

IT'S TIME TO GET REAL

FOLLOW MY FOUR-STEP GUIDE AND GAIN INSIGHT INTO YOUR PATIENTS, FORM A BOND WITH THEM AND BECOME A BETTER DENTIST IN THE PROCESS

ADAM MORGAN

Today, many people are trying to stand out and be different. In fact, it is one of the top things people tell me they want when I meet them. The truth is, most people do not create something different and they certainly do not stand out because they fail to break away, think differently and behave differently.

In a world where you can get pretty much anything you want and have access to limitless opportunities to grow and succeed, why is it that almost 90 per cent of companies and businesses are similar to all of their competitors?

Why is it that we have come to accept a certain standard as the norm? We walk into a retailer and come out underwhelmed by their products or level of customer experience. We have all been somewhere and been met with the tired dreary face of the receptionist and lacklustre illusion of warmth they give off. And there are many more examples I could give here.

The more I travel and speak around the world, the more I have come to believe that we must put the patient experience at the very heart of everything we do. You see, if we want to be truly different and stand out in the sea of sameness that is out there right now, we must stop comparing ourselves to others in our field and start looking up at the world around us.

For me, everything rises and falls on communication – great or poor. Think of the people you most love to spend time with – why is that? How do those people make you feel when you are around them? Why is it you only feel that way when you are in their company? It is true that everyone is born with a need to be valued, wanted and liked. In fact I haven't met a single person who has ever said to me: "Adam, I just love being undervalued, disliked and unwanted!" That has never happened.

And yet, many practices communicate the wrong messages to patients. We make it hard for them to deal with us. We treat them like we are in charge and that they are just "the patient" – as if we are more important than they are. I've seen patients

walk out of practices in tears because they have been communicated with poorly and then I see dentists and their teams bragging about how much they care.

Simply put, if you want to be different and create a truly world-class practice, you have got to stop the madness and get real about patient experience because there is more choice than ever and we are no longer being compared with the other practice down the street. We are being compared to all the other companies out there – and let's be honest, some do it very well and some do not.

There are four key communication principles that are absolutely essential to creating a personalised, skilfully crafted patient experience. These simple principles are literally life-changing when used religiously and passionately and I have worked with many companies around the world that make these elements the foundation of their business. They should be talked about daily, practised continually and the whole team should be involved in the delivery of these principles – remember, this is a whole team responsibility.

It's time for you and your team to get REAL:

RELATE

The first principle is that we must be able to relate to people. The dictionary definition of relate is: to find the connection between two or more things, objects or people. So, in other words, we need to find something in common with the other person. Correct? I don't think so!

It is much deeper than this. In actual fact we should be looking for emotional bonds that can be formed with patients. We must be able to feel how they feel, value what they value and remove the barriers that lie between us. Think about a close friend or family member. Do you treat your patients like you would treat them? Do you ask about their day and wholeheartedly hang on every word of their response?

You see, to truly relate to another human being, we must stop focusing on



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Adam works specifically with practices throughout the UK and helps dental teams to raise the bar, be more successful and achieve their goals and vision. With more than a decade of expertise working with many of the leading hotels and resorts, retailers, financial institutions of the world, he is a talented consultant able to deliver results.

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what is important to us and place all of the focus onto the other person. How can you relate if you are not fully listening or do not have a genuine interest in the other person?

Do you know what they do? What they are working towards? My challenge to you when it comes to relating to others is that you must get under the skin of your patients. Ask them meaningful questions about their life and in return talk about your own life and experience. Truly relating means giving and taking – the sharing of something valuable – not just talking about the weather or trip in to your surgery!

ENGAGE

Secondly, all great companies engage with their customers. They have a partnership with them. They are on the same level. They have mutual respect and trust for one another. Do your patients say that about you and your team?

When two people are fully engaged in conversation with one another – nothing else exists. You stop thinking about all the things you have to do in the day, what is for dinner, what time the kids need to be picked up, whether you locked the front door, and are fully present in that conversation you are having in that precise moment.

That is how it feels to be fully engaged.

The same is true when we look at engaging with our patients. Do your conversations fully engage them, or do we superficially skim the surface? When someone is engaged, they feel a tremendous sense of being valued. Their respect and trust for you grows and their openness to share more about themselves increases.

AUTHENTIC

Thirdly, today it is paramount that we are authentic. No one likes to be served by the fake friendly waitress or be met by the phoney cheery receptionist. You can spot the people who are disingenuous a mile off.

And yet, we can sometimes do the exact same thing with our patients. We put on the smile and away we go – but our patients can tell we are not being genuine. People value authentic people. It's a fact.

So when you are with your patients, treat them like the kings and queens of the world. Look after them and value their business. After all, they don't have to come to your practice, they choose to. And, in return, choose to give them a piece of yourself by making them laugh, taking a real interest in them and showing them you too are a real person, just like they are.

LISTEN AND LEARN

Finally, listen and learn. I put these two

together because apart they do not work. I know many people who listen and do not learn – and also those that have knowledge but do not listen. You need to do both.

Listen to what your team are saying. Have you ever sat down in your team meeting and asked for as many ways the team can think of to improve the practice? Or sat in the waiting room and just talked to each person that sits down to find out what they like and don't like? Do you use surveys that tell us what we already know or do you actually have a heart-to-heart with patients about how you could be a better dentist or practice?

Once you have listened, what changes are you willing to make? This is the hard part, because when you have truly listened, you can always learn something. Then you should get your team around you, rally the troops and change.

So to wrap up – it's time to RELATE, ENGAGE, be AUTHENTIC, LISTEN and LEARN. By doing so, I promise that your communication and patient experience will increase and you will have happier and more open patients – and team members!

Be different, don't follow what the rest are doing, but break away and put excellent communication and experience at the heart of what you do. The results will speak for themselves.

The Adam Morgan Company

- Are you looking to take your practice to the next level?
- Do you want to increase treatment uptake by communicating more effectively?
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