



First Impressions

For Dental Sales Professionals • May, 2012

Clear Communications

Why managers should evaluate whether they are effectively communicating with their team



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stop when people feel they are
working in isolation, with no
opportunity for
input or feedback.**



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Greener pastures

Eco-dentistry pays off for your dental customers and their patients.

It turns out that practicing environmentally safe dentistry is not as difficult or costly as some dentists might believe. At the same time, a growing group of patients – eco-moms – are looking for eco-conscious dentists to care for their families. With a bit of encouragement from their distributor sales reps, more dentists are recognizing the benefits of practicing green dentistry.

“There is a misperception that it costs more to practice dentistry in an environmentally sound

reusable trays, she adds. Nor are fewer orders for disposables necessarily a bad thing for sales reps. “When dentists save money on disposable [barrier products] and impressions trays, they have more money to spend on equipment,” she says. And, reps who are committed to the long-term well-being of their customers will likely be the ones who make these sales, she points out.

Indeed, eco-dentistry also involves some more substantive changes, such as converting to digital

imaging. For some dentists, converting from traditional x-rays to digital imaging may be overwhelming, but reps can educate them on the benefits. For one, it’s safer for the environment to avoid using lead foils and chemical fixers, which often pollute public sewage systems and are known to be skin, eye and respiratory tract irritants, according to the Eco-Dentistry Association.

In addition, they have been shown to have neurological impact, such as seizures, and to be toxic to blood, thyroid, kidneys and liver, among other risks. “Many x-ray developers report to us that they are developing in closets, without proper ventilation,” says Pockrass. “They report a significant increase in upper respiratory illness, [having to take] more sick days and even a greater rate of miscarriage.”

If that’s not enough to convert a dental practice from x-ray to digital imaging, dentists should consider the time-savings that digital offers their staff. For example, digital systems do not require traditional developers and processors, which otherwise would have to be cleaned and put back together. Furthermore, digital x-rays provide immediate results, decreasing x-ray times by as much as 10 or 20 minutes, according to experts, who point out that



Practicing eco-dentistry can be as simple as reminding staff to turn off office lights and equipment before leaving at the end of the day.

way,” says Ina Pockrass, co-founder of the Eco-Dentistry Association (Berkeley, Calif.). In fact, practicing green dentistry “helps dentists fare better economically, by saving money, generating revenue and attracting patients,” she points out. “Sales reps can play a pivotal role in helping dentists practice in an environmentally sound way.”

Taking it digital

Practicing eco-dentistry can be as simple as reminding staff to turn off office lights and equipment before leaving at the end of the day, or using reusable barrier products and impression trays, notes Pockrass. “It takes no more time to sterilize the trays than it does to throw out [disposable trays], lug out the trash and order new trays,” she says. And, an average sized dental practice can save about \$200 annually with

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with traditional x-ray, dentists do not know if they need to be retaken until they are developed.

Practically speaking, digital x-rays can be enlarged for better viewing and more precise diagnostics. Digital intra-oral cameras enable patients to see actual pictures of their teeth on a chair-side monitor, encouraging them to ask more questions and have a dialogue with their dentist. Plus, the odor of traditional x-ray chemical fixers can be off-putting to some patients, notes Pockrass.

Finally, reps should remind their customers of the cost savings generated from no longer having to purchase lead foils and chemical fixers. "The average dental practice that has switched to digital can improve its bottom line by more than \$8,700 annually," says Pockrass. Yet, about 65 percent of the 125,000 dental offices across the United States have yet to convert to digital imaging, she points out. That means that 4.8 million lead foils continue to be disposed of each year, and 28 million liters of x-ray fixer continue to be dumped down the drain, contaminating the country's water supply, she explains.

