at this point, which it's always for us about offense. We're coming into this beautiful time of year and, yeah, see what happens.

Kevin: I love it. And regarding offense, think about it. At the time that we are recording this, we are in the final quarter, we are five minutes from victory, but it's not time to pull it back. It is time to keep the pressure on my friends! Time to stay on the offense. So, having said that, it's hard to believe that we are as close as we are to wrapping up another really incredible year of amazing stories from clients of ours who are getting more people healthy and beautiful and feeling good and all those kind of things.

And so it's just wonderful to take pause and reflect on that as we were developing the script and what we're going to talk about today. And to me, I'm just so grateful for that and it just so happens to be a couple of weeks away from here in the great old United States of America, Thanksgiving, which is the big holiday mode that's upon us. And what's interesting with that is there's always this rush that starts to percolate. And this is the time of year, similar to my initial point I was making, is you correlate that to a football game. And it's time to remain focused and enthusiastic and not pull back and get caught into that rhythm because that rhythm can derail you from what you had expected to have happened. So let's talk about all the wonderful opportunities that come with this season each year. So Scott, why don't we begin by just going through all the good old holiday excuses and how we can use that to our advantage?

Scott: Well, yeah, thanks Kevin. Thanks for the sentiments. I think it's good for everybody to have that and just reflect. I mean, we believe gratitude is like a daily thing and really live it. And people can't just be happy when good shit happens, you just got to be happy when any shit happens because it beats the alternative. So I just think filled with gratitude and appreciation. But it reminds me of the funny little things we would do at school. We'd make a little turkey with the hands or make feathers for all the things you're grateful for. You'd make these little chains and you'd put something that meant something to you or something you appreciated, and we just don't take enough time to do that.

And it's funny, Kevin, one of the things, nobody on this meeting's going to remember this, and it's one of the things we do with every single team who joins our family; what a smart decision. We send them something that they go over as a group, all the positives, all the appreciations, all the uniquenesses, and they do these little adjectives, I think it is or something, about their superpowers. And so you really got to embrace. And everyone has superpowers, it's just most people don't believe it or deny it or resent it or whatever, and so then they obviously are, whatever, not capable because they do not fully embrace and embody this idea and theme of being in control and having influence.

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Scott:

People love to talk about influence of others, but what the hell, if you can't have influence over yourself, you're not going to be so great at influencing others. So just filled with gratitude and appreciation I think is also not just an outwardly reflective thing. People, they think of relationships, they think of, honestly, like material things. I think it's so much important to look in the mirror and deep inside yourself for those things too. So I digress.

So Kevin, look, every time of year people make excuses. At the recording of this call, about one week ago, people were making excuses of something called "the election year." And now that excuse is gone, so you got to find a different one. And so many people they say, "well, it's the holidays," or, "it's tax time," or, "it's the summertime." And the people who want something to have an excuse about are going to probably not be so great, and then they'll need those excuses to make them feel better. On the flip side, people can just use things to their advantage and look for ways to be more resourceful. And I don't think there's a better time of the year to really check yourself as to whether you are an advantageous person, really, or an excuse-making disadvantageous person because there's no better deadline on Earth than the calendar, and the sand in the hourglass is almost to the end. And therefore, you have the most compelling reason on Earth for people to make decisions, to make investments, to get healthy or at least get it scheduled; to make progress in their life.

And what's very funny about the end of the year is that obviously it starts a beginning of the year and there's not like this gap in between, it's kind of all a continuum. And so you have this way to play straight into health. You have this way to play into, you know, "healthy for the holidays," or, "prepare for the best year of your life and get healthy then." So the point is, Kevin, that a lot of times if we start with the premise that it's going to be tough, or challenging, or people want to delay, or people going to save the money or all this, it's just a different name of the month and it's just a different time of year excuse. The same things exist every other time of the year.

So we have to start with the premise that we have the power, we have the positive energy to make an impact on people, and instead of these things be like weaknesses and liabilities and Achilles heels, how about we turn them into assets, strengths, and reasons why? And the same things that could be to the detriment could be to the compelling encouragement. So that's a big bunch of bullshit and conceptual, theoretical stuff, but I'll let Kevin, you can play with that for a moment and then I'll get into what I wanted to do today, Kevin, is that once you throw it back to me, I want to go over just very specific strategies that are all relevant and present, now through the end of the year, that are our definition of creation, offense, future focused, and proactive. And these are all things that will just load up your collections and really get you ahead of the start to 2025. So what say you?

Kevin:

I love it Scott, and thank you for setting the stage on that as well as sharing where we're going to go with this. I want to stay in this spirit of, it's really about how you view this, and the mindset that you're in and most importantly the belief.

