

Team leadership

Sim Goldblum explains how to make the most of your practice.

As I write these few words, Gordon Brown has confirmed the date of the next general election. So by the time you read this, dentistry may be in for an even bigger change than it already was. Fortunately, I don't have to forecast the election result or where dentistry will be going, as it becomes one of the many political footballs that will be kicked around during the next few weeks and months.

Thinking of football, Arsenal have just been 'destroyed' by a slight, short, Argentinian maestro. At least, that's the view of some commentators, but there are others who said what a wonderful team Barcelona is. Messi was unable to score in the first leg in

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London but scored four at their home stadium. Was that because of the way Arsenal played, the way Barcelona played, or was Messi suddenly revitalised? Would he be brilliant in any team, or does he require a really effective team to allow his undoubted brilliance to flourish?

Does this have any relevance to dentistry and to 'making the most of your existing practice'? It certainly does, because every series of activities that require several people



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The Dentistry Business will be running a series of one-day seminars aimed at helping you make real improvements to your practice life.

Starting a new practice and *Making the most of your practice* seminars are taking place between June and December 2010. For more information call 0161 408 2030 or visit www.thedentistrybusiness.com

to be involved, needs to have clear leadership, a clear vision of where the activities are leading and basic processes that are always executed perfectly.

As the principal dentist, do you restore teeth, run the business, or a bit of both? How much time do you spend being a clinician and how much time the managing director? Your associates and performers turn up to conduct clinical dentistry and go home; as the practice will not run itself, you need to put in place the leadership and the structures that will allow you to spend enough time in your surgery and the necessary and important time working on your business.

It is so easy to get bogged down in the detail and there's no quick fix, no panacea, no magic pills to take; just a few clear steps to take:

- Have a clear vision of where you want to take your practice, what it looks like, what it feels like, what it smells like, who your patients are, what sort of treatment you want to do, how many staff you want, what type of staff, who is in charge?
- How long do you want to take to achieve this vision? Establish some clear goals and timed milestones so you can measure progress and ensure that you have a plan, not a dream
- Look seriously at your current team; is it a team of motivated people, all of whom know their roles and their

contributions to the overall practice activity or do you have a group of individuals, each of whom is doing a job? Can you change your staff by giving them the necessary and appropriate training or can you change your staff?

- Review your active patients and determine if you have enough of them; you may have enough, but are they the right patients; those who value their oral health, who value your skills and those of your team to ensure that their oral health continues at a high level; or are they disinterested in the genuinely real treatment plans that you are offering them, attending infrequently, often cancelling?
- Are you marketing your practice to the right people, to the local employers with whom you can develop a special relationship and provide a unique service, to the commuters who want early or late appointments, or to those largely exempt patients who would like somewhere warm to sit and a friendly face to talk to?

So where does Lionel Messi come into this? He knows what his role is, he knows how to create the space to allow his team members to reach him and he knows how to execute with clinical efficiency the vital route to goal. How do you become your practice's Lionel Messi? Join us at our one-day seminars at a location near you to find out. ■