

# The Top 10 Mistakes You're Making in Your Practice and How to Fix Them

...#6 will shock you



## **MISTAKE 1.** NOT TREATING YOUR PRACTICE LIKE A SMALL BUSINESS

---

**It's not your fault:** You thought you went to school for a DDS, not an MBA. Now, you're having to consider things like overhead and not just overbites, email marketing and not just enamel.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

Adopt a business mindset every day by asking these questions:

#### **1. What's my brand?**

If I say "Starbucks," you think coffee. If I say, "Dr. Smith's Family Dentistry," your patients think...what? Consider your "brand" and how you want to be perceived.

#### **2. What differentiates your practice?**

Some call it the "secret sauce," others the "wow factor." The dental industry is changing. Like any small business, what are you doing that keeps you competitive?

#### **3. Where are you heading?**

Think of that common question asked at every job interview: "Where do you see yourself in five years?" If you said, "restoring teeth," you're thinking like a dentist. If you said, "Expanding the services my practice can offer patients, such as placing implants, after having invested in the right technology and training courses," then you're thinking like a business owner.



## MISTAKE 2. NOT TREATING YOUR TEAM WELL

The 2017 Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)'s [report on employee job satisfaction and engagement](#) found that respectful treatment and trust between employees and senior management were ranked as two of the top three most important indicators of job satisfaction. In fact, respectful treatment beat out overall compensation for the number one spot. Sadly, while employees indicated that respect and trust were very important, very few responded that they were satisfied with what they were currently experiencing at their jobs.

Don't be "that boss." Your team is the frontline of your practice and often spend more time with your patients than you do. Besides the simple fact that everyone deserves to be treated with kindness and respect, patients can sense if your team is unhappy, which reflects poorly on your practice.

### OPPORTUNITY

Be a leader, not a boss.

**Tip:** Encourage your team to share their ideas and solutions where they see inefficiencies around the practice. If one of these ideas is implemented and is successful, reward the employee whose idea it was with a gift card or cash bonus.

### LEADER VS BOSS

Coaches team	Drives employees
Depends on goodwill	Depends on authority
Generates enthusiasm	Inspires fear
Says "We"	Says "I"
Fixes breakdowns	Places blame for breakdowns
Shows how it's done	Knows how it's done
Develops people	Uses people
Gives credit	Takes credit
Asks	Commands
Says "Let's go!"	Says "Go!"



3.

## MISTAKE 3. NOT USING SOCIAL MEDIA CORRECTLY

I'm sorry, your 15-year-old nephew isn't a social media expert and sharing a cheesy dentistry comic once a month doesn't count either. As of March 2017, there were more than 1.94 billion monthly active Facebook users, and that number has only increased. Social media is too big and too relevant to neglect.

### OPPORTUNITY

Prioritize social media like any other aspect of your business.

**“PRACTICES NEED TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR POSTING. THEY SHOULD POST DAILY WITH CONTENT THAT IS SPECIFIC TO THEIR PRACTICE AND DENTISTRY TO ENSURE PATIENTS STAY ENGAGED”**

- Rachel Mele, author of "365 Days of Social Posts for Dentistry"

### Who on your team is responsible for social media?

Don't assume it's the youngest person with the most followers on their personal Instagram account. Designate a trustworthy person and make sure they understand social media is part of their role in the office like any other task.

### Social media is about being social.

Snap pictures of your own patients with before-and-after smiles\*; highlight new technology installs to show patients how you're investing in their care; or promote a cause your practice is passionate about and involved with (a 5K to raise funds for cancer research, for instance).

### What do you want to do more of daily?

If you want more cosmetic patients in your practice, talk on social media about the specials you might be offering or show before-and-after photos (with a patient signed consent form, of course). If it's wedding season, are you letting patients know you do whitening? Are you reminding patients about their end-of-year benefits? Whatever you want to see more of in your practice, make sure you're pushing that out through your social media channels.

\*Contact your state dental association for patient model consent forms before posting any images.



