

January 2012

e update



Get into gear for the new year

The start of a new year is an inspiring time for making plans for the months ahead... and what better way to get the ball rolling than by booking your early bird ticket for the ADAM Conference in Harrogate in May?

We are delighted to announce that the guru of treatment co-ordination, Laura Horton, has confirmed that she will be running a parallel session on

the Saturday titled Understanding the role of a treatment co-ordinator.

Laura is well known and well respected within the industry and we are looking forward to welcoming her to our conference.

More information about early bird ticket prices, which are available until March 14, can be found on p.9.

www.adam-aspire.co.uk

Inside this edition . . .

Read all about it



For all the latest news in the world of dentistry turn to pp.4-5

Tips from the top



Jane & her practice have won 23 awards and counting... More on p.7

Stop complaining



Turn complaints into a positive for your practice. More on p.12

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Contents

Contents

3 Read all about it

This month, BDA chair says it's the worst time in living memory to be a dentist, GDC keeps registration fees on hold for 2012 and more...

6 Eager to improve?

There are plenty of interesting courses coming up to help you learn how to drive the success of your practice and fulfil your CPD requirements.

7 Importance of industry awards

Jane Armitage has been crowned Best Practice Manager four times and has won an Outstanding Achievement Award. Read more on page 7.

11 Working smarter - not harder

We are hosting a one-day workshop with The Dental Business Academy in March, with special prices for members. Read more on page 11.

12 Manage complaints, get results

The number of official complaints has risen but it's not the end of the world if you manage them correctly. We'll show you how on page 12.

13 Daily marketing opportunities

Almost every day is National Something-or-other Day - but that's great for marketing! Read more on page 13.

14 Better patient care, more profit

Treatment co-ordinators will improve patient care and increase profitability. Read more on page 14.

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'Worst time to be a dentist' says BDA chair

This could be the worst time in living memory to be a general dental practitioner in England. That's the view expressed by Dr Susie Sanderson, Chair of the British Dental Association's Executive Board, in a new blog for the BDA website.

The blog sees Dr Sanderson argue that a combination of factors, including the continued existence of the flawed 2006 dental contract, an overblown system of regulation, threats to NHS pensions and the intention of government to bar new entrants to the seniority pay scheme, is making dentists' jobs increasingly difficult and leading to declining morale.

Nonetheless, Dr Sanderson argues, there are reasons why dentists can be optimistic about the possibility of a better future. These include a better contract that it is hoped will emerge from the pilots launched last month

and the potential for more consistent commissioning as a result of the transfer of commissioning responsibilities from Primary Care Trusts to a National Commissioning Board.

She also addresses the question of professional standards and patient satisfaction. Citing both the feedback dentists receive in their practices and the findings of the recent Adult Dental Health Survey, she argues that patients, who are the reason dentists do what they do, continue to value highly the care they receive.

She warns though that high professional standards are vital to maintaining that patient trust and the status of dentists as professionals worthy of the trust placed in them, arguing that practitioners must not let the obstacles being put in their way or their indignation at them allow them to compromise the care they provide.

Publication showcases research by hygienists and therapists

The British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT) has announced the launch of the Annual Clinical Journal of Dental Health, which will sit alongside DH Contact and Dental Health as the new addition to their family of complementary publications.

The aim of the new publication is to provide an opportunity to showcase clinical research undertaken primarily by dental hygienists and therapists.

The launch coincided with BSDHT's Annual Oral Health Conference and Exhibition where delegates were able to see a poster display summarising recent individual and group research, all of which is published within the new journal.

The new publication reflects the desire of BSDHT to encourage more clinical research by its members and

follows a series of workshops and other research based initiatives held earlier in the year.

Sally Simpson, BSDHT President, said: 'I'm delighted to see the launch of our new journal which I hope will encourage members to participate in research projects in the future. By doing so they will not only develop themselves but they will also benefit the wider dental community.'



Your chance to question dentistry minister at BDA conference

The Department of Health minister Earl Howe has been confirmed to speak at the British Dental Conference & Exhibition on Friday 27 April, Earl Howe will provide delegates with an insight into the Government's vision for the future of dental services.

Delegates will also have the opportunity to put questions to the Minister, with topics such as the new dental contract and the commissioning of dental services likely to top the agenda.