Eco-mom

Eco dentistry isn't just about using the right products. It's about attracting new patients as well. Take the growing market segment of consumers who practice Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS), a focus on health and fitness, the environment, personal development, sustainable living, and social justice. "This consumer group represents one of the most significant groups of dental patients – the eco-moms between 20 and 40 years old who have young children," says Pockrass. Not only are these moms very conscientious about what their children eat, sleep and breathe, they generally are the ones who make decisions about their caregivers. And, they're looking for eco-dentists.

"Eco-moms spend money on healthcare," says Pockrass. "They prioritize dental care over going out

to dinner." If the hygienist says they and their children need to come back more frequently for cleanings, they will, she notes. "This group of eco-moms will fuel the success of dental practices," she says. That said, if a dental practice is marketing itself as an eco-practice, it had better be using non-toxic surface disinfectants and reusable cloth barrier products, she adds.

For that matter, eco-practices should invest in amalgam separators as well. Amalgam filling material contains elemental mercury. When mercury gets into drinking, irrigation and fishing waters, it can become an environmental and human-health concern, according to the Eco-Dentistry Association. "Silver fillings are 50 percent mercury by weight," says Pockrass. "The Environmental Protection Agency [estimates that] dental offices dump 3.7 tons of mercury waste [each year] from dental amalgams into local water supplies and that dental practices are the number one contributor of mercury waste in the water supply."

Good amalgam separators can capture over 99 percent of mercury from fillings, Pockrass continues. Some states currently require practices to have separators, and more are expected to do so by the year's end. A dental practice only requires one per office, and the cost is minimal, she points out. But, again, 65 percent of practices have yet to add them to their practice. "This is good business for dental sales reps," she adds.

"We define green dentistry as practicing in a way so as to reduce waste and enable the dental office to authentically reach wellness lifestyle patients," she says, noting that the Eco-Dentistry Association supports dentists and partners with distributor reps through its GreenDOC™ Dental Office Certification Program. Practicing dentistry comes with a high overhead, she says. But, it's a misperception that practicing green dentistry will cost dentists more. **FI**

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Clear Communications

M
Why managers should evaluate whether they are effectively communicating with their team

Most of us think we're pretty good communicators. Unfortunately, our self assessment is not always the best measure of effectiveness. Everything we say is clear to us – or we wouldn't have said it that way. Yet, we find ourselves frustrated when people take what we've said the wrong way, or disappointed when others don't keep their deals.





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Most of us think we're pretty good communicators. Unfortunately, our self assessment is not always the best measure of effectiveness. Everything we say is clear to us – or we wouldn't have said it that way. Yet, we find ourselves frustrated when people take what we've said the wrong way, or disappointed when others don't keep their deals.

There are several ways to recognize when personal communications break down or negatively impact peers, subordinates and overall effectiveness at work:

- Frequent requests for more information about issues already discussed
- Seeing little or change in people who have applied your recommendations

Everyone has experienced at least one of the symptoms of poor communication above. If you experience these situations on a regular basis, then you might want to apply some of these ideas to strengthen these skills. The truth is, if you need to improve your communication skills – you are not alone. A European consulting firm surveyed 2,000 workers and found that 64 percent would work more efficiently and their overall performance would improve if senior management communicated more effectively.

If the effects of poor communication impacted only one individual, the need to improve would not be as urgent. However, its negative influence runs wide

The truth is, if you need to improve your communication skills – you are not alone. A European consulting firm surveyed 2,000 workers and found that 64 percent would work more efficiently and their overall performance would improve if senior management communicated more effectively.

- Inability to influence others to accept your ideas or change their point of view
- Ongoing conflict or feelings of frustration interacting with others
- Believing what you do or say doesn't really "change things" in the long run
- Frequent need to redo projects or make major modifications
- Continual need to send reminders to others to take action, meet deadlines, or send information
- Lack of input, questions, or feedback on your ideas
- Feeling of disconnection and discomfort in one-on-one or small-group interactions

and deep within many organizations. Consider just a few areas:

Productivity and performance. The quality and the amount of what gets done at work suffers when communications breakdown. A lot of time is wasted waiting for clear instructions or when work needs to be redone due to lack of understanding. Communications commonly break down through vague language between co-workers or unclear instructions between managers and staff. Especially in an era of e-mail and texting, the message can get lost in a sea of digital back and forth – much of misunderstood due to poor writing or unclear messaging.

