



It's All About the Hustle

Great success requires hard work—and not just in the dental practice

What do children and dental offices have in common? There's no 'good time' to have either one. I, meanwhile, did both at once: I graduated from dental school in May 1987 and my oldest son was born that September.

Sure, it sounds insane, and sure, you know it's going to be tough starting out, but you can't live in fear. The risk of a dental practice going bankrupt is incredibly low—like one-half of 1 percent, and usually that's because the dentists had their licenses taken away because of drug-related offenses or other crimes.

So, are you afraid of the work?

Getting online referrals

Every practice management consultant I talk to says that on Day 1, when she observes the office, she never hears a single staffer ask for a referral.

Does it 'feel weird' suggesting that patients fill out an online review? Get over that! Your patients walk into that all day long, when they blurt something out like, 'Oh, my God—it looks awesome!' or even, 'I didn't even feel that shot'. Whenever you hear a patient say something that you'd love to see associated with your name in print, or online reviews, follow up and say, 'Would you please say that on my Facebook page?'

Many people don't know how to make online reviews—I bet you're reading this right now and you've never made one. Walk your patients through it! Do you have

an instruction sheet? Can you help them do it on their phones, right then and there, to get it done?

These online referrals are *social confirmation*, which is imperative in our industry because we're selling the invisible, and that requires trust. In urban and rural locations alike, there's a correlation between places that have the most online generated referrals and those that show the highest increase in new patients.

Promoting the practice

When you open a dental practice, you've got to get out there and act as if you're running for mayor.

This happens with almost all the dentists I've ever talked to: I'll ask if they have a business card, and they never do. It's almost a rule that they don't have a business card. Every time you go out to eat, you should give the server your business card. Take a selfie with her, put it on your social media.

If you're not asking, you're not hustling. I opened my practice in the same shopping center as a major grocery store, so I walked over, found the manager and asked, 'Hey, how's your dentistry going?'

He said, 'Man, I need a dentist, but I don't have dental insurance'. I had a box of fliers and told him: 'If you put a stack of these fliers at each of your checkout stands and tell your baggers that whenever they're bagging up groceries to put one flier in one bag per customer, I'll do all your dentistry for free'.



Share your best advice with Townies!

Dr. Howard Farran discussed a few ways that really paid off when he promoted his dental practice, and now he wants to hear from you! To tell him your success stories about how you promoted your practice, visit dentaltown.com/magazine and leave a comment in the section under this column. Or hit him up on Facebook or Twitter: @howardfarran.

by Howard Farran, DDS, MBA, publisher, *Dentaltown* magazine

He thought it was great. The funniest story of that was, the dentist across the street called me up one day and said, 'Hey, I don't know how you do it, but I've got your flier sitting on my dining room table. And nobody can figure it out: It didn't come in the mail, there's no envelope. ... How in the heck did you get your flier in my house?'

I just started laughing. When I told him what I did, he said—and I quote—'Nice hustle.'

Getting the word out

You can divide up any community in a few ways: You have schools, churches, police precincts, fire stations, city council, mayor.

When I started my practice, I went around to all 18 churches in my town and told the pastors that I would do their dentistry for free as my contribution to their ministry. I also explained how important it was, while they were standing up there in front of a

bunch of people, that their teeth be attractive. 'Look at televangelists,' I'd say. 'They all have perfect teeth.'

Probably three of my first four cosmetic veneer cases were on pastors. And it blew my mind, because not only did that sell a ton of other veneer cases, but I, being a 25-year-old dentist just starting my practice, thought everybody who got veneers would be young, hot, supermodel types who were going for the infinite detail. Turned out they were mostly 60-, 70-, 80-year-old ladies who'd been staring at their pastor!

(Later, when I went out and spent time in Dr. Larry Rosenthal's office, I thought his office would be packed with young, hot patients. Well, young patients don't have \$50,000 to do veneers—but a bunch of 70-year-old patients who want to look younger again do!).

I did the same thing to beauty salons. Knowing that 90 percent of dental appointments are made by women, I went to about a dozen salons and told them: 'I'll do a smile makeover—bleaching, bonding, ortho, veneers—if you'll put your before-and-after on display in the lobby'. About half of them said yes, and I'd always get their flock.

Becoming a recommendation

In just the past six months, I've gone out to eat with local pharmacists, naturopaths, chiropractors and physicians. I found it amazing how so many people you might say offer "alternative" care, such as chiropractors and naturopaths, were stunned that I even was interested and cared about what they did. It was huge.

On Friday night, why are you going out to dinner with your spouse, when you could be going out to dinner with your spouse, and the pharmacist who works across the street at Walgreens or CVS? Patients listen to pharmacists, chiropractors, physicians all day long and take their advice—and you could benefit from that.

Have you heard the saying that there are only 10,000 people who rule the world and they carve it all up on a golf course? It's damn near true ... and the dentist in your area who is hustling the most is most likely to be one of them. ■

See Howard Live!

Howard Farran, DDS, MBA, is an international speaker who has written books and dozens of articles. To schedule Howard to speak at your next national, state or local dental meeting, email rebecca@farranmedia.com.

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14th annual MegaGen International Symposium

Mandalay Bay Convention Center,
Las Vegas, Nevada

Nov.
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Harrisburg Area Dental Society

Radisson Penn Harris Convention
Center, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

