

## **Back to Basics**

So you are an orthodontic practice - just one of hundreds in the UK. And you think you have something different to offer potential customers that you shout brashly from your new glossy marketing literature and website: specialist expertise, the latest technology, refurbished and relaxing premises, a customer-focused team! You shout and the customers come knocking. Great! But the real question is do they enter and stay or do they decide they don't like the reality and move on?

### **A fur coat but no knickers**

Believe it or not, you cannot achieve a customer-based strategy by simply re-packaging your existing *modus operandi* in glossy brochures with cleverly worded text, or by becoming an expert at selling. We all recognise the increasingly competitive nature of our market and the necessity for slick sales and marketing, but in isolation, neither will achieve the desired result. In isolation, both lack the substance that supports the promise. Lasting and sustained business success is only ever achieved through the total alignment of all business efforts towards the complete satisfaction of the customer - a true customer-based approach.

### **Delivering the promise**

A satisfied customer is not just looking for the right product, at the right time, for the right price. They want the glow that dealing with your practice can provide. It is *crucial* therefore that every other aspect of the practice is as sharp as your marketing and selling skills. I notice how practices are neglecting key areas that can either make or break their success. For instance, many talk about a commitment to excellence in their literature but when a new patient phones, the call is not answered in a timely manner, or appropriate information about the first visit is not given! Are you committed to excellence if you have a team that does not share a smile with patients or if your treatments are constantly taking longer than your original treatment plan suggests?

### **Back to basics**

My advice is to continually go back to basics. Invest time with your team to analyse what is working in the practice and what is not. What will make you 'positively' stand

out from your competition? What do past, existing and prospective patients say about you at each stage of their experience? Is it a *consistent approach to excellence*, regardless of who they are? Do you actually measure the total customer experience? If not, how do you know if you are delivering it?

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