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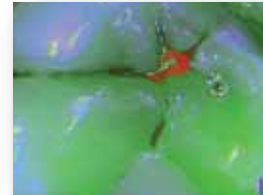
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Morale and motivation. According to a study by Dye and Garman (2006), one of the biggest contributors to low morale within many U.S. corporations is poor communication among managers. The cost of low employee morale has been shown to hit company budgets hard. The Gallup Organization estimates that there are 22 million actively disengaged employees costing the American economy as much as \$350 billion per year in lost productivity including absenteeism, illness, and other problems that result when employees are unhappy at work.

Fortunately, improving employee morale and motivation, damaged by poor communication, can be remedied by listening, asking appropriate ques-

customers! Obviously, customer satisfaction is essential to maintaining ongoing revenue and maintaining a strong organization. Companies weak in communication expose themselves to a myriad of ways that undermine their sales and marketing efforts – not to mention their intentions to establish a positive on-going relationship with the people they desire to serve. When the vital flow of communication in and out of the company is broken, there are many ways this places the organization and wealth of knowledge it brings to its managers at a significant disadvantage. For example, when communication to the company is lost, it misses out on valuable consumer feedback. Poor customer communication can show up in marketing

Companies weak in communication expose themselves to a myriad of ways that undermine their sales and marketing efforts – not to mention their intentions to establish a positive on-going relationship with the people they desire to serve.

tions and making careful observations. An effective manager will not only ask questions, listen to answers and observe behaviors, but also apply what is gathered to help workers achieve their highest potential. At the very least, workers will get a much clearer sense of direction from their boss. It is quite surprising how quickly things improve when employees see managers making good effort and positive changes resulting from their feedback and involvement.

Customer satisfaction. Everything starts at the top in every company. Senior managers lacking in strong communication skills create a company culture of that not only negatively impacts the organization internally but hurts the source of revenue and growth –

pieces as well as from the presentations of your sales force. To maximize profitability, put proactive customer communication policies in place that follow up after an initial purchase to ensure customer satisfaction, and to maintain contact with clients.

Fixing common communication mistakes

Dancing around the truth. It isn't easy for anyone to have to deliver bad or difficult news – unfortunately managers are tasked to deliver bad mail on a fairly routine basis. More unfortunately, most don't deliver it well. It is important to develop a direct but empathetic approach when dealing with difficult conversations or news. People that are ill prepared tend to skirt around the main issues. This appears that you



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are either you're not being completely up-front with the employee – or they think you're not. This erodes trust in your word and in you. *Be prepared – be direct – and be empathetic.*

Playing too close to vest. People can sense when they are receiving incomplete information and they resent it. This too promotes a lack of trust. As a manager, you might be privy to information that you are not at liberty to disclose. In those cases, a simple explanation will do. However, routinely withholding relevant information or not taking the time necessary

agenda that is undermining your goals and intention at work. Avoid double-speak – make sure your actions, policies, and behavior match your words.

Sluggish to respond. When you are slow to respond to others it sends a clear message – you are either too busy to handle your basic responsibilities or too arrogant to care. Most business professionals expect (and deserve) a response within 24 hours if not the same business day. If you are an overachiever – strive for responding within 90 minutes of the inquiry. Be responsive.

Communication and productivity stop when people feel they are working in isolation, with no opportunity for input or feedback.

to provide the necessary framework for open upfront understanding of the issues is counterproductive and just plain wrong. Be open and candid.