Earl Howe joins an impressive line-up for the event that already includes the eminent pharmacologist and brain scientist Professor Susan Greenfield as keynote speaker. A selection of world leading clinical dental experts from the UK and abroad, including Dr John Kanca III, Professor Helen Rodd, Professor David Ricketts, Dr Lorenzo Vanini and Dr Robert Wassell, will also address the conference.

Visit www.bda.org/conference for more information.



Competition attracts record numbers

The Premier Symposium, the eleventh such event organised by Dental Protection and schülke, was the setting for the announcement of the winners of the Premier Awards 2011. This annual risk management competition has a total prize fund of £6,000 and accepts entries from projects that recognise the importance of patient safety.

This year's competition received the largest number of entrants in its history and congratulations go to this year's winners:

Undergraduate prize - 1st prize: Luke Blythe and Andrew Wilson, Bristol Dental School, "The potential hazards of respirable particles in dentistry" with 2nd prize: going to Chee Keong Yeap, Western Australia Dental School, "Considerations and management of a pregnant adolescent presenting with an abscessed molar tooth"

Postgraduate prize - 1st prize: Anchal Puri (Glasgow



2009) and Gillian Smith (Newcastle 2009), "Medicines reconciliation on admission to the oral and maxillofacial surgery wards", with 2nd prize being awarded to Lauren Hardwick, Sheffield, 2009, "Audit on doctors' assessment of mental capacity". DCP prize - 1st prize: Jack Colclough, Dental Hygienist, "A study into the personal protective equipment used by dentists in general dental practice" and 2nd prize: Francesca Mignone, Dental Hygienist, Australia, "Minimising risk and maintaining societal trust in the dental profession"

All the entries this year were of a very high calibre and Andrew Collier, Senior Dento-legal Consultant, who presented the awards took time to encourage dentists and DCPs from all regions of the UK to participate again next year.

Kevin Lewis, Dental Director of Dental Protection said, "The entries for this year's Awards have once again exceeded our expectations, with so many different projects being submitted by a wide variety of dental professionals from throughout the world. The Awards focus on raising the awareness and management of risks within the practice, and we are delighted that so many of this year's entries were so relevant to many of the hot topics in dentistry."

The Awards were presented during the annual Premier Symposium, a risk management event created for all members of the team. This year saw more than 300 dental professionals attend the day. The organisers also wish to thank Denplan, Henry Schein Minerva, Smile-on The Dentist and Wesleyan for their sponsorship of the symposium that helped to make the day possible.

GDC fees on hold for 2012

Dentists and Dental Care Professionals will see no increase in their registration fees in 2012 following a decision by the GDC.

This means dentists will pay £576 and dental care professionals £120 by 31 July 2012.

The decision to keep the fee at 2011 levels is in line with both the GDC's own Strategy and the Government's Command Paper, 'Enabling Excellence', ensuring GDC resources are managed effectively, efficiently and sustainably.

The ARF funds the GDC's work in:

- Registering qualified professionals
- Setting standards of dental practice and conduct
- Assuring the quality of dental education
- Ensuring professionals keep up to date
- Helping patients with complaints

The budget and business plan for 2012 includes continued investment in the GDC's performance in Fitness to Practise. Improvements include:

- Holding more decision meetings and hearings to prevent case delays;
- Reviewing provision of legal services;
- Introducing a top class case management database to help manage case information better;
- Introducing improved internal guidance;
- Appointing an internal quality assurance team to make rigorous checks on the GDC's performance.

