

Quality Dental Plan Presents

The 5 Massive Mistakes You're Making in Your Practice & How to Turn Them Around Instantly!

by Dan Marut, DMD

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**Special Report &
Breakthrough Quiz**

www.QDPdentist.com

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How would you like to take back control of your business while increasing profit and case acceptance?

Sounds like a fantasy, right? Well, it's not. There are hundreds of potential patients out there – it's just a matter of getting them in your chair. It may not seem easy, but it's possible to build a practice that creates new patients while increasing case acceptance and revenue. I've done it, and it would be my pleasure to share how.

But first, you're going to need a few things. To build your ideal practice, you're going to need confidence. You need to trust your judgment. You'll need to adjust and grow and learn what's not working for you. And finally, to discover the parts of your business that will need to be changed, you'll need a little guidance.

Most dentists go their entire practice lives without ever reaching this point, but with my help, you'll be seeing things differently in a matter of minutes. In no time, you'll be peaceful, happy and actively guiding the fate of your practice.

So why hasn't this happened yet? Well, if you're anything like I was, you spend a lot of time in your practice, and less time working on your practice. You go about your days doing what you think is the "right" thing, never knowing the blueprint you're using is entirely wrong for your business. Or you have the right tools, but you're going about using them the wrong way. You've experimented with different marketing approaches, but don't really get the sense that anything has worked. And you're probably wondering why your practice isn't growing and your efforts aren't creating results. You've asked trusted friends, your spouse and your staff about your marketing frustrations, but never actively tried a different solution.

If any of this is striking a chord with you, keep reading. This may be one of the most important days of your entire life.

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In this special report, you'll learn:

- The 5 massive mistakes that are derailing your practice
- How adapting marketing techniques can help you leverage your existing patient base to increase your income
- Tangible, straightforward systems that are easy to implement
- How a quick quiz can assess your readiness to proceed with QDP's innovative approach to patient service

If you find the entire pursuit of increasing your practice income to be exhausting, I can certainly sympathize. Most of us have tried dozens of different ways to market and attract new patients before we find a system that works – if we ever do! Think about everything patients have to consider when looking for a new dentist: education, training, years in practice, standing with the State Board of Dentistry, malpractice claims, dental associations, Better Business Bureau rating, professional reputation, online reviews and ratings, specialties, location, office demeanor, hygienist personalities, fee schedule, insurance accepted, ages treated, procedures offered, technology in the practice, whether the dentist is male or female – and a thousand other deal breakers. When you think about it, it's amazing that anyone ever settles on a dentist. Yet they do.

And because there are dentists who manage to grow their practices to capacity by word-of-mouth alone, we've become convinced that this is the right way. Accidentally. Organically. Trusting that the goodwill and efforts of your patients will just make it happen. Well, just because some folks win the lottery to get rich doesn't mean it's a solid plan. The surest path to success is to identify what's not working and to make adjustments until you get a better result.

So if you ever feel frustrated, confused, or uncertain when it comes to marketing your practice, don't worry, everyone feels that way sometimes. The good news is that the answers you're looking for are right around the corner.

Within this report, I've identified the most common issues that dentists struggle with. Once you understand these mistakes, you'll possess a much better ability to correct them. There will be much greater clarity around where to focus your efforts and why.

Let the fun begin!

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Massive Practice Mistake #1

Not working to increase your revenue

Let's break down how you spend your business life: You probably spend anywhere from 25-40 hours a week working on your patients while stealing glances at your iPhone to see if you missed any e-mails between appointments. You spend a few hours managing the books, about an hour talking to your staff, a few hours talking to patients and following up after procedures. You take an hour or two each day to have lunch. You schedule your patient time so you have time for a personal life, which is spent watching television or reading, going to the gym, enjoying friends and family, relaxing and surfing the Internet. But how much time do you actually devote to actively creating your dream business, or increasing your practice income?

If you're like most of us, it's not very much.