Two sides of one mouth. If what you say appears inconsistent with what you do – your credibility will plummet – and it is more difficult getting it back than losing it. Consider where you may not 'walk the talk' and fix it. Mean what you say – say what you mean is fundamental leadership in action. In other situations, some managers feel the need to be purposefully evasive to save face – yours or theirs. Check in to see if you are running some personal

People over projects. No improvement in communication techniques will fix fundamental flaws in the relationships you have with people. If employees think you don't care about them or they don't feel a connection with you – you have to own it and work on the relationship. This is another place where positive changes come quickly – but you need to be upfront, honest and forthright

in your efforts to reengage and demonstrate you value people over projects. *Reprioritize and connect.*

One-way street. The very definition of communication is the exchange of information. Communication and productivity stop when people feel they are working in isolation, with no opportunity for input or feedback. Encourage open discussion and feedback.

One of the expected qualifications of being a manager is employing solid communication skills. In the midst of everything else that pulls at you to improve and develop, it is easy to ignore this fundamental talent – yet, I hope we have convinced you of just how critical it is! Everything works better in business and in life when communication is good. Don't believe me? Go ask your spouse! **FI**

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Windshieldtime

Chances are you spend a lot of time in your car.

Here's some automotive-related news that might help you appreciate your home-away-from-home a little more.

Car tips on Weather Channel

The Weather Channel Companies said it will feature vehicle care and maintenance content from the Car Care Council on weather.com, its online weather news and information site. The Car Care Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating consumers about the benefits of vehicle care, maintenance and repair, has partnered with weather.com to provide selected tips and advice for motorists with links back to the new council website, www.carcare.org.

Extended warranty?

Thinking of purchasing an extended warranty for your car? The Service Contract Industry Council – which works with state legislators to regulate the licensing of motor vehicle service contract providers, mandate consumer protections and implement stringent financial safeguards – offers some advice. Service contracts make sense, because manufacturers' warranties typically cover only a fraction of the 10,000 components found on today's vehicles. What's more, manufacturers' warranties do not cover steering, electrical, suspension, air conditioning, heating, fuel systems, brakes and convenience packages, such as navigation systems. Manufacturers' warranties are based on defects in material and workmanship, and do not cover normal wear-and-tear.

Cars connected on the cloud

Imagine that you're approaching an intersection at 30 mph with a green light ahead. What you can't see is that another vehicle coming in on the cross street is about to run a red light. In a typical car, you would enter the intersection and most likely be slammed in the side by the other vehicle, which could seriously injure or even kill you. But in this car, a prominent

red warning light flashes on the dash and an alarm blares, giving you time to hit the brakes before entering the danger zone. That is one of several crash scenarios that can be prevented by a new safety system being developed by government, universities and automakers, and that is featured in Consumer Reports' Annual Auto Issue. It allows cars in the same area to communicate with one another over a wireless network, exchanging data about each vehicle's speed, location, and direction of travel. With that information, the system can determine whether a crash is likely and warn drivers to brake. In more advanced designs, it can even brake the car if a driver doesn't respond quickly enough. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, such a system has the potential to help drivers avoid or minimize up to about 80 percent of crashes involving unimpaired drivers. In addition to vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication, systems are also being developed that allow cars to communicate with roadside infrastructure, such as traffic lights, and work and school zones. Taken together the technology is now often referred to as V2X.

Owners holding onto cars longer

The average length of ownership of vehicles that were purchased new has risen to a record 71.4 months, or nearly six years, according to an analysis of U.S. vehicle registrations by Polk, a market intelligence firm. For consumers who purchased used vehicles, the average length of ownership is nearly 49.9 months. Combined, owners of new and used vehicles are holding on to their vehicles for an average 57 months. For new and used owners combined, the length of vehicle ownership among U.S. consumers has increased 23 percent since the third quarter of 2008. A number of factors contribute to the increased length of

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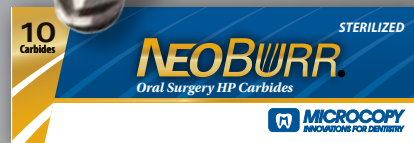
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Chances are you spend a lot of time in your car.