Full details can be found at www.gdc-uk.org



Get in touch. Send your news & views to denise@adam-aspire.co.uk

Training & development diary

Date & location	Name of event & provider	Cost & notes	Contact details
26 January London	The essentials of staff management.	£200 for practice managers (ADAM 10% discount)	www.bda.org/training
27 January London	The essentials of staff management.	£200 for practice managers (ADAM 10% discount)	www.bda.org/training
28 January Doncaster	Medical emergencies in general dental practice. Postgraduate Education Centre, Bassetlaw Hospital	£10	Pamela.Whitehurst@dbh.nhs.uk
31 January Glasgow	Growth through marketing seminar. Denplan	Free for Denplan members, £40 for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/dentists/members/events-and-training.aspx
31 January Leicester	Reduce the cost of practice staff CRB checks - Leic & Rutland LDC training workshop	£40	Email colin.blackler@btinternet.com
3 February London	Level 2 Child protection (am) & Consent and complaints (pm). Dentabyte CPD4CQC	£75 for each session	www.dentabyte.co.uk
7 February Cheltenham	Growth through marketing seminar. Denplan	Free for Denplan members, £40 for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/dentists/members/events-and-training.aspx
6 - 9 February Manchester	IOSH Managing Safely. Four-day course with Ellis Whittam	£495 (clients) £545 (non- clients)	graham.greaves@elliswhittam.com
10 February Manchester	IOSH Directing Safely. Ellis Whittam	£200 (clients) £250 (non- clients)	graham.greaves@elliswhittam.com
10 February London	Handling complaints and improving communication skills. BDA	£100 for practice managers	www.bda.org/training
21 February Luton	Growth through marketing seminar. Denplan	Free for Denplan members, £40 for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/dentists/members/events-and-training.aspx
23 February Bristol	The perfect front desk with Emma John	£200 (BoD members £120)	www.businessofdentistry.co.uk
24 February London	Child protection; the dental team's responsibility. BDA	£100 for practice managers	www.bda.org/training
24 February Cardiff	Business planning and financial management for practice owners and managers. Andy McDougall	£100 for practice managers	www.bda.org/training
28 February Belfast	Growth through marketing seminar. Denplan	Free for Denplan members, £40 for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/dentists/members/events-and-training.aspx
2 March London	Record keeping. Dentabyte CPD4CQC	£75	www.dentabyte.co.uk
6 March Leicester	Growth through marketing seminar. Denplan	Free for Denplan members, £40 for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/dentists/members/events-and-training.aspx
12 - 15 March Edinburgh	IOSH Managing Safely. Four-day course with Ellis Whittam	£495 (clients) £545 (non- clients)	graham.greaves@elliswhittam.com
16 March Edinburgh	IOSH Directing Safely. Ellis Whittam	£200 (clients) £250 (non- clients)	graham.greaves@elliswhittam.com
20 March Leeds	The perfect front desk with Emma John	£200 (BoD members £120)	www.businessofdentistry.co.uk
22 March Manchester	Treatment co-ordination for profit with Laura Horton	£100 (BoD members £60)	www.businessofdentistry.co.uk



Jane knows a thing or two about entering - and winning - awards

Jane Armitage manages two dental practices, one NHS/private the other an outreach facility for final year BDS and HT dental students. Since 2005 she and her team have been in 53 finals and won 23 winning titles, including Dentist of the Year, Dental Nurse of the Year, Receptionist of the Year (twice), Team of the Year (twice) and Practice Manager of the Year (four times!). Here she tells us why industry awards are so important.

I honestly don't know what secret ingredient we have that has enabled Thompson & Thomas in Sheffield to be recognised so many times.

In December I was the recipient of the Dentistry Outstanding Achievement Award I was absolutely knocked back by hearing my name announced. I was asked 'Why do you think you have won this?' and my reply was 'I don't know, I always think I'm just doing my job.'

After winning anything I usually think I'm not going to do anything extra at the practice this year and then something crops up and I find myself saying to myself or the team 'This is just an idea but...' - then I get a spontaneous reaction usually by staff shouting and saying 'here we go again!'

What's the magic ingredient?

I have received quite a few calls from managers who are contemplating entering various awards and the one question I get asked time after time is 'Can you tell me what to write in my application?'. The answer to that is simple: no.

I can give some pointers but they will be no different to what the awarding body would be able to tell you.

You need to write exactly what you have done in that year and also be able to provide evidence or testimonials that reflect this.

Write your entry from the heart

Entries come from the heart and involve hard work. The awarding bodies are usually looking for someone that has done something different that stands out.



I like to turn going to any awards into a team event. It doesn't matter if we win or lose, we are out for a good day. The girls love it, the run up, the outfits, it all creates a great ambience and everyone becomes involved.

Proud of something? Then enter!

All these awards have bonded the team, have brought recognition to the practice and as for myself, well I would never have believed that my career would progress further than my imagination would allow me to imagine after receiving my first award in 2005.