It's not that you're wrong for doing things the way you always have, or for focusing strictly on treating your patients. Patient care is the heart of your practice, but unfortunately, it doesn't create much opportunity to attract new patients. How can you expect to grow your business if you're not devoting time and money to bringing in new patients? It's worse than trying to catch a fish without a pole or bait – it's like fishing without a boat when you're not even near the water.

Consider anything that you've invested in – learning to play a musical instrument, mastering the ski slopes or golf – even becoming a dentist. All of those things required trial and error and frustration until success was finally achieved.

But when it comes to things like increased patient flow, we don't expect or want trial and error. We want our skill at dentistry to be the driving force. No innovative marketing ideas. No time spent on advertising. No new systems. No implementing. We expect that as long as we treat them well, our patients will continue to refer friends and family to us.

The problem is that patients are busy. They have their own lives, and referring new patients to their dentist is not a priority. Half of them probably don't even know all the treatment you can provide for them (but I'll get into that a bit later). Imagine if you tried to become President without doing any campaigning. That's basically what so many of us do as dentists every day.

This brings to mind one of my favorite quotes by Thomas Edison. He said this after years of trying to perfect the light bulb: *"I haven't failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that don't work."*

10,000 ways that didn't work. I couldn't think of a better metaphor for growing a dental practice.

Anything that's worth having requires work. Increasing your practice income is no different. That's why the first thing you should do is assess whether increased income is truly your top priority?



If it's not, that's okay. If you'd rather catch up on *Inside Dentistry* and practice your golf swing, you're in good company. Most patients would prefer to be doing other things as well. Just know that your future success depends on a steady flow of new patients, and that the best way to attract new patients probably isn't what you think. If you want to grow your practice, you need to put yourself out there and do something you haven't done before.

The solution:

Allocate time to finding innovative solutions, remain open to new ideas and make good business decisions, and you can make your practice turn around in ways you never thought possible.

Implementing common-sense solutions that complement your existing business practice, seeking out marketing coaches and business mentors who have already successfully implemented innovative solutions, shifting your perspective from tried and true into trying new things. If you want to increase your practice income, you first need to create the opportunity for it to improve.

If you never innovate, never implement effective new systems, and adhere like super glue to what you think you already know, your business may run smoothly, but you'll never build the ideal practice you've always wanted.

Massive Practice Mistake #2

Not being open to new innovations

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Did you ever try something and it didn't work the way you thought it would, so you just went back to what you knew because it was easier and seemed safer? Do you suffer from results ADD: when something doesn't work immediately, you move on to something else, all the while never knowing whether the first thing didn't work because it was truly ineffective or if you just moved on too fast? Do you find yourself wishing for the days of yore when things were "easier," there wasn't a constant technology learning curve – and a clipboard, pad of paper and pencil were all you needed to keep up?

I can't speak for you, but I've done all of the above hundreds of times. When your time is limited, you have systems that seem to be working, and you're considering how to grow your practice, you have to make tough decisions about where to allocate your resources and why. It's easy to decide that what you're doing is working well enough, so why waste money and time that you don't have messing around with new systems?



I understand. I struggled with that same question. I asked myself why I should do things differently when what I was doing worked just fine. I had no need to innovate. I had patients. They liked me. I made money. I had a successful practice and a comfortable life.

Except that I really didn't. Deep inside, I knew I needed to innovate. I kept asking myself if there was a better way of doing things where I could leverage what I knew. A system where I could do less but make more, create referrals and get rid of insurance company restraints.

I felt like I was making decisions from a place of disempowerment. I believed I had no choice but to use insurance and the insurance fee system. I thought offering dental savings plans and packages would cause me to lose revenue rather than gain it (boy, was I wrong!). So I provided the same thing every other dentist provided in my saturated market – which really meant I had nothing unique to offer. Worse, the economic downturn was causing patients to tighten their budgets, and an increasing number of them were missing their recall.

