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Internal Controls

*The Fourth Simple Factor to
Business Success
Fifth in a Series on Practice Growth*

We're on the last lap. We have already spoken about the importance of trading our minutes for significant return - loving God and loving people. We have repeatedly touched on the four simple factors necessary to make a business grow. If you've been implementing these ideas, you have already seen your practice take on new life - growing in numbers, in income, in enthusiasm, in lowered stress, and in impact on patients' lives.

What are the four factors important to building a healthy business?

- ☑ New business - attracting new patients
- ☑ Repeat business - retaining existing patients for reasons that are in their best interest
- ☑ Increased back-door business - offering additional services that our patients want and need
- ☑ Internal controls - limiting expenses, without sacrificing quality, and training of ourselves and our staff

Let's talk about internal controls. This is a broad topic in relation to growing a business, but we will briefly address two areas within it. First, we will turn our attention to limiting expenses. I have to admit that this is a weak area for me in my practice. In the attempt to provide my patients with an excellent experience every time they enter our office, I may go too far. We serve fresh coffee, hot tea and filtered water in the waiting room. We have snacks and newer reading materials available. The rest room is as clean and comfortable as the nicest one in my home. *(Without the shower. We haven't gone that far. Yet.)*

The staff is friendly and attentive and good at what they do. We aim to have each patient wait five minutes or less. We have answers ready for most any question that is likely to be asked. Records are ready for patient treatment before the patient enters the office. We offer all the latest diagnostic and treatment equipment that we can rationally provide. We strive for excellence, and people like to come to our office. We aim to exceed their expectations, and we accomplish this almost every time.

Yet, we can go too far with this, too. At some point the expenses get out of hand, and the trend has to be reigned back in a bit. Look at this on occasion. Have a trusted advisor look at it once in awhile. We want to be sharp, but reasonable.

The second facet to this area of business growth is training. The key to this is not necessarily outside classes, though those may be important at times. The key is regular staff meetings. We do ours twice a month without fail. Attendance

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mandatory. We serve lunch to sweeten the pot, but, even without a free lunch, staff meetings are critical to forge a team, to sharpen our skills, and to keep us all doing the right things all the time. Entropy affects the energy of the universe, the cleanliness of children's bedrooms, and the efforts of staff to stay on task. If allowed to run its normal course, our team will stray from policies, do tasks a bit sloppier every day, and lose focus on how to do what needs to be done in the office. We want our staff sharp and able to do the right task the right way - every time.

So what do we do at staff meetings? First of all, we laugh. We tell a joke or two. Next, we celebrate. We share victories we have seen in the office and in our families. Then we polish up problem areas that have shown since the last staff meeting - issues that have arisen that are not yet covered in our staff policy manual. Everyone is encouraged to keep a list of these to bring to the table. And then we finish up by covering a major area that every team member has to work on - including things like scripts for new patient phone calls, how to present the report of findings, how to teach exercises that I have prescribed, scripts for posting and scheduling and collections, what paper work has to be done (and how) on the first visit, and so on. We revolve through a series of these types of items. Sometimes they seem just a bit repetitive, so we play games with them, letting different staff members teach the topic of the day - and then the rest of us playfully critique how they did. We actually have a lot of fun at these meetings, and as I said above, they serve several very important functions.

So, tighten the financial screws just a bit - or at least sit down and review where the money is going on occasion. Continue offering an excellent experience to your patients. And keep you and your staff sharp by holding staff meetings - at least twice a month.

This is the fourth factor to building a healthy business. We are not quite done yet. To finish up this series, we will discuss implementation next time.

2010 Annual Convention

*Plan to be in the
Buffalo, New York, Area
Next Summer!
June 23rd - 27th, 2010*



The CCA's 2010 Annual Convention is scheduled to be at the Millennium Hotel in Buffalo, New York, next June!