What have you to lose if you know you have done something that you are proud of - enter it!

Still time to enter ADAM Awards

The Denplan-sponsored ADAM Awards recognise a job well done and the winners stand to win £500! [Click here](#) to download an entry form. Your entry of no more than 750 words can be emailed to denise@adam-aspire.co.uk or hard copies and/or memory sticks can be posted to ADAM Awards, 3 Kestrel Court, Waterwells Drive, Waterwells Business Park, Gloucester, GL2 2AT.

The deadline for entries is February 14.

The Dentistry Show 2012: follow the trend

Advertising Feature

Brendon MacDonald, Co-founder and Chief Engagement Officer at ApexHub will be appearing at The Dentistry Show 2012, a world-class two-day conference and exhibition. With over 250 confirmed exhibitors and 6,000 expected delegates, this outstanding event is set to be one of the most important dates on the dental calendar for practice managers.

In his presentation titled 'Social media for your Business – Evolve? Or dissolve?' Brendon will discuss how practice managers can get the maximum value from their business from social media, without having to spend too much time online as he elaborates in his presentation abstract:

"Social networks are a great and easy way for you to communicate with your potential customers. Nowadays the buyers set the ground rules on when and where they will engage and increasingly turn to trusted third parties for education (including via blogs, twitter and other social media). This means your business must develop an integrated social media



02-03 March 2012 / Hall 4 NEC Birmingham

strategy which identifies where potential patient conversations are happening and effectively uses various digital channels to acquire, convert and retain patients."

Brendon will discuss how to grow business for practice managers, giving them the tools to manage and save their time with key ideas to take away after the show including, what a social business is and what the benefits of being one are. He will discuss what lies ahead in 2012 for social media for business such as current trends and the key resources that are required to execute success. Areas of social media that are underutilised will be scrutinised to demonstrate to practice managers where to focus their energies to enable them to be noticed more, without spending inordinate amounts of time on planned advertising.

Practice managers will also learn how to find breathing room in existing overcrowded social networks and 'must have' social media tools for business to use. There will be a heavy focus on trends of 2012 as well as Brendon's own case study of a successful social media campaign in a dental practice.

● **The Dentistry Show is at the NEC, Birmingham March 2nd and 3rd 2012. For more information, please visit www.thedentistryshow.co.uk/ADAM, call 020 7348 5269 or email info@thedentistryshow.co.uk**



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ADAM Conference, Harrogate 18 -19 May 2012

Friday

14.00hrs	Registration, exhibition and refreshments	
15.00hrs	AGM (ADAM members only)	0.5 hrs CPD
15.30hrs	Refreshments and exhibition	
16.00hrs	Welcome and overview of conference - Jill Taylor and Hew Mathewson	0.25 hrs CPD 2hrs CPD
16.15hrs	Mock disciplinary hearing	
19.30hrs	Buffet supper and exhibition	
21.00hrs	Conclusion of mock disciplinary hearing	0.5 hrs CPD

Saturday

08.30hrs	Registration, exhibition and refreshments	
09.00hrs	Successful Service Delivery - Jann Gardner	0.75hrs CPD
09.45hrs	Performance management - Roger Matthews	0.75hrs CPD
10.30hrs	Exhibition and refreshments	
11.00hrs	Utilising the skill mix - Margaret Ross	0.75hrs CPD
11.45hrs	It all comes back to numbers - Andy McDougall	0.75hrs CPD
12.30hrs	Exhibition and refreshments	
13.30hrs	Parallel session 1 Understanding your team (workshop)	1.5hrs CPD
	Parallel session 2 Understanding the role of a TC - Laura Horton	1.5hrs CPD
15.00hrs	Refreshments and exhibition	
15.30hrs	Parallel session 3 Assertiveness skills	1.5hrs CPD
- 17.00hrs	Parallel session 4 Dealing with bullying and harassment	1.5hrs CPD
19.30hrs	Drinks reception	
20.00hrs	Dinner, ADAM Awards, casino & disco	

* Please note small changes to this programme may occur



Appraisals & managing performance

Roger Matthews, CDO at Denplan Ltd, will be speaking at the ADAM Conference in Harrogate in May on performance management. Here he discusses appraisals.