I was looking for ways to combat patient attrition, and suddenly realized that the problem wasn't the patients – it was their lack of insurance and financial resources. When patients were laid off from their jobs, they felt that they could no longer go to the dentist because there was no way to get affordable care. My scheduled appointments dropped and emergency appointments increased. Patients were draining their savings accounts paying for expensive restorations that could've been avoided had they made their routine checkups, but getting them to understand this before it actually happened seemed nearly impossible.

No, things were not fine at my practice, despite what I'd been telling myself. So I stopped living in denial and started asking myself some questions. How could I help my patients in this difficult time? How could I help myself? What was the solution?

Getting new patients through marketing was always a challenge for me. I just wasn't very good at it and didn't feel confident about how to go about doing it. After all, I got my degree in dentistry, not sales. As a result, I'd made no changes to the way I'd been doing business pretty much since I started my practice. I stuck to "safe" and "same" thinking they were serving me well. Though I wanted new patients and improved production, at the time I wasn't open to the possibilities of how to do it. It turned out my biggest obstacle in my business was me.

The problem is, unless you make new business innovations a priority, you won't have anything provocative or unique to attract new patients to you. No distinct way of doing business, no marketing, no innovation and no simple way of communicating with existing patients to ensure you're always on their mind will leave your business stagnant, like mine was. If you're not doing things to set your practice apart or offering an experience that your patients can't get from any other dentist, you're missing out on the best source of new patients and revenue – your existing patient base and the money they spend on care.



But which programs are right?

This is the million dollar question. Well, there are a ton of marketing programs out there, but I can tell you right now, they aren't right for you. Period. This is because most marketing and practice systems aren't really designed for the business of dentistry. Said simply, they're not created by a dentist for dentists. Dentistry really is a business unlike any other. We're different than our colleagues in the medical field and we're distinct from our friends who work in the retail sector. Our business actually has elements of both, putting us in a unique category. Unless the person who's advising you has worked in the dental profession, chances are they don't understand how unique it really is.

An even bigger problem than using a system that wasn't designed for dentists is using one that was designed for everyone. What I'm referring to is insurance.

While insurance may seem like a good idea for all involved, when I really looked at it from all angles and scratched down a layer to see what it was really made of, I realized that it wasn't so great for me or for my patients. Being a third party provider cost me time, resources and even patients, who usually blamed me when insurance didn't cover something. Patients expect dental insurance to work like medical insurance. They expect everything to be paid for. They don't realize that if they need a restoration, much of that money is going to be an out-of-pocket expense.

Here's what I identified:

We need to put the benefit back into "benefits."

- Employers need a better way to provide insurance for employees
- Employees need to understand the true cost of their benefits package
- The unemployed need a solution for care when they have limited income
- Dentists need a solution that benefits everyone – including them

Dental insurance isn't helping the way we think it is.

Like a Monet painting, dental insurance looks great from far way, but as you get closer to it, the details lose their relationship to each other. Let's take a look at how it impacts you, employers and the 99% of your average patients with average dental needs.



Employers large or small:

Businesses offer dental insurance to their employees as part of their benefits packages. Still, how valuable is it? Insurance premiums go up every year, which increases company overhead. As a result, year after year, companies are faced with some unpleasant options:

- A. Allocate more of their revenue to pay for employee benefits. Often this forces them to raise the cost of goods and services to offset it.
- B. Lay off employees to reduce overhead when times get tight.
- C. Have the employees share the cost. The last few decades have seen the end of many pension programs and increased employee contributions to healthcare.

Companies are in a losing position either way they go. They can offer benefits and reduce their profits or not offer them and watch their reputation suffer. In light of this, there's a case to be made that other systems can work and that insurance is not the only solution to the problem. I'm proving it now with Quality Dental Plan.

Patient perceptions about insurance:

The reason insurance is so appealing is that it seems like you're getting something for almost nothing. After all, when you go to the dentist for routine care, it's free. Of course, you're not thinking about what you're paying each month via payroll deduction. When you factor that in, the true cost of dentistry for an average family is about \$1,200 a year, and that doesn't even include any out-of-pocket costs that family may need to cover if someone needs a root canal or a crown. With many insurance companies, the patient may have to cover 80-90% of costlier procedures. So where exactly is the "benefit" when families are paying over a thousand bucks a year just to cover their preventative care and may have to pay hundreds of dollars on top of that if they need restorations?

