

## Optimistic About the Economy - Is it better than ever?

**W**ith the recent change in the economy many people share their doubt, fear and apprehension. Much time is spent thinking and talking about things that are of concern to us, but not at all in our circle of influence (that which we can change). We cannot change the economic state, but we can certainly change our habits to weather the storm and make the best of it. This is the art of being PROACTIVE.

Reactive people spend time and energy thinking within their circle of concern; things that are of concern to them, but not necessarily within their ability to do something about. Proactive people spend their time and energy working on the things that they can do something about.

Recently in a team-building seminar we used the current state of the economy as an example of a concern, in order that we could practice thinking proactively about what we could do to be a part of the solution. The ideas generated from the synergy of the group were brilliant. We can use this economic circumstance as an opportunity to:

### Retain Our Patients

- Get to know our patient needs better by listening to them, making them feel understood, and demonstrating with our extra time and our actions that we really care about them.
- Use a referral program, as simple as sending a personal card to those patients who refer new ones.

### Achieve Better Efficiency

- Scheduling patients to use everyone's time most efficiently.
- Determine capacity building strategies by planning for the continued education of all staff to increase the productivity and effectiveness of the entire team.

### Improve Internal Communication

- Come together as a team to plan for the upcoming year, set goals, discuss systems that need perfecting, and strategize actions necessary to achieve the goals, with established checkpoints along the way.
- Instill the value of your services to your patients.

As quoted by June Williamson, RDH, International Lecturer and Educator, "the value of the dental care **must exceed** the value of the dental insurance coverage." The patient must be aware that the value of

your services is far greater than the insurance coverage, so that if the insurance coverage is discontinued or changed, the patient maintains a need and value of the service your practice provides.

### Market Our Services Effectively

- Patient education is a low cost place to start when it comes to marketing. An educated patient ensures the success of a dental practice. Patient newsletters that offer the gift of education for better dental health is an effective way to market your expertise and commitment to patient care. They can be generated and posted on your website, emailed, printed in house and handed out to patients.
- Improving cash flow, reducing costs and spending ... the list went on and on.

When you summarize this approach to thinking about the current economic state, you could say that the current state of the economy is slower than it has been but will eventually turn-around as the economy is historically cyclical. Our time, thoughts, action and energy can be put to great use during this time as we are able to better manage and improve our patient relationships, skills development, continued education, communication and business planning.

When we think back to the reason we got into dentistry in the first place, committed to the most beneficial dental health possible for our patients, would it be true to admit that the current economic state is better than ever?

"It's not what happens to us, but our response to what happens to us that can either hurt us, or benefit us." writes Dr. Steven Covey, author of *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. It's our choice. We are responsible (response-able = able to choose our response).

Best wishes for a proactive winter season. The best things in life are in fact ... free!



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