If you ask anyone about appraisals or performance management you'll usually get one of two responses. Either: "it's a great way to align behaviours with the objectives of the organisation" (that will be the boss or the HR manager). Or: "I hate it" (that'll be the rest of the workforce).

What is performance management?

So what's performance management and why is it a good idea? According to Wikipedia, Aubrey Daniels coined the name in the 1970s, as "...a technology for managing behaviour and results." Cut to the present day, and you'll find a version of this in the Care Quality Commission's Essential Standards of Quality and Safety.

The CQC says: "The development of staff is supported through a regular system of appraisal that promotes their professional development." (Outcome 14: supporting workers). At Denplan, we've had an internal appraisal system for almost 25 years, and we encourage the use of appraisal techniques as part of our Excel accreditation reviews for dental practices.

A good appraisal system relies on setting good objectives for each individual. The objectives should be simple, measurable, and aligned to the goals of the practice. That way, everyone knows they have a part to play in creating success and growth.

Measure behaviour

Objectives should include 'behaviours'. You might say "you can't measure behaviour!" - but you can.

One practice looked at how reception staff should ideally treat each patient at the desk. They came up with five simple ideas: 1. Smile! 2. Address the patient by name; 3. Always say "hello" and "good-bye"; 4. Look neat and professional at all times and 5. Include at least one non-dental remark in the conversation.

Evaluate each other!

The reception team evaluated each other, and whoever came out top each month got a little prize donated by the practice. This simple approach emphasised some of the

most important things about performance management:

- Keep it simple and straightforward
- Make sure the goals are aligned with what the practice's objectives
- Keep it personal and direct
- Make it a regular feature



Often appraisals are left to half-year or annual meetings. Can you imagine an Olympic coach waiting until just before the Games before giving an athlete feedback? In the same way, regular and short one-to-one meetings can be more effective than a rigid timetabled activity.

One final, crucial thing...

One final and critical thing – team members will take their cues from the activity of the management. If the associates (or even the principal) habitually turn up five minutes after the first patient is booked in, that will be regarded as the standard to be achieved. It's been said that the only nice thing about standards is that there are plenty to choose from! So you have to make sure you choose them wisely.

- At the ADAM conference on 18-19th May, I'll be looking at practical ways to encourage high performance, and just as important, techniques to manage under-performance. Coax or coerce? Manage them in or manage them out? Is there an ideal way?

Early bird tickets are now on sale! For members, prices start at just £64 for Friday, £120 for Saturday or £165 for both days. Tickets for the ADAM Gala dinner and Awards Ceremony cost £45 and include a three-course meal and two glasses of wine. Early bird tickets are available until March 14. Please email denise@adam-aspire.co.uk or call 01452 886 364.

ADAM Annual Conference 2012

in partnership with



Majestic Hotel, Harrogate
18-19 May 2012



**Laura
Horton TC guru
to speak at Conference!
Early bird tickets are still
on offer.**

**Read her article in Practice
Focus in February**



Conference Topics*

Successful Service Delivery - Jann Gardner
Performance management - Roger Matthews
Utilising the skill mix - Margaret Ross
Everything comes back to numbers - Andy McDougall
Staged Disciplinary Hearing

Parallel Sessions

Understanding your team - Cheryl Adams
Assertiveness Skills - Cheryl Adams
Dealing with bullying and harassment - Janice Sibbald

Social Programme

Friday evening: buffet supper and exhibition
Saturday evening: conference dinner, featuring the ADAM Awards

In partnership with



For more information visit www.adam-aspire.co.uk

* programme subject to change



Working smarter - not harder

Do you feel like you've done a whole year's work already? And it's only nearly February? Do you have days when you feel like a fire-fighter, dealing with one crisis after another? Would you like to put a bit more control into your practice life?

ADAM is hosting a powerful one-day workshop, sponsored by The Dental Business Academy, that could be exactly what you're looking for. Join up with your colleagues for a great day of support and challenge in the smart surroundings of the Victoria & Albert Marriott Hotel in Manchester. Take a day out of your practice to take stock and re-think how you manage your team and prepare for the challenges of the next 12 months.

The team at The Dental Business Academy has put together an action-packed day brimming with ideas, tools and techniques to help you and your team work smarter, not harder.

