

Practice Simplicity

Breaking through complexity to better, more effective dental practices

Sharpen Your Axe

A young man approached the foreman of a logging crew and asked for a job.

"That depends," replied the foreman. "Let's see you fell this tree."

The young man stepped forward, and skillfully felled the great tree.

Impressed, the foreman exclaimed, "You can start Monday."

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday rolled by -- and Thursday afternoon the foreman approached the young man and said, "You can pick up your paycheck on the way out today."

Startled, the young man replied, "I thought you paid on Friday."

"Normally we do," said the foreman. "But we're letting you go today because you've fallen behind. Our daily felling charts show that you've dropped from first place on Monday to last place today."

"But I'm a hard worker," the young man objected. "I arrive first, leave last, and even have worked through my coffee breaks!"

The foreman, sensing the young man's integrity, thought for a minute and then asked, "Have you been sharpening your axe?"

The young man replied, "No sir, I've been working too hard to take time for that!"

Our lives are like that. We sometimes get so busy that we don't take time to "sharpen the ax." In today's world, it seems that everyone is busier than ever, but less happy than ever. Why is that? Could it be that we have fallen into old habits?

There's nothing wrong with activity and hard work. But we don't want to get so busy that we neglect the truly important things in life. I all too often see dentists who aren't enjoying the process. It doesn't have to be that way. We all need time to relax, to think and meditate, to learn and grow. We all need time to get properly focused. Like the young man, if we don't take time to sharpen the axe, we will become dull and lose our effectiveness.

Sharpen Your "Axe" by attending one of our upcoming Breakthrough Seminars. Call our office at 1-800-866-0655 for details.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Dr. Hank VanHala's Suc-	2
New Website Info Announced	2
Practice Evaluation Part 6	3

UPCOMING EVENTS

- "Breakthrough" Seminars -
 - July 31-August 1
Richmond, VA
 - September 18-19
Orlando, FL

Please call 1-888-216-5249 for more information about The Coaching Program or to have Dr. Willis to speak to your group or organization.

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."
- Oliver Wendel-Holmes

Dr. Hank VanHala — “We thought we were doing well before..... We had had no idea this was possible!”

After being in The Coaching Program for nine months, Dr. Hank VanHala, of North Canton, Ohio says, “**Probably the biggest difference is that we are now working as a team.** The whole atmosphere in our office is more positive – for me and for the staff. Everyone is focused on what each individual has to do – what their part is in our practice model. Everyone covers for everybody else. If somebody is running behind, all other team members know how to help that person and pitch in to get it done. As a result we’ve been more on time. That not only makes for happier patients, but also for more fulfilled team members.

The way The Coaching Program has us set up our team meetings has made a big difference too. The morning and afternoon huddles take care of the routine items. Which frees up the monthly staff meetings for in-depth discussion of more meaningful issues. We put an agenda sheet in the lab for the monthly staff meeting. When someone has a constructive idea that they want to talk about, they write that idea on the agenda. They have to have a suggested solution to bring up an idea. Then, we implement the idea right away if everybody decides that it’s a good thing to do.

I’ve been in a couple of other

consulting programs and gained a lot of information that became a part of my practice model. But the biggest difference between those programs and The Coaching Program is not only am I involved, but my team as well. I also have a much better relationship with The Coaching Program. It’s a big difference from what I experienced before.

“Even in these economic times...after working with The Coaching Program, our production is up a little more than 16% and our days worked have been reduced!”

We are very excited about The Coaching Program systems we have now. **We thought we were doing well before, but as we’ve developed these systems, we’ve notice some amazing results.** Before The Coaching Program, I thought our systems were pretty good and I also thought I had maxed out what I could produce. But after working with The Coaching Program, our production is up a little more than 16%. And that included three months on our shortened, summer schedule! During the summer months, we don’t work

nearly as many hours per week as we do during the rest of the year. It’s amazing to me how much I didn’t know and how much more successful I can be by having better systems in place. I can hardly wait to see what happens in the next six months when we work our regular schedule. The other interesting thing is that right now, our collections are exceeding our production. Dr. Willis predicted that would happen because we had quite a large accounts receivable balance. In our first six months, we reduced our accounts receivable balance by over \$40,000! The good news is that goes right to the bottom line.

Before enrolling, my biggest concern was that I thought I was too busy for The Coaching Program. I wondered, ‘How am I going to implement this in an already busy practice?’ But I’ve found that I’ve gotten so much more efficient because of The Coaching Program systems we’ve put in place. I’m not hearing the complaining that I heard before about a busy schedule. Our schedule is prioritized and people are just much happier. I know I’m much happier. Our patients are better served and our quality has gotten even better. Working with The Coaching Program has proven to be a great investment for me and for our practice.

We’ve Restructured Our WebSite

We recently launched our new, restructured website. It is easy to navigate and packed full of useful information. You can view articles, past newsletters, order our Financial Arrangements Package and much more.

Visit us at www.DentalCoach.com

“The tragedy of life is not that it ends so soon, but that we wait so long to begin it.”

-W. M. Lewis

Evaluate Your Practice Potential

Is Your Staff As Excited About Your Practice Goals As You Are?

