

Don't panic

I can see CQC, says **Sim Goldblum**.

Many people in the dental journals have done their best to explain why a comprehensive practice management system makes compliance with the CQC requirements an absolute doddle. Many are providing lectures and training programs to guide you line by line and they have been at pains to indicate that for those practices who have Investors in Practice or the BDA's good practice award are in a great place to be a fully registered practice of the future.

So why is it so difficult? Why do members of your staff not know the basic things about your practice? For example, where are your emergency drug supplies what is your complaints

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procedure and how do you deal with the patient who complains? Why do so many of your front line team not know how to talk to a patient on the telephone so that the patient, prospective or existing, is keen to come and visit the practice?

During the last year, I have written about creating a vision and setting a goal, recruiting the right staff, marketing and operational control – all critical elements in helping you and your team run a successful

practice. We understand that for the mature, single-handed practice owner, many of the recommendations made to implement best practice management processes can be seen as onerous and difficult to deliver in an environment where constant pressure is being applied to costs and fee income whether by primary care trusts or by the reluctance of private patients to continue investing in their oral health treatment.

For many of you, however, I would recommend the approach you need to take is initially one of protecting the wonderful practices you have, in which you have invested so much of your love, enthusiasm, time and, not least money.

How can so many of you be happy to let this all slip away? How can so many of you be prepared to operate your surgeries with un-registered dental nurses, risking not only the wrath of the GDC but potentially the safety and well-being of your patients?

There is so much that is right about dentistry in the UK today – clinical innovation, outstanding patient care from a large number of dentists who understand what their patients want and are creative enough to find ways to meet their needs and make the appropriate financial reward.

We do not appear to be reading the runes correctly - a capped budget for NHS dentistry that will have an ever-increasing performance management element to the funds paid to dentists. If you and your practice are being performance managed, how can you not run your practice in a way that you know you are always ahead of the game?



● Whatever regulatory bricks are thrown at you, make sure your practice management systems can cope.

In the increasingly competitive private sector, what is the niche you will serve so well that no one can match you? What is your 'purple cow'? It is easy to say 'create a vision and work out how much you really want to earn from this business (income and capital) and then develop your business plan'. It's easy to say 'make sure your income is part of your business plan so you know what you take out of the business is actually affordable by the business.'

So, make a resolution to uphold the truths of practice management, become more of an expert with the help of your practice manager, and ensure whatever new Government or regulatory bricks are thrown you will be able to react quickly and decisively and win. ■



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