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Kevin:

The belief that you have that what you're offering is valuable, that what you're offering is important now. Not six months from now. Not after the holidays. Because as you mentioned, it's always something! "Well, we got this going on, it's not the right time to do it." Someone's going to give you something every month. And it's funny because I think of us, Dental Success Today. We have all sorts of events to plan. We've got Practice Champion events, we do those multiple times a year. We do our Advanced event, we do those multiple times a year. Wealth Group, multiple times a year. Our annual Doctor Retreat, multiple times a year. Scott, you've got all sorts of things on your calendar from speaking events, this, that, and other. We could come up with every excuse in the book to never schedule a date.

Well, nobody's going to show up here, the kids are getting off school. Nobody's going to show up here, it's the election. There's always something! So friends, just make the decision that it doesn't matter. There's always going to be something. So get that out of your mind in the first place. Don't even allow that in. Because if you do, you're going to go along with them. You're going to make it easier on yourself. And so the key on this deal is to always remember when we're talking about any kind of objection, we're focusing on the holiday excuses right now, just remember, it's not a battle. It's about you earning the trust of the patient to be able to offer a different perspective. And there's a lot of different ways to do this. So I just want to give a couple tactical ones here because I know that they're going to help when Scott starts to go into his strategies.

And the first one is is where you literally ask permission. You get them to say yes to you and you say, "You know, patient, I appreciate you sharing your thoughts with me on that. May I offer you a different perspective?" And then you just stop and you actually have them say, well yeah, sure, Kevin, go ahead. Great, thank you. And then you go in and here's what I would say, I know that this is important to you. Let me tell you why doing it now is important. And if we delay, what would happen if... We always use the easy excuse of, "Well, patient, this has been a problem and we don't know when it's going to go the wrong way. And God forbid you're sitting at Thanksgiving dinner and you haven't done anything about it. God forbid you're in Christmas. God forbid you're at New Years or whatever it is. You don't want this to turn into an emergency situation, that's why we're saying let's do this thing now. Let's not delay."

So you're literally asking for permission to offer that. That's one way to do it. Otherwise, if you want to just be more assertive and roll right into it, you just say, "Patient, thank you for sharing all that. Allow me to give you an alternative perspective to consider here." And I love the word consider because you're not coming over the top and shoving it down their throats. You're basically saying, "Listen, patient, I get it. I hear this stuff all day long. Let me just give you a different perspective to consider..." So friends, that's the key. It's not a battle, it's a discussion. You're not there to sell them, you are there to change their perspective and their priorities of what is most important and most valuable to them here in that moment.

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Kevin: And I just did this today on a phone call. I asked somebody for permission. I said, "Friend, may I offer you a different perspective on what you just shared with me?" And she was kind enough to say yes. I shared my perspective. A little bit of silence. She came back to me, she said, "Kevin, I never thought of it that way. Thank you for sharing." And I said, "Well, I appreciate you giving me the opportunity. Because that's just what it's about. We're having a discussion." Anyways, Scott, you know I could go on here. I get fired up about this stuff because we over-emphasize like the "victory" on this thing rather than, "Friends, let's just talk. We're sitting at the table, we're having a discussion. I'm here for you. I know what's best, that's why you're paying us to be here." Scott, take it away, my friend.

Scott: Well, yeah, look, I mean, I think everything you're saying, as always, I love the way that you bring it to life and make it more something that people can internalize as an individual. So yeah, look, Kevin, I guess I'm going to work backwards today just for fun. So number one, this is all stuff you've all heard before ok, but every year you need to do it. I mean, we have the same calendar that exists every single year, so the same strategies apply every single year. So the first thing is you should be working on your first quarter schedule. So I'm talking about production. Now we're going to do a planning session next month for December, but we're talking about your production schedule, because of the limited number of clinical days most likely left through now until the end of the year, you got to be working on January, February, March. You're putting stuff into that schedule.

We don't often like to timestamp these calls, but this is just such a critical piece. So there's absolutely an extreme sense of urgency to get patients fully committed and closed on everything and to map out their visits between now and forever. Because, otherwise, you're going to drop clinical days, you're going to walk through the holidays, you're going to come into the first of the year, and instead of having what should be the greatest months in the history of the world, you're going to get smacked in the face and you're going to be struggling to try to build productive days. So really the further out you are on the schedule, the more sense of urgency there is to really drive case acceptance.

And I always find it odd, Kevin, people say, "Whoa, the patients don't want to wait that long." If they don't want to wait, then they got to get scheduled now, because if they don't, they're going to end up waiting longer. And so you don't sell this as a bad thing. You sell this as, "Hey, great news, we can get you started the first week of January or mid-January or February." "Great news..." the same thing applies, "...we can get you in before the holidays." It doesn't matter whether it's before or after, it's the same sense of urgency. It's the same point. Same reason why. So again, some people will use an excuse, we use it as a reason why. It's the same thing. So that's number one.