How insurance impacts you:

One of the biggest problems with dental insurance stems from a lack of understanding – patients expect it to work the same way medical insurance does. When they find out their bridge is going to cost them over \$1,000 and that's with their insurance, usually we're the ones to shoulder the blame. I've actually lost patients over this. It's not their fault. No one likes to find out something is more expensive than they thought it was going to be. However, the fact that it's understandable doesn't make it any less frustrating for you as a dentist. You made it all this way – you found a new patient, gained their loyalty, all to lose it on a technicality. Now you have to start all over. You've lost them and all of the referrals they might have brought your way.

As a dentist, you perform the same work no matter who pays you – insurance or the patients. I thought...what if I could change that? What if there was a way to offer the same service, but keep the revenue in house?

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So I tested a new system based on improving the business of going to the dentist for patients, employers and dentists. I did away with insurance. I offered pre-paid plans and fee-based memberships in my practice. I reasoned that if I'm providing the service anyway at the same cost to me, and if I can keep the yearly costs the same for my patients, why not keep 100% of the money and offer a solution to their problems and mine? I liked it. And 3 years later, I increased my practice income by 20%. You can too. The logic is simple. (But if you need more convincing, see our whitepaper on Harnessing Buyer Behavior!)

The QDP system benefits everyone – businesses, patients and the dental practice. I increased my practice revenue, and additionally, I had something unique to offer new patients. My market was saturated, but it wasn't an issue for me because I was the only one with this unique program capable of saving patients money while providing them with greater control over and understanding of the treatment they received in my office. And since it's much easier to do internal billing than third party billing, there was nothing I had to change about my office administration. It was easy to implement, but the results were profound.

The solution:

Recognize now that systems that don't offer innovative solutions which can be easily implemented into the way your existing business runs are not for you. Programs that grow your revenue, set you apart from other practices and were designed with your unique business model in mind are.

So don't be content with running your business the same way you always have just because it feels comfortable. Now that you know how to offer your patients something of value that sets you apart, greater production is within reach. And now that we have deconstructed insurance, patient needs and employer needs, and put them into a different context, you'll know exactly how to implement the right programs and systems rather than investing in the wrong ones.

After all, every dollar you place in the insurance company's pocket is one that could go directly to your bottom line.

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5 Massive Mistakes



Massive Practice Mistake #3

Thinking you'll find new patients because you're a great dentist

You're kind. You're skilled. You're easy-going. You're well regarded. You're successful. You've been in business for a while. You have the experience. You have a good reputation. You're great with your patients. You really care. You've redecorated the waiting room. You figure that with all of your good qualities, getting patient referrals and attracting new patients should be a piece of cake.

But it's not simple, is it? It seems like new patients are fewer and farther between. Or you may be attracting the wrong type of patient altogether, simply because you don't know how to effectively communicate the services you offer at your practice. Every dentist has lost a patient to another dentist because they didn't realize you could provide the treatment they were looking for. Ever have a patient come into your office with a full set of veneers that they received from another practice? Though you feel that you're doing all the right things, you wonder why it's so difficult to build a loyal patient base. Simple. Though you're a great dentist, your patients have hundreds of other great dentists to choose from.

You can't do anything about your competitors. All you can do is focus on the things that you can control – and that's your practice and the services you provide for your patients.

You don't find new patients just because you're a good dentist with good qualities. You don't double the size of your patient base by having an ad in the paper and a beautiful website that touts your skills. Patients don't love you simply because you deserve it and have done all the right things.

Most dentists I know have a lot going for them. But the ones who attract new patients are the ones who recognized that they couldn't coast on their impressive credentials alone. Your goal should be to clarify your strengths and identify your weaknesses. This clarity will allow you to make the right decisions when choosing what new things to try at your practice.

