The Era of Feedback

by Thomas Giacobbi, DDS, FAGD, Editorial Director, Dentaltown Magazine

No Contest: The Case Against Competition is a book that was first published in 1986. The author, Alfie Kohn, is credited as one of the pioneers in the anti-competition movement. Briefly stated, this is the time when we stopped keeping score for children under the age of nine and we gave everyone a trophy at the end of the season. I am not here to debate the wisdom of this movement, only to point out the fact that this generation is all grown up and they are writing reviews on everything. Amazon.com, Yelp.com and many other Web sites are filled with user-generated reviews – reviews of products and services, restaurants and hotels and anything else you can imagine. Welcome to the era of feedback. Is it really possible that the least criticized children have grown up to be the most critical of everything they encounter?

A recent headline from The Onion proclaimed: “Brave Woman Enters Restaurant Without First Looking It Up Online.” [As an aside, if you do not get your “news” on TheOnion.com, you are missing some great stories.] I will be the first to admit I could relate to this fictional woman, because I frequently use Yelp when I travel. I find it is a great way to discover popular restaurants in my vicinity. Why not let scores of diners point me in the right direction? When I am interested in seeing a new movie, I look it up on RottenTomatoes.com. For many years, Zagat was the go-to resource for restaurant reviews even prior to the proliferation of the Internet.

Nobody wants to be criticized but everyone needs feedback. Dental companies often seek out your feedback in a very direct way by asking you to sample a new product. The smart companies also pay very close attention to your comments on Dentaltown.com. Dental practices are also faced with the prospect of being reviewed on any one of hundreds of different Web sites, some specific to dentists, others simply a listing of businesses. This trend has spawned a new business support function: reputation management. 1-800-DENTIST has recently launched ReputationMonitor, which you can read about on page 118.

In the world of print magazines, feedback has always been shared through letters to the editor. Dentaltown Magazine does not publish this feedback in our print edition for two reasons: 1) comments could be two to three months old before they reach a print edition, 2) the contents of our magazine are available on Dentaltown.com 24/7/365. If you read an article in this issue and you want to make a comment, log on to Dentaltown.com and post your comments directly on the article. You might soon discover other dentists who agree with your point of view. Have a question for the author? Share it in the comments section of the article and everyone will benefit from the answer. I have provided some basic instructions at the end of the article to accomplish this task.

We invite you to read and participate in the articles, message boards, clinical cases and CE articles we publish every month. This is much more than feedback, it is an opportunity to engage in a conversation with your colleagues. Each issue of our magazine contains information to improve your clinical dentistry and expand your understanding of our profession.

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I’m excited to share the fact that we are in the process of developing an improved digital version of our magazine that will streamline the process of interacting directly with our content and also allow for offline viewing. Our current digital version can be viewed on Dentaltown.com in both HTML and PDF formats.

In addition to interacting with the content we select every month, there are opportunities to provide content for future issues of the magazine. Over the years we have found many talented dentists willing to share information with their colleagues. Your first option is to post a case or start a thread online at Dentaltown.com. The conversation can begin immediately. However, if you would like to submit an article, we now have a “submit an article” button on our site (Fig. 1). I look forward to your additional involvement in the conversations. In the meantime, I can be reached via e-mail: tom@dentaltown.com.

**How to Leave a Comment at the End of an Article**
- Click on the cover of the most recent edition of *Dentaltown Magazine* on the Dentaltown.com homepage to get to the content of the current issue.
- Click on an article.
- Read it.
- Scroll down to the bottom of the article and click the “Add Comment” button (if there aren’t currently any comments posted after the article) or the “View Comments in the Message Board” button, which will take you to a thread about this article, where you can post your two cents.

**Things on My Desk**

***How To Open a New Dental Office or Relocate Your Current One***

*A Journey Through the Dark Side of Dentistry*

**By Gordon F Osterhaus Jr., DDS**  
**Edited by Eric Curtis, DDS**  
**Cost:** $295  
**Pages:** 244

Dr. Osterhaus is a rare breed: a dentist with 20 years of private practice experience who decided to change careers and become a dental equipment and start-up consultant. His new book is a detailed explanation of the right way to build a new office or relocate an existing practice. Throughout the book, he uses real-life stories to illustrate his messages. This book is certain to save you money and prevent premature aging as you will have an opportunity to consider all the appropriate details before you start your project. You might think that you will leave your project to the experts; this book will teach you to trust, but verify.