

Stop racing the clock...



**Better Time Management:
*Overcoming the Full Time Relay Race***



As each dental office prepares for their next team meeting, your thoughts turn to how you can work smarter versus just working harder. That very issue is one of the cornerstone strategies The JP Institute has studied for the last 25 years. Using hands-on coaching in over 2,000 dental practices throughout the United States and Canada, we have compiled an outline of some of our best time management strategies.

The path to doing anything better always begins with an assessment of what you are currently doing. You can make many frustrating attempts without achieving your desired refinements if you don't have a concrete goal of what you are trying to achieve. To facilitate the refinements needed within your practice and to ensure that there is enough time to review the patient's previously diagnosed yet incomplete restorative and aesthetic treatment plans, The JP Institute has formulated the following assessment to maximize results:

- 1) What is the concrete goal you are trying to achieve? If your practice is focusing on increasing the number of accepted case presentations for patients with incomplete treatment plans, it is necessary to research each job description within the office to determine what refinements are necessary.
- 2) Ask each team member, "During the patient's appointment time, and according to your job description, when is it most appropriate to review the incomplete treatment with the patient?" Every team member must put down in writing; when during the appointment they feel they could accomplish the desired objective. When you have an open mind during this exercise you can have amazing results defining what areas of time management that you can refine. Do not rush through this exercise! This may take two to three team meetings depending on how much time you set aside. The most important objective to define within your 'magical hour' is whether or not you are trying to complete a patient that **is not a true preventive appointment**, and trying to squeeze in all of your clinical and communication expectations within your hour. That scenario creates overwhelm and never having a sense of completion, and always feeling like 'I could have done more.' This exercise is well worth the time it takes. By utilizing the focus of defining ***when you spend the quality time within each appointment reviewing incomplete treatment*** you can usually count on an increase in accepted treatment by at least 20%!
- 3) It is equally important to assess the visual technology that you are utilizing to enhance the patient's perceived value and case acceptance. Remember, a visual

is worth a 1,000 words. First, review your patient's incomplete treatment plan by having your intra oral camera picture(s) up on the monitor when the patient walks in the operatory. If the photos are not stored in your system, capture the picture at the beginning of the appointment. Then, during one of your natural breaks (an oxymoron in dentistry), perhaps when you are developing film, or doing some documentation, utilize a patient educational system like Patterson Dental's Casey System to describe the procedure. In order to really become successful with your patient case acceptance, you must first review with the patient the incomplete dentistry *with the most important objective –WHY WAS THE PROCEDURE ORIGINALLY DIAGNOSED?* Getting the patients attention as to why the doctor originally diagnosed the procedure and what can happen if the patient does not move forward with the treatment is a critical objective to re-engage the patient in the value of the treatment. If the treatment is Aesthetics, review with the patient the benefits, and offer some emotional responses from other patients as to how the procedure literally changed their life.

- 4) The next question to ask is, "What current changes in my time management need to be made to implement the necessary refinements?" The easiest answer is to schedule more time per appointment, which is very rarely is the best answer for the practice. This is where you really need to scrutinize your personal time management. We also find this is a very emotional question. We all like to think of ourselves as being as efficient as possible. When assessing your time management remember to be very objective as to where refinements can occur. Sometimes, just by utilizing advanced technology allows the patient to perceive the value of your procedure and can save you the time you need. Consequently, you receive a successful outcome with increased case acceptance in less time.
- 5) Additionally, during our in-office consulting and assessment of a practice's potential for time management refinement, we have observed that one of the most notorious areas in which we lose time in our appointments is when the patient becomes sensitive during our procedures. Dentsply Pharmaceuticals has a product designed to eliminate sensitivity during the dental appointment. This is groundbreaking news for better time management! The product is called Oraqix, which works as a non-injecting anesthetic! For states that hygienists can provide anesthetic, it is great for mid- line, cervical and palatal areas. For the states that the hygienists cannot provide the anesthetic the time management savings of the doctor not having to leave his/her patient is a leap for joy for both the doctor and the hygienist! And what about the assistant that is blowing air on a tooth that is so sensitive that the patient is in pain. Do we go ahead and do the procedure and inflict the pain because it is only for a few seconds? Does that build the confidence of our patients? The time management savings for all of these scenarios is so wonderful to open up communication time. Just ask any team member how much more incomplete periodontal/ restorative/aesthetic dentistry they could have reviewed if they did not have to spend more time trying and trying to get the patient comfortable!

The next objective during your assessment would be to have each team member ask themselves, “What are the challenges I will personally need to overcome in order to achieve my goals?” You may find the time to review the patient’s incomplete treatment plans, however, you may not have the confidence with the case presentation skills or the expertise of utilizing your technology. The amount of time you personally spend refining your communication skills and becoming proficient in the use of your technology will allow you to achieve tremendous results. Because obtaining proficiency in the use of technology and proficiency in your case presentation skills are such requested topics, each year the nations leading dental hygiene conferences, like the ADHA and RDH Under One Roof, dedicate continuing education speakers to these concerns. By becoming proficient in these areas you will save time getting the patient to understand their treatment plan, ***and to say yes for case acceptance!***

Last but not least, let’s give ourselves a compassionate reason to choose to go down this path of time management scrutiny. Ask each team member to write down...**Five Benefits our Patients Will Receive by Our Office Reaching Our Personal Time Management Goals.** You will find this exercise is the catalyst to making a difference in your patient’s health, and in turn will give you the reason to choose to succeed!

*Peggy Sprague, RDH, is a Co-Founder of the The JP Institute, which has taught the most advanced clinical protocols, technology, and evidence based science for the past 25 years. The JP curriculum emphasizes team support for comprehensive dentistry. JP specializes in analyzing and refining practice philosophies, strategies and business systems, hands-on implementation of clinical skills, and technology and product integration. Call The JP Institute at (800) 946-4944 for a **complementary Practice or Career Profile** to analyze your professional development, clinical protocols, technology and product integration, management systems, and profit potential.*