The solution:

It's often shocking to learn that the traits in which you may take the most pride are not your most important assets to your patients.

It's not that they don't matter. But don't lose sight of the fact that a patient wants more than just a clinically skilled doctor these days. They expect that. What they want is:

- A dentist who makes him or her feel cared for and good
- A dentist who offers something unique
- A dentist providing something of value to them
- A dentist who can fulfill all of their perceived needs

It's great that you have done five times the required CE this year. But if you're not making your patients feel like they're important to you, if you're not offering things they can't find at other practices in their area and if you're not regularly communicating with them about the treatment you provide in your office, then you'll lose them to someone else who wasn't so shy.



Massive Practice Mistake #4

Believing that marketing is just for sales organizations

Have you looked for ways to increase your practice income, but wasn't sure what would work? Do you think selling is just for retailers? Or is it the opposite? Do you feel awkward and embarrassed that you don't know more about sales and marketing? Are you at a loss as to what is the best way to market your business? Are you annoyed that in spite of all the classes you've taken and books you've read, you still can't figure out this whole marketing thing?

If so, raise your hand and declare, *"I AM A SOLOPRENEUR, AND I AM HUMAN!"*

Yeah, this stuff happens to everyone who is an entrepreneur. You're not the only one with questions about marketing. While you are a dentist running a dental practice, you are also a solopreneur and it's on you to wear all the hats and possess the needed skills for everything you do. That's hard to do when you've got no models for how to do it right. You can feel a bit like Sisyphus when with each new idea you try, no matter what you do, your next task will be uphill and will yield the same results. What's frequently overlooked is that negative experiences create much of our worldview, and we're apt to draw false conclusions because of them. If you've tried systems in the past that haven't worked out, you're likely to say that all systems don't work. Worse, you would be less likely to try the right system just because your previous experiences haven't panned out.

When I first opened my practice, I hated sales and marketing, and frankly, I believed my time was better spent on taking care of my patients or picking up new clinical skills. Clearly, I didn't get my DMD to learn the best way to leverage my resources, attract patients, create lead generation and institute best practices for how to increase my revenue. I got my degree to give people the best oral healthcare I can provide.

The question is, if they don't know you, your business or the services and unique programs you provide, how will they get that care? They won't. You'll lose revenue, they'll go somewhere else and the cycle will repeat. So what's the solution? Well, it exists inside your practice now. You just need to see where.

When I started practicing, I felt confident that I could do it all. After all, I'm smart and well educated, aren't I? But I stumbled through making the business (sales and marketing) side work. I felt awkward, made mistakes and tried systems that didn't work for me. I fell down and scraped my business's knees more times than I want to admit.

What I realized was that I either needed to become a marketing genius or find someone who was. Both seemed problematic. My head was buried in the sand and I was in denial about what my weaknesses were. I'm a great dentist. I'm creative, and I love tinkering. And I was determined to succeed at marketing. Necessity breeds innovation, so I innovated. I scrapped my old ways of doing business, deconstructed everything and recreated the processes and systems that weren't working for me. When I was done, I had pioneered a system would change the way dentists do business.



The solution:

Open up. Get away from this idea that marketing is only for retailers, not for professionals. Drop your assumptions about what you think you know. Recognize what you're great at, and for the things you're not strong in, obtain expert help. Embrace innovation. Consider sales and marketing in a new light with a new perspective. And learn how implementing programs created by people who had the same problems as you can benefit you now.

Massive Practice Mistake #5

Expecting that patients know what services you provide

Consider these very common statements that I hear as a QDP consultant to dentists:

"Patients are finicky."

"Patients are hard to please."

"They don't understand that I'm not affiliated with their insurance company."

"Patients don't have money for costlier treatment."

"My patients go elsewhere for services I provide, and I don't know why."

What do all these complaints have in common?

They're expressing frustration at the patient instead of looking for an active solution. Patients are patients. There's no power in wishing they were different. Your power comes from your ability to change your own thoughts and actions when it comes to your practice.