## **MISTAKE 4.** NOT PRIORITIZING TRAINING

---

Have you seen how fast technology changes these days? CBCT systems are powered by touch-sensitive smartpads and intraoral scanning acquisition software has arrows that show you the best way to scan.

If you want to practice at the highest level with technology like this, you'll need training for yourself and staff.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

Set aside a training budget.

This ties back to thinking of your practice as a business. Investing in training to keep you and your staff on the cutting edge of practice management, infection control, marketing—whatever it is—is an investment in the viability of your small business.

Re-examine some of the tools you use in your practice every day; software, equipment, etc. Have you ever wondered what “that button” does or has a colleague with the same CBCT system shared an implant report or the full free version of the imaging software with you and it's made you wonder how they did it?

Most dental technology companies have a full staff of trainers; give your manufacturer a call and set up a day of training or ask if they have online options like webinars or remote training sessions.



## **MISTAKE 5.** NOT PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

---

When your patients walk into your practice, are they greeted warmly or told to sign in without an upward glance? Does the hygienist carry on her conversation with her coworker while performing a prophy or focus on the patient? Is the patient shuffled out the door after the appointment and left feeling like just a calendar entry and credit card in the computer?

### **OPPORTUNITY**

Put yourself in your patient's shoes.

- 1. Think about positive business experiences you've had; they don't have to have been in the dental world.**  
Maybe your bank knows you by name and uses it during every interaction for an added personal touch. Adopt those little extra flourishes in your practice.
- 2. Walk through the entire appointment process yourself, or even ask a close friend or family member to do so without your team knowing.**  
This "secret shopper" scenario can give you valuable feedback and identify areas that need improvement.
- 3. Cold call your own practice and hear exactly how your team is answering the phone.**  
If they're not giving the impression you'd like, work on a new script for your front desk.



## **MISTAKE 6.** LETTING YOUR TEAM HAVE "UGLY" SMILES

---

There, I said it. I've mentioned in #2 that your team is the frontline of your practice and therefore your best form of advertisement. What does it say about your work if they aren't flashing their best smiles? And don't make the excuse of, "They're just going to leave the practice," or "I'm too busy." I'll refer you back to #1 and how you want your practice, your "brand," to be perceived.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

Take the plunge and invest in your team members' smiles.

The best example of the return on investment I can share comes from my own life:



*Exhibit A (aka, my daughter with her new straight smile)*



*Exhibit B (aka, yours truly)*

Sometimes, we get so caught up focusing on our patients' smiles (or in my case, my daughter's smile) that we don't see the opportunity right in front of us, i.e., your team, or my own smile. Personally, I couldn't go on anymore knowing as much as I do about the dental industry and the importance of oral health without taking action.



*A whole team, complete with matching t-shirts, at the Global Oral Health Summit.*

## **MISTAKE 7.** NOT INCLUDING YOUR ENTIRE TEAM IN CE COURSES

---

Maybe you've already made training a priority...but only for yourself, or maybe just your office manager. Remember the difference between a boss and a leader: "I" vs. "We." Provide the same opportunities for your team as you do yourself.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

Encourage collaboration by including the whole team.

Knowledge is power; avoid leaving team members behind and involve your entire team on training and continuing education. Providing continuing education for each team member, from the front office to the back, helps each person understand their role in your office and how they contribute—yielding greater overall success.

**Tip:** Check out Carestream Dental's Global Oral Health Summit for two days of educational courses and fun teambuilding activities.





8.

## MISTAKE 8. NOT ATTENDING YEARLY DENTAL TRADE SHOWS.

---

Yes, sometimes finding time in your schedule and money in your budget to travel halfway across the country for the yearly trade show is hard, but not doing so is hurting your practice in the long run. Not only do these shows represent the largest gathering of your colleagues of the entire year, they're also the place to see all latest and greatest technology. How could you miss the chance to sit in on courses, network and explore all the newest gadgets that could make your practice better?

### OPPORTUNITY

Attend trade shows with a game plan.