Number two, you really want to look at this opportunity to close up any loose ends. All treatment that's pending, all records that need updated. We're going to say the same thing to you in January. Like the new year, perfect time, you should be rebooting. Here's what I don't understand, Kevin. Our specialists

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Scott:

have a little bit different approach because a lot of times they're seeing the patient once and then maybe there's an annual checkup, but it's not necessarily for a repurposing of health opportunity, it's really just maintenance. For all of the traditional practices, any equivalent of hygiene. But even for our PM and sleep, even for our early treatment, all of our other people that are seeing patients for more of a therapeutic approach that maybe has an end point, they still are constantly adding services.

So you have to look at this as if the first of the year and the end of the year are all perfect times to say, "Let's look at the future. Let's make sure we're planning ahead." Who doesn't plan the year ahead? So why would we not say, "Let's go over all of your health goals for 2025." It doesn't have to be a new patient! You would do this for every patient! And once again, whether it's before the end of the year or whether it's at the first of the year, the same principle, it's the same strategy. It doesn't matter if it's between now and the end, or it's after the start. The same.

So what I'm trying to get across here are the sense of urgency of scheduling, at the "treat every patient like a new patient," repurposing the treatment plans, look at the crystal ball, and redefining and reimagining the health of the future, it's the strategy. The time is the reason why, no matter when it is. The key is executing on the strategy. And then the third piece of this, specific to right now, is it's the perfect time to pay it forward, to share with others, to give the gift of health. So we do a referral structure. We do all these expansive family members. And again, if it's between now and the holidays or it's for the new year, the same principle, but you have been given this greatest, sacred opportunity of the end and the beginning of the years.

But the principles are the key. The time is the reason why, no matter which side it's on. And so I'll throw it back to Kevin on this part just because I don't want to overcomplicate because I always do. Very simple: closing the treatment, building a bigger vision, getting the multiplier effective referrals. You have the perfect opportunity from now until the end and from the beginning forward. Same principle, different time of year. As the reason why, it matters now. And after Kevin flips it back, then I'm going to go into a couple excuse objection killers and the whole delay, money, holidays, Christmas, blah, blah, and show you how to tweak those very quickly. And Kevin, back at you.

Kevin:

I love it. All right, I've got two points that I want to make here listening to what you said. I love this concept of let's end strong, let's begin strong. And I know that you guys hear us say that on a regular basis, and whether you like that specifically or some version of it, please use that with your patients. You can look the patient in the eye and you can say, "Patient, let's end the year strong by making smart decisions about your health. Let's get this taken care of once and for all."

And for those of you who feel very comfortable in getting the patients to say yes and to get moving forward on treatment, all those kind of things, this is a fun way to be able to play with how you take times of the year and use them to your advantage. For those of you who may struggle from time to time with

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Kevin:

getting patients even started, well we can use that to our advantage too. Where if we're struggling to get full case acceptance, you can say, "Hey, listen patient, let's make the smartest decision you've made for this year and let's just get you started. That way we can end the year strong and then we can begin next year even stronger by figuring out when we're going to get the rest of this done."

So two different ways to look at it. You're doing well, things are going well, great, let's get it all here. If you're finding yourself in a little bit of a rut and you could use a little bit of encouragement, a little bit of strategy to just get some patients started because they're frustrating the heck out of you, well there's a way that now you can actually use, "Let's get started," as something that actually applies and then, but don't stop there, okay? Please don't stop there! Then say, "And then when the calendar changes, Mr. Smith, we'll figure out how we get the rest of this done." Scott, back to you.

Scott:

Well look, Kevin, I love that you always add the energy and the patient back and forth on the verbiage which people need. So I'm going to tell you something that nobody expects, okay? And I set it up on purpose to do it in this order because I don't want to focus on the ejection or the patient excuse. So, number one, I just solved the delay idea, because if you follow what I said, then you are going to preempt the idea of delay because you are controlling the context or the pre-framing of the time of the year meaning. So that excuse is out the door because we took control and we have the power and positioning. The second big excuse is the money. And the big thing on the money, because people always try to delay the decision before they'll deal with the money because it feels better to them versus saying, "Oh yeah, money's the issue."

So the money, number one, you always go back to the patient's worth it. "You're investing in your health, giving yourself the gift of this, is more important than anything else. I understand you want to do great things for your family for Christmas or Hanukkah or whatever you celebrate. At the same time, it's vital that we take care of you. Whether we do that immediately or in the new year, we can be flexible with this. We cannot compromise or settle for less than the standard of health that you deserve." So you stay strong on the principle. You don't turn it around and make the focal point the money, you keep the focal point the patient, what they deserve, and their well-being.