Failing to plan is planning to fail. Learn the skills of good planning and you will discover how to avoid many of those crises that cause so much stress in practice. Find out why dentists are naturally bad planners and what you can do to help create a practice that has a secure future and is a great place to work.

The CQC

Are you worried about your CQC inspection? The Dental Business Academy promises to help you prepare for the big day by getting inside the inspector's mind and discovering how he/she will make judgements. Everyone gets anxious about a CQC inspection but this workshop will help take some of the stress away for you and your team – you might even look forward to it!

Building a great team

Do you have a happy, high-performing team? The team from The Dental Business Academy says it finds that team issues are always the most challenging in any dental practice. Wouldn't it be good to have team members who feel respected and also respect you? They have some tried and tested techniques to move your team from good to great.

The perfect patient journey

The perfect patient journey. Let's not forget the patients



in our practice! Whether you're private or NHS, from North, South, East or West, none of us would have a job if patients didn't turn up at our door. Are your patients consistently receiving the quality of care they expect? Do you think you could improve it? What are the key performance indicators to help you manage the patient journey through your practice?

The workshop

This exciting workshop will be designed and delivered by some of the UK's most experienced dental practice experts. As practice owners and managers, The Dental Business Academy knows what it takes to run all sorts of dental practices in today's world. They also have a vast amount of experience setting up programmes for practice managers and other team members throughout the UK, from 'lunch and learn' to degree level study.

Date: Friday, March 30th

Venue: Victoria & Albert Marriott Hotel, Manchester

Time: 09.00 – 17.00

Cost: ADAM members £75, non-members £150 inc breakfast rolls and buffet lunch

● Register your interest now by emailing Jan@thedentalbusinessacademy.co.uk



Feature

Stop complaining - and get better results

In a recent press release The Dental Complaints Service (DCS), which deals with complaints about private dental care, revealed a 24 per cent increase in complaints from 1,180 in 2009/10 to 1,559 in 2010/11.

Although 67 per cent of these complaints were resolved within a week – a great result – it would have been preferable for all concerned if a) the cause for the complaint never existed, and b) it was dealt with effectively by your practice without the need for GDC involvement.

Successful businesses embrace a culture for customer satisfaction. In this short feature we offer some tips for managing complaints effectively.

The benefits of a good complaints handling system

An effective complaints handling system is essential and offers many benefits:

- Improved product quality and service delivery
- Less errors and so less time is wasted on correcting them
- A better understanding of patients' needs thereby improving patient loyalty
- More satisfied patients who will likely recommend you
- Less time and money spent attracting new customers to replace those you have lost through dissatisfaction
- An improved business reputation

Developing a system

There are six essential elements involved in determining and developing your own complaints handling system:

- Create a policy that clearly states you welcome customer complaints
- Formulate a system to handle complaints effectively
- Communicate your ethos towards complaints to everyone and train the whole team to handle complaints well
- Deal with the complaints immediately; agree a service level (SLA) that you respond by
- Make sure your complaints process is easy for patients to understand and facilitate
- Regularly review your complaints records for trends that might identify staff training needs, poor performance or ineffective processes and take appropriate action

Managing expectations

Often it is not the intricacies of your complaints system that



lets you down and leads to customer dissatisfaction, but a failure to manage expectations internally and externally. You must clearly communicate your policy to ensure it is followed properly.

Get the right culture in place

Getting the right culture is vital so encourage and reward your team to deal with complaints from disgruntled customers, well. Set an expectation that everyone understands and abides by. For instance, implement a practice policy that contact is to be made with the patient within 48 hours. Often it is not the failure to resolve the issue that causes dissatisfaction but frustration with a complete lack of response. You will know the feeling as we have all been left high and dry following a complaint – there is nothing more frustrating! Although an issue may not be resolved, if a customer is aware that it is being addressed they are more likely to be patient and obliging.

More information?

If you are interested in knowing more about managing complaints you might be interested in reading the DCS' Annual Review available from www.gdc-uk.org or reading Jill's forthcoming column in *Dental Tubules*, which will focus on this topic in January/February. www.dentalatubules.com



There's a day for everything in 2012

We often hear about it being National something day - years ago such days were few and far between whereas now it seems that almost every other day is dedicated to starting or stopping something!

But for practice managers, it's all good news because these events open up all sorts of marketing opportunities