Is your staff as excited about achieving your practice goals as you are? They should be. No, that's not right. Not 'should' be, '*must*' be! If you are to have any real chance of consistently achieving your goals, your staff *must* be as excited about meeting that challenge as you are. No winning team can ever realize it's full potential, unless every member of that team is *totally committed* to winning.

In a previous edition of *Practice Simplicity*, we suggested that National Basketball Association Coach Phil Jackson could help your dental practice. We pointed out several parallels between a championship NBA team and a dental practice that achieves its goals year after year. Each must be committed to continuous improvement. Each must have the kind of structure and systems that exploit the talents of every player. Most importantly, each must be a *true team in every sense of the word*. Teams that win NBA Championships year after year (dental practices that consistently realize their full potential) only occur when the head coach (dentist) *personally* ensures that all players (staff members) clearly understand that structure, those systems, and most important, what their individual roles and responsibilities are.

Of course, it also helps for the team to know what's in it for them. That's a lot easier for the NBA coach than it is for the dentist. You don't have to play basketball to have an idea about the feelings of joy and excitement the players have every time they put on their Championship rings. How about your staff? Do they have the opportunity to share in your success? To 'go for the gold?' Or, win or lose, do they get the same paycheck? And, it's not just the money. It's also the satisfaction of being part of a highly enjoyable practice that provides excellent dentistry to very satisfied patients. Staff members don't enjoy stress any more than you do. They would like to spend more time with their families just like you would. They don't like a five-minute lunch, or getting out late every night either. Make sure your team knows that you're all in this together. Make sure that when your practice succeeds, that everyone can share in that success.

There's one other thing that's very much a part of the NBA that I'd like you to consider. Teams change players and players change teams. Every NBA player is not a star, but they wouldn't be in the NBA if they didn't have a great deal of talent. In spite of their enormous talent, not every player is right for every team, and not every team is right for every player. You and your staff members can only know if you're 'right for each other,' if everyone clearly understands your definition of a successful dental practice. No staff member is wrong if their definition of success is different from yours. But it's going to be very difficult for them to be absolutely committed to something they don't believe in. And, think how much happier they will be helping a dentist achieve the kind of success they do believe in.

Make sure everyone in your office is pulling their share of the load by making sure they are all 'on the team.'

"Before we were introduced to The Coaching Program several years ago, we worked Monday through Friday, 8am to 8pm, seeing everything from root canals to extractions, and had an accounts receivable balance of \$160,000. We now work 8:30 to 5:00, Monday through Thursday, our accounts receivable balance is now \$10,000, we average over \$1000 bonus per staff member per month, and have patients that bring us gifts and actually pay us at the time of service. The Coaching Program has totally changed our dental practice and we now love what we do!

Dawn Hall, Administrative Coordinator, Winston Salem, NC

PRACTICE SIMPLICITY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
Dr. Hank VanHala's Success Story	2
New Website Announced	2
Practice Evaluation Part 6	3

Upcoming Groups

Our next Coaching Groups are being formed in Ohio, Virginia and Florida

Call Jack Wunderlich at 1-888-216-5249 for further information or email: coachprog@aol.com

Practice Simplicity is published by The Coaching Program, 10020-C S. Mingo Rd., Tulsa, OK 74133
Phone: 888-216-5249
Fax: 918-294-1205

© 2003 The Coaching Program. All rights reserved.

Readers are invited to submit, for the Editor's consideration, brief reports or suggestions for articles. Questions are also welcome and may be answered in print.

For more information about The Coaching Program, call 888-216-5249, or write to The Coaching Program, 10020-C S. Mingo Rd., Tulsa, OK 74133, or fax 918-294-1205.

Dr. Robert Willis
The Coaching Program
10020-C S. Mingo Rd.
Tulsa, OK 74137

"Prior to The Coaching Program, we offered several financial options, just as we do now. The difference is that we offered them all at one time, with no pauses, and then had the patient choose one. We were overwhelming them with options without communicating the benefits or value of each option. This left the patient too confused to make a decision. When we received the sample scripts, we modified them to fit our practice and then implemented the system. Since that time, we have been so much more successful in getting patients to schedule treatment and have a firm commitment from them on their method of payment. Thank you!" **Mary Linda, Dr. Lee Ann Hovious, Knoxville, TN**

"When I first started working with Dr. Joe Palmer 2 years ago, I had no experience working in a dental practice. So, everything was very new to me. Within the first 4-6 months Dr. Palmer put me through all of The Coaching Program classes. It really helped me with financial closings. I think the most important things I've learned were how to make sure new patients feel comfortable in our office, and financial arrangements and closings. Once you feel confident about yourself it becomes so natural. Dr. Palmer, Janice and Kim have helped me see how The Coaching Program systems have really worked in our dental practice! **Celia Bridges, Dr. Joe Palmer, Piedmont, SC**

"How much? I can't afford it. I don't have that much money! Does that sound familiar? It does to me. How many times have you wanted something expensive and if you had to pay for it all up front you would not be able to have it? A house, car, motorcycle or even new furniture are some of the things we would like to have, but if we could not make monthly payments, those things would not be possible. The same is true for patients wanting excellent dentistry. Finding out what is financially comfortable is important to our patients and to our practice. Knowing they can have healthy teeth and gums without compromising other financial obligations gives them a reason to smile. Knowing we have made a difference in someone else's life makes our job worthwhile."

Crystal Cashion, Dr. Donald Cheek, Statesville, NC