



Get Noticed and Get Busy

by **Rosemary Bray**

No, we don't see patients like that. No, I won't bend on this principle. No, that's not the kind of treatment we offer. No, that market is too hard for us to reach properly. No, I'm sorry; I won't be able to have lunch with that dentist. No, that's not good enough. Will you please do it over again? No, I'm not willing to lose my focus, and no, I'm not willing to compromise.

Seth Godin, the guru of today's marketing, reminds you that saying these things, either aloud or to yourselves, can be holding you back from success and fulfillment.

How often do you do that in your monthly team meetings, or at the AAO when talking to the marketing companies, the ortho consultants, or the many vendors who are all there to assist in making your life better?

Everyday online, I receive a word for the day with its definition and usage and a motivating quote for the day. Today a most appropriate quotation was this, "Entrepreneurship is living a few years of your life like most people won't, so that you can spend the rest of your life like most people can't." - Unknown Author

Wow, does that strike a chord. Each ortho practice wanting to succeed and grow and make a profit and survive in the remaining time in this downed economy has got to do all they can to get going when the going gets tough! It is so easy to become complacent; the word I detest in ortho and feel should be the practice's greatest fear. I see it and hear it everywhere as I visit office to office. "We used to do that", "We tried that, it didn't work so we stopped", "That will never work here in our town and for our patients", "Oh we don't have time to do that stuff," and my least favorite, "Is the guy down the street doing that?"

When in their office, I will often ask team members to name for me their greatest competition. It is rather funny, yet sad, that I always hear a list of all the names of neighboring ortho offices and even the names of the

general dentists down the street who are doing ortho treatment at half the cost of the office I am in at the moment. Perhaps that used to be the correct answer to such a question. Today I believe the right answer would be, "Disneyland, the family vacation to Hawaii, Mommy's Botox treatments, the electric bill and brother's college tuition." Our true competition is no longer the practice down the road. It is survival. In many homes, optional, non-life threatening ortho treatment competes with making the house payment or putting food on the dinner table. We are fighting for whatever discretionary funds might be left over after the critical needs have been taken care of.

In years past, the orthodontist was listed as #2 or #3 on the Forbes list of highest paying professions. This last year it dropped to #4 and understandably. However, I hope you agree that it will remain on the top for being the most rewarding and satisfying of all professions!

Today the most valued consumer who actually is willing to give away some of the left over discretionary funds is far more demanding, has many more choices, and expects more from you, the provider. Your goal has got to be to create today's raving fans, not merely yesterday's satisfied patients.

Remarkable Customer Service

Your customer service is everything your practice is and does. Yes, it is what you do; but even more, it is who you are. How sad if your patients are only satisfied because their expectations are low or because no one else is doing better. Just having satisfied patients isn't enough anymore. If you really want a booming practice, you have to create those raving fans that Ken Blanchard described in his famous book of the same title. The same holds true for your ortho supply and management companies.

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There are numerous choices in software management systems and there are many bracket choices for ortho offices. I am continually hearing from doctors about how they switched brackets or management systems or web providers, not because of the product, but because of the poor level of service! This can hold true of your practice patients just the same and you cannot afford to lose ONE. That ONE patient talks to many more than ONE other person.

Seth Godin, an author and coach of marketing and wowing people, provides for you a simple fill in the blank for creating a remarkable service, partnership, or experience. He says, "I was pleased that I got what I paid for, or that the food was properly cooked, or that they honored their contract, or that the roller coaster worked, or that there was no trash on the ground or that the staff looked me in the eye."

These are all great comments to make about your own consumer experiences. But what you want to be saying yourselves and what you should want your customers (patients) to be saying is, "What really blew me away was ____!" Now fill in your blank. What would your patients say about you?

By definition, whatever goes in the blank is an extra, the more than what you had to do. What must you do to be considered remarkable? Remarkable is what we call something we actually remark on.

Is Your Office a New York City?

Godin tell us about the day he was walking through Grand Central Station in New York City. He got to thinking about why New York City attracts so many tourists, more than just about any city in the world. Not because of any natural wonders they have or even outdoor sports activities. It might be because:

- It's different there (as in not the same).
- You can find someone to have an argument with.
- There are fringes – cultural, educational, architectural, societal.
- More than 42 languages are spoken at the Queens public library.

- You can get something that's not the regular kind.
- There are profit-seekers who will happily sell you something, anything.
- You will find a diversity of religious belief like no other.
- It's changing all the time.
- The food hasn't been entirely homogenized.
- People are active.
- A stranger will go out of his way for you, perhaps, and more often than you expect.
- There is more information per minute, per meter, and per interaction.
- Neighborhoods are more important than homogeneity, and co-existing is most important.

The important thing is that New York can be anywhere. There are "New Yorks" going on in towns large and small, in companies big and tiny and in families that support and respect at the same time they embrace and encourage difference.

Godin and I believe we all have an obligation to stand up, stand out, and to do work that matters. Wherever you are, there's an opportunity to be different, with respect. I see "New Yorks" in many ortho offices and those are the practices who are up in their numbers and in their overall morale. I actually have some doctors who look me in the eye and say, "Is there a recession? The economy is down, really?" They are not complacent.

Leo Burnett, renowned 20th century advertising executive, said, "If you don't get noticed, you don't have anything. You just have to be noticed, but the art is in getting noticed naturally, without screaming or without tricks." Whether you are getting noticed by sending direct mail, maintaining a fantastic website or Facebook page, creating an in-office warm welcoming environment, providing that extraordinary experience, having a reputation for being the fun practice, giving your patients the best contests and rewards, or creating the most beautiful, functional esthetic smiles – however you are getting noticed – make it ethical, effective, and consistent. It is a total team effort to get

noticed and for all the right reasons!

Come to the Users Group Meeting in San Diego in February and learn some great ways to get your practice noticed! Hear the speakers and interact with your Ortho2 team. Also talk to all the others who are there, pick their brains, and share with each other. The best pearl you can take home from any meeting can often come from the person you sat next to at lunch! Notice that person! ♦

About the Author



Rosemary Bray is an orthodontic consultant, trainer, and professional speaker with more than 30 years experience in the orthodontic profession. She will be presenting two courses at the 2012 Ortho2 Users Group Meeting in San Diego.