Now, the flip side of that is the part that you wouldn't expect. So who cares if you get all the money? So who cares if the patient gives you resistance? Again, we are not trying to grab short-term gratification. We are practicing relationship-based dentistry. Instead of meet the resistance and try to fight against it, the closer we get to whatever holidays, we say, "Hey, that's all right. We're here to help you budget this out and make sure you achieve your goals. So let's walk through what makes sense. Let's come up with something we can put towards it now and let's budget it out over the next handful of months so we can complete your pathway to health."

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Scott:

Now that works when you're presenting comprehensive, complete health dentistry. That works when you're full-fee bundling, whether you're doing oral surgery, full arch, TM sleep, early treatment, whatever, this works when you wrap it all up and put it into a big bow and then you just break down the money and you engineer exactly the way that we've taught you on the finance. When you've already chopped it into small pieces or when you're trying to grasp at straws for the teeny tiny little bit that you might be able to get and fit into your schedule before the holidays, then you blow the whole thing up because you got no room to move.

So think relationship, think not going with resistance, but removing the resistance and simply being helpful and facilitating the patient success by leveraging our focus on the goals and the patient's well-being and then making the money not the problem. And so that means, and that's why I start at the beginning, that you're scheduling out into the future anyway. If you can get everything completely completed between now and the holidays and you're not working a Friday or a weekend, then you got bigger issues here. So the cup ought to be running over. So we want to still give, and this is point number three, we still want to give a giant incentive to get the money now in this calendar year for the full treatment plan, for any reactivation of treatment, for any patients that want to jump back into the flow of care.

Remember, this closes the loop on everything we've talked about. Give it so that they can't refuse it, an incentive for fast action, and turn the holidays and the time of the year into your best friend and into a huge benefit and advantage for the patient. So I know that's all over the place, Kevin, but if they go back and re-listen to this maybe sideways, backwards, three times the speed, and then slow it down even more, then I think that they'll catch that we just gave them six different ways to attack, not just the short-term end of year blitz, but also to pad the start of the year future, all with the principle around relationship-based, what's best for the patient, and not fighting objections and resistance, but actually facilitating success and outcomes. All with the year, the calendar, end or beginning, being actually your best friend and greatest asset to drive deadlines and urgency, and really, these principles forward.

Kevin:

What a great way to wrap this up. And I love how you ended it there where you said, "Hey, let the calendar be your friend." The calendar's actually not your enemy and you don't have to have that work against you. And a couple of points that I'd like to make as we just wrap up the show here today, is lean into "deserve." I do believe, although you hear us speak about it all the time, I do believe that it's one of the most underutilized words when discussing the health status with your patients. They need to hear it 100 times. Especially, I always use this one very specific example is moms. Moms tend to give, give, give, give, and give, and they put themselves last. They have to be forced to put themselves first. And so you have to keep these things in mind, again, just using that one specific example, is that we have to get them to believe they deserve it. Because if they don't believe they deserve it, it's going to be hard to get them to say, "Yes."

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Kevin: And so every person, let's figure out, engage, if they actually believe that, because that may be a step that you're missing. And again, the "smart decisions," you guys know that's our big deal for us. Everybody wants to make smart decisions. Use the calendar at your advantage to do that. And the last piece, I'm just going to do a real quick flip on this and then we're going to wrap this thing up. We've been talking about all the patient excuses, friends, we got to make sure that we're paying attention to our own excuses. We cannot let ourselves use the holidays, the end of the year, the too busy, too this, too whatever, to get into our own way of finishing strong, of bringing home the victory. Because the last thing that you want to do is take your eye off the ball and have somebody come sneak in and you don't win the game because that's what we're here to do. Scott, final words from you and then we're going to wrap it up.

Scott: Oh, Kevin, happy, happy, happy Thanksgiving to all of you. Remember you have the giving of thanks to your patients and the thanks-giving back to yourselves. So we make it every day, Thanksgiving Day, but really appreciate and gratitude. But Kevin, you just crushed it and I love the bullseye at the final point and really turning it right back around, which is kind of the whole entire theme of today, so thank you Kevin. Best wishes to everybody. Now listen, take these principles and go after it. Stay on offense. Be strong and bold. You're doing meaningful work here, but the key is, the magic word, it's called, yep, you got to actually do the "work," all right? So let's finish strong and let's really run hard through the end of the year, and most of all, into the new year and maximize the opportunities with every patient. Again, as Kevin said, calendar your best friend, not patient excuses, but our own, let's win, win, win, Kevin. We got this. Take care everybody, and we appreciate you and happy Thanksgiving.

Kevin: Well said, Scott. And in the spirit of gratitude with the Thanksgiving soon to be upon us, I'm grateful for all of you and honored to have the opportunity to serve you all. Friends, thanks for listening in to the latest episode of the Dental Success Today Practice Profit Accelerator podcast. Let's go get 'em. Let's end the year strong so we can start even stronger. We'll talk soon, friends, we'll talk soon.