- 1. Sit down and map out a plan of action for your classes and show floor.**
- 2. Get in, get out.**  
If you're worried about crowds, prioritize the booths you want to see and then leave. No need to loiter and become overwhelmed.
- 3. Talk to your team members and get them involved.**  
Is there literature they want you to bring back? Maybe they heard about a new handpiece or software module from a colleague from another practice and want you to check it out and report back.
- 4. Break it down later.**  
From courses to the trade show floor, you'll be taking in a lot of new information at once. Take notes, tuck the brochures away and save them for review on the plane flight home when it's quieter and you can focus.



9.

## **MISTAKE 9.** NOT BEING TRANSPARENT WITH THE TEAM ABOUT THE NUMBERS

---

Talking money is taboo in our culture, but if you're following #1 and thinking like a small business owner then you must embrace the numbers, good or bad. Maybe that's the easy part: Of course the business owner should be familiar with the financial health of the practice. The "tricky" part comes with sharing those numbers with the team, but it doesn't have to be.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

Make your team members true partners by letting them know where the practice stands.

If you think of yourself as the coach of your team, then the only way they'll play at their best is when they know the score. Are the numbers down? Let's pull together and play harder! Are you ahead? Great job, team, let's keep at it! Lay out your game plan (i.e., your business plan for your practice) for the team and make sure everyone knows the practice mission, goals, where you're at financially, where you'd like to be and how you'll get there together.



## **MISTAKE 10.** NOT BEING WILLING TO CHANGE

I'll let George Bernard Shaw handle this one for me:

**“PROGRESS IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT CHANGE, AND THOSE WHO CANNOT CHANGE THEIR MINDS CANNOT CHANGE ANYTHING.”**

Think of all the changes that are happening in dentistry. You're probably using a digital sensor; could you imagine if you hadn't been willing to change and still be using film and chemicals? Do you remember practicing before strict infection control protocols were put in place (I'm talking no gloves or facemasks required)?

Thank goodness for that change. What about intraoral scanners and CBCT systems? Perhaps you're still on the fence about making those changes to your practice, but the next generation of dentists will know no other way to practice.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

Try something new!

Here are some easy ways to find something new to try in your practice.

- 1. Talk to your sales rep**
- 2. Read publications**
- 3. Talk to your colleagues/peek in their offices**
- 4. Attend trade shows.**
- 5. Brainstorm with your team**

After all, it only takes one person to change your life: *You*.



With more than 16 years in the dental publishing industry, Kevin Henry is the former group editorial director for Dental Products Report and managing editor for Dental Economics. He now serves as the co-founder for IgniteDA.net, a community designed to empower, enlighten and educate dental assistants. He speaks to dental assistants throughout the country, reminding them of the important role they play every day in their practice. Kevin was recently named as one of the top five influential voices in the industry on Twitter. You can follow him at @kgh23.

---

### ABOUT CARESTREAM DENTAL

Carestream Dental provides industry-leading dental digital product lines and services, including imaging equipment, CAD/CAM systems, software and practice management solutions, for dental and oral health professionals. With more than 100 years of industry experience, Carestream Dental technology captures two billion images annually and aids in more precise diagnoses, improved workflows and superior patient care.

For more information or to contact a Carestream Dental representative, please call **800.944.6365** or visit **[carestreamdental.com](http://carestreamdental.com)**.

Follow Carestream Dental online:



**COME VISIT US AT THE 2018 GLOBAL ORAL HEALTH SUMMIT**

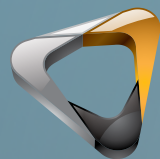
Like what you just read? Hear more from Kevin, and many other experts, at the 2018 Global Oral Health Summit, Nov. 9-11, in Dallas, Texas.

# GLOBAL ORAL HEALTH SUMMIT

**GAYLORD TEXAN RESORT AND CONVENTION CENTER**  
Dallas, Texas • Nov. 9-11, 2018

**REGISTER NOW! [carestreamdental.com/globalsummit](http://carestreamdental.com/globalsummit)**

**800.944.6365**



**WORKFLOW** INTEGRATION | **HUMANIZED** TECHNOLOGY | **DIAGNOSTIC** EXCELLENCE

---

For more information, visit [carestreamdental.com](https://www.carestreamdental.com)