



A PUBLICATION OF STERLING™ • ISSUE 4

SOLUTIONS

A portrait of Kimberly Chapman, DDS, a woman with brown hair and glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, smiling at the camera.

Personnel: Your Most Valuable Resource or Greatest Burden

DENTISTS INSIDER

Read what hundreds of dentists say
about managing their practices.

Kimberly Chapman, DDS

With the Sterling program, production increased by 24% in the first year.

Although the government had declared the recession was over, I still blamed the economy for flat-lined production in my dental practice in 2010. I had purchased the practice in 2004 with a dream of building a strong business, earning a good living, working three or four days a week and enjoying life with my husband. Six years later, financial problems and stagnant growth would make that dream an improbability.

The Economy

I bought into “the economy” from my office manager. She had lots of reasons why she couldn’t schedule patients to meet production goals, such as “people are afraid to spend money” or “it’s the recession and people can’t afford it.” When I asked her to show a different employee how to do patient recall, she secretly told the employee not to do it. My office manager’s viewpoint was the patient’s health was their own responsibility; if they wanted an appointment, they should call in on their own. That attitude was creating big holes in the schedule.

To make ends meet, I used two business credit cards which

were nearly maxed out. I was barely able to pay off enough of the balance each month to continue charging the recurring expenses. I could no longer pay other bills in one lump sum, I had to partially pay them as the cash came in. I began to skip taking paychecks

I dismissed the office manager who was the real reason production was flat, not the economy.

and when I did pay myself, I’d hold the check until the other checks had cleared the bank first. With mounting credit card debt and no savings, I was becoming more and more insolvent.

Since I was the primary breadwinner in the family, the finances were putting a strain on my marriage. My husband resented how much time I put into the practice with so little to show for it.

Dragging Anchors

I received a magazine from Sterling which talked about “employable” and “unemployable” staff.

Interested, I sent for their management seminar on DVD. Watching it, I was struck by the Sterling management principle that speed and accuracy determine the success of a business. I realized I had a lot of “dragging anchors” in my office, especially at the front desk.

I remember when I was first talking to Sterling about their program. The Sterling service consultant called for me and my office manager, who answered the phone, treated her as an unwelcome solicitation. When the consultant reached me, she warned me that the woman at the front desk was probably driving away business. That thought had never occurred to me, but I had no idea how she dealt with callers when I was in the back treating patients.

I signed up with Sterling to address the flat-lined production and staff issues.

Boosting Production

Early in the Sterling program, I dismissed the office manager who was the real reason production was flat, not the economy. Using Sterling’s hiring procedures and personnel testing, I was



Kimberly Chapman, DDS

able to differentiate between a good job candidate and an unacceptable one. I learned that many people who interview well cannot follow basic instructions and that others are not as caring as they would have me believe.

I began to hire better staff. With the right person on the front desk doing the scheduling, people began to call back. The names of patients whom we hadn't seen in a long time began to appear in the appointment book.

The biggest boost to production was Sterling's statistical management

In just six months, I had four best-ever production months, each higher than the previous one and the numbers keep going higher and higher.

procedure. I was able to measure each employee's performance in an objective way. Formulas were also included—exact steps to be taken in sequence—to reverse declining productivity or

reinforce rising productivity. I was also able to manage weekly. Managing monthly, there is nothing I can do about anything by the end of the month.

My Sterling consultant helped me see what my true overhead costs were; I had thought they were much lower than they were. My own calculations had excluded taxes, savings, and even my own compensation. My consultant worked with me to start accruing financial reserves for emergencies and capital investments.

Reaching New Levels

With the Sterling program, production increased by 24% in the first year. In just six months, I had four best-ever production months, each higher than the previous one and the numbers keep going higher and higher. Our volume of new patients went up along with the percentage of case acceptance.

I am now in control of my practice and my finances. My husband and I are able to invest in remodeling our home and go on vacations—both would have been impossible before the Sterling program. There is so much less stress in my life, personally and professionally.

I recommend calling Sterling and asking for their free management DVD. They not only revitalized my dream for my practice, they are helping me achieve it. □