

The Pizzazz Factor

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Pizzazz in a dental practice? Yes. Pizzazz is that elusive quality which makes the difference between a practice that can be quickly sold vs. a practice that remains on the market unsold month after month.

Pizzazz is the sizzle, the sparkle, even the flamboyance that makes a practice desirable and salable.

What creates pizzazz?

An attractive office. As a patient, would you be happy and at ease while waiting for your appointment? The little things count. A television in the waiting room, perhaps. Fresh flowers and plants. Current popular magazines. Comfortable seating. All of these things contribute to the relaxation of waiting patients.

A well-organized office. Are records neatly filed and the front desk uncluttered? Is the office computerized? A visible computer in this day and age implies modernity and organization.

A well-maintained facility. Does the operatory glisten and is the equipment up-to-date? Although the average patient probably can't tell if the equipment is the latest and greatest, he can certainly tell if the equipment "looks old," or if the paint on the walls seems tired.

A friendly and dedicated staff. A long-term, loyal staff provides a sense of permanence and stability. Patients feel much more comfortable visiting a practice where the staff is familiar, caring, and obviously experienced.

Pizzazz shows up in a consistent pattern of growth, which indicates the strength of the practice and can reassure a potential buyer that the mechanisms are in place to help assure a successful future. A good benchmark for growth is 7 to 10 percent annually, or perhaps more if a good marketing plan is in operation.

Pizzazz is in the flow of new patients. If you're a specialist, other practitioners should be referring patients to the practice. Advertising, even on a modest scale, often can pay for itself. Signage indicating the office's presence makes your practice easy to find. New-patient flow can be a key element in gauging the success of a practice. New patients mean new dentistry.

Pizzazz is in the right mix of patient types. Obviously, every practitioner would like all patients to be on a full fee-for-service basis, but it's seldom that way. Insurance, union plans, and capitation have to be considered. Too high a percentage of patients on capitation or limited-fee HMOs can mean lots of work for you, but little net profit.

Pizzazz in a practice equals goodwill. It is the intangible, but most important, asset that exists above and beyond the value of the tangible assets - it reflects the value of the operation of the practice on a continuing basis.

Does your practice have an active and aggressive recall program? A finely structured recall schedule often can keep more than one hygienist fully booked. Your own appointment book should be booked at least two to three weeks in advance.

Pizzazz is value in your practice. You're likely to enjoy the benefits of a four-day week, six weeks of vacation, the beauty of fresh flowers every week, an organized office with modern equipment - an office you'd be proud to show anyone's mom. This adds up, of course, to greatly enhanced value for the practice to you and its greater salability in the marketplace.

Pick up the pizzazz in your practice. Pick up your hard-earned benefits.