Here's some automotive-related news that might help you appreciate your home-away-from-home a little more.

ownership, according to Polk, which analyzed vehicle registration data through Sept. 2011. First, consumer spending remains conservative in a still-weak job market with relatively high unemployment rates. Second, many buyers have longer-term financing options to secure more affordable payments. Third, vehicles produced in recent years have been more durable and more reliable than their predecessors, according to industry reports. Several manufacturers are also offering longer warranties for new vehicles, reducing the risk for consumers who want to keep their vehicles longer.

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Auto loans more affordable than ever

The automotive loan market showed continued improvement in the last quarter of 2011, with interest rates for new and used vehicle loans reaching the lowest levels since 2008, according to Experian Automotive, a market intelligence firm. Average interest rates for new vehicle loans fell to 4.52 percent in Q4 2011, down from 4.84 percent in Q4 2010. Average rates for used vehicle loans fell to 8.68 percent in Q4 2011, down from 8.71 percent in Q4 2010. Average credit scores for new and used vehicle loans also dropped in the quarter; the percentage of loans to customers with nonprime, subprime or deep subprime credit scores increased; and lenders increased their willingness to make loans between six and seven years long. Consumers also continued to do a better job of repaying loans in Q4 2011, as loan delinquencies fell.

Lexus most dependable

Lexus ranks highest in vehicle dependability among all nameplates in 2012, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Vehicle Dependability Study. In addition, the Lexus LS has the fewest problems in the industry. Rounding out the five highest-ranking nameplates are Porsche, Cadillac, Toyota and Scion, respectively. MINI and Scion posts the greatest year-over-year improvements from 2011. Toyota Motor Corporation continues to perform well in long-term dependability, and garners eight segment awards—more than any other automaker in 2012. The 2012 Vehicle Dependability Study is based on responses from more than 31,000 original owners of 2009 model-year vehicles after three years of ownership. Among compacts, the highest ranking are Toyota Prius, Toyota Corolla and Hyundai Elantra. Among midsize cars, they are Ford Fusion, Mitsubishi Galant and Toyota Camry. Among large cars, the top 3 are Buick Lucerne, Toyota Avalon and Ford Taurus. **FI**

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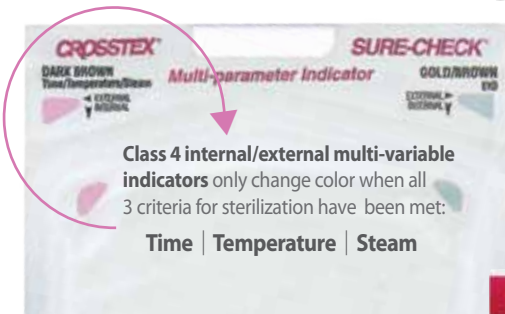
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You can't be sure about sterilization without internal multi-variable indicators for time, temperature and steam! ISO standards and CDC guidelines make it clear: to ensure effective sterilization, items must be exposed to all 3 sterilization criteria – time, temperature and steam. Yet traditional sterilization pouches have an external or internal Class 1 process indicator that measures only temperature. Patent pending Sure-Check pouches have multi-variable **CLASS 4** indicator technology that confirms all 3 criteria for sterilization have been met. **Today, more than ever, your customers need to be SURE about sterilization – they need Sure-Check!**

CROSSTEX® | **PROTECTS®**
A CANTEL MEDICAL COMPANY



Sure-Check® Sterilization Pouches



Class 4 internal/external multi-variable indicators only change color when all 3 criteria for sterilization have been met:

Time | Temperature | Steam

Crosstex delivers a complete system for the highest level of sterility assurance!

Sure-Check pouches, when combined with daily, weekly or monthly testing using ConForm biological monitoring systems, provide the highest level of sterility assurance available. Contact us for more information!



Sterilization

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Changing the
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