I can give you a course of action. I can help you understand buyer behavior. I can share with you my methods of increasing practice revenue. I can help you discover how to run your business effectively, instead of repeating what you've been doing to diminishing returns.

I cannot change the patients, the economy or which way the wind blows. In other words, I can give you only the tools to change the one thing you can change: Your practice's marketing system and product offerings.

With Quality Dental Plan, you'll get a course of action that's easy to implement and can increase case acceptance and practice revenue in a way that doesn't disrupt your existing business. You'll be able to understand and therefore accept the more intangible aspects of marketing and selling dentistry.

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My plan takes what you already know, along with the results you've already achieved and helps you to increase your revenue step-by-step. You'll learn why buyers buy the way they do, what the top retailers understand about selling and how this can be applied to running a dental practice. You'll learn what to change, what to keep and why. You'll see case studies of how other practices have used the QDP system to transform their business. You'll discover what kind of experience causes patients to refer their friends and family to you and how to capture patients by attracting new employers too.

With the insight you'll receive from QDP, you'll be informed, empowered and ready to start changing your course of direction, so you can get back to doing what you really love – being a dentist.

You'll also learn:

- 5 major misconceptions you have about marketing your business
- How to leverage yourself in a down market
- How to be effective if you're in a dentist-saturated area
- How to offer benefits to those who have lost them
- What really motivates patients to spend their money
- The insurance game...why it offers no assurances

In Sum...

Massive Practice Mistakes

Massive Practice Mistakes	Effect	Solution
1. Not working to increase your revenue	Generating fewer new patients than possible	Innovation
2. Not being open to new innovations	Frustration about lack of results	Engage with new ideas
3. Thinking you'll find new patients because you're a great dentist	Income is stagnant or reduced	Perspective shifting
4. Believing that marketing is just for sales organizations	Fewer new patients	Different efforts
5. Expecting that patients know what services you provide	Patients go elsewhere for treatment you could provide	Retool your marketing



Do you need QDP? Take my 10-question quiz...

For a free evaluation of how Quality Dental Plan can potentially benefit your practice, call 888-960-1221 or fax this quiz to us at 323-210-7011 today!

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Dentist/Owner Dentist/Partner Associate Other: _____

Practice Name _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Find out if QDP is right for you!

To what extent does each of these statements apply to you and your practice?

(please mark as appropriate)

	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree
Increasing my practice's revenue is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want to know how to continue to build value for patients.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want to generate more revenue without reducing the value I provide to my patients who trust me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't want the hassle of dealing with insurance companies about patient care and reimbursement rates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am too busy with my practice to invent and implement a new marketing program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I wish someone could provide me with turnkey advertising campaigns and marketing efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want to know about inexpensive yet effective ways to increase and retain my patient base.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating more enjoyment at work and a balanced work/home life is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any new systems I implement cannot disrupt the ones that are already in place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Even though I'm not a "marketer" learning skills to market my practice is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'd like to increase word-of-mouth referrals to my practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I've been looking for new marketing systems to implement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating predictable revenue with simple, tested methods and systems is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want to know how to creatively reinvent myself and create changes that sustain my practice over the long term.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'd like for local business owners to know more about me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping costs low while increasing profit is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fax this completed quiz back to 323-210-7011 today for your free practice marketing evaluation.



If you answered “Strongly Agree” to 3 or more questions, you would benefit from our system.

Surprised? Don't be.

All top athletes have coaches, and millions of successful people have mentors, teachers or advisors who provide guidance and wisdom.

You may think you shouldn't need help with your practice, and that's true – when it comes to treating your patients. But managing your business requires an entirely different set of skills, and if it were anything else – fixing the plumbing, doing your taxes or catering a big event – you'd reach out to someone who was trained for that one purpose.

One of my team members will contact you if we agree that you're a good candidate for QDP. Or call us today at 888-960-1221.

Warmest wishes and many thanks,

Dan Marut, DMD

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