



ORTHO2

Practice Purple!

by **Rosemary Bray**

Imagine yourself on vacation, driving through the countryside enjoying the farmlands. You see a brown cow on the side of the road. You stop. You take a picture, you smile. You are on your way. Soon, you see another brown cow at the next farm. "Oh look, another brown cow," you mention to the kids in the back seat, now bored with all the cows. Then you pass another, and then one more. Soon, you stop noticing the brown cows—they just seem to be everywhere. Then it happens! You turn the next corner and there in front of you, grazing at the side of the fence is another cow—but it's **PURPLE!** You can't believe your eyes! You stop, you jump out, you take a picture, and another picture... you get on the cell phone, you tell everyone you can think of that you saw a real **PURPLE COW!**

Why was the **Purple Cow** so special? Why did you tell everyone about it? Author, Seth Godin, tells us in his great book, *The Purple Cow*, how we stop looking at all the brown cows because they are common, they are everywhere, they are nothing unusual. The analogy that he presents to us is that the brown cows are all the businesses (ortho offices, if you will) that are alike, that blend into the next one. They are everywhere. Pretty soon, people stop noticing because they all seem to be just the same. However, if someone saw an ortho practice that was different, unique, special, unlike all the others, they would stop, take the picture, and tell everyone about it.

Are you phenomenal, fantastic, fun, fresh, and exciting? If you are, perhaps you are a **Purple Cow!** Patients don't forget "**Purple Cow Practices.**" Godin says that marketing is not something you do because everyone else does—it is inherent, it is built into your office. You are either invisible like the brown cow or you are extraordinary like the **Purple** one. Something remarkable is worth talking about. Worth noticing. It's a **Purple Cow.** Boring is invisible—a Brown Cow.

One example of a **Purple Cow** that he uses in the book is

that of Dutch Boy Paint. They noticed the paint cans were heavy, difficult to open, harder yet to pour from, and often a real hassle. They came up with an easy to carry, easy to open, easy to pour paint jug. Sales soared! They merely enhanced the product and did not have to change the advertising. They became **Purple**—and people talked.

Another example was of a physician's office where the doctor personally called his patients with test results, even if it was good news! If a routine test came back with no problem indicated, he called to tell the patient. It was a simple phone call, yet carried with it, a monumental impact. Why does he do it? He says it is because that is what he would like *his* doctor to do for him! Simple.

Godin also tells about a Häagen-Dazs store which had a stack of business cards on the counter that read, "If you have any comments at all about the store, please feel free to call me at home and tell me." The owner's home phone number was printed on the card. People who shopped there noticed. People who worked there noticed that people who shopped there noticed. People in the store mentioned the cards to other people in the store. The BUZZ was spreading. It was different. He cared, he told them he cared, and then he showed he really did.

So, could your ortho practice be an example? An orthodontist can be the best skilled clinician in the world. I say this all the time. Yet, you can have a failing practice. You can have very fair fees and the best equipment and the coolest office... but if the patient can't get past Brunhilda at the front desk, it all means nothing. If the patient is not impressed, he might return, but not likely. If he is really unimpressed, he *will not* return and he will tell approximately 10 others about his negative opinion of you. It is the job of the *entire team* to create a **Purple Cow**

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Experience for each and every patient, each and every time!

Be unique, set yourself apart, make people talk about you! Do not be boring or like everyone else!

To be a Purple Cow Practice, you must do things for your patients (your customers) that are:

Unnecessary Unexpected Undeserved

Seating your patients on time is necessary, and they expect it, and they deserve it, too. Receiving quality treatment is also expected, necessary, and deserved. As are proper, safe OSHA standards, good communication from all the team, and finding a place to park. That is not what I am talking about here. It is the above and beyond, the remarkable, the **Purple** things that make people stop and take notice and then tell others.

What could be a **Purple Cow** experience in Ortho, you ask?

1 Having the doctor make the confirmation call the night before the New Patient Exam. Talk about a jaw dropping moment! Dr. Kimsey Anderson of New Mexico says, "after Rosemary had me start to call my new patients the night before their exam, it has changed meeting a 'new patient' to meeting a new 'friend.' The whole appointment is more comfortable, effective, and efficient for the entire team, and the patient and parent love the personal touch of the call."

2 Creating a fun, exciting and remarkable deband experience—even singing a deband song to the patient and their parent at the chair. People do not expect the team to sing to them—it is hilarious and certainly memorable. See my web site, www.rosemarybray.com to order a song book!

3 Making a point to record the patient's passion, hobby, or interest and then talking about it when they come in each time. Focusing the conversation on the *patient* and not on you or teeth.

4 Sending a note to the patient's home to commend their A grade in math, to express sympathy on the death of their dog, to wish them a great vacation to Disneyland, or to say how cute they looked today in the office! Kids rarely get mail addressed to them and love it when you remark about things they might have mentioned during their "boring" appointment.

5 Not charging the patient for the replacement of their broken retainer but instead asking them to write you a story about how it broke. You put that story in your *How I Lost/Broke My Retainer Book* and others get to read the hilarious, mostly fictitious, stories written by your patients.

6 Making a sincere, caring Care Call in the evening to check on your patient, even when they did not have a difficult appointment. Telling them that you care about how they are doing and wondering if they had any concerns or questions. It is

called a Care Call for a good reason!

There are many, many ways to make the experience of orthodontics remarkable and **Purple**. The only roadblocks will be your *creativity* and *consistency*.

We need to *remember always* that the Doctor and the entire team have always been, are now and will always be *the number one, most effective* marketing tool in any practice. Your communication, your warmth, your true caring for people are the most significant features of your practice and these will bring patients into your office and *keep them there*.

Be **Purple** and give that superior quality and service! ☺

About the Author



Rosemary Bray is a speaker, consultant, and trainer who specializes in new patient exams, marketing, outstanding customer service, communication skills, and team relationships and motivation. She will be the General Session speaker at the Ortho2007 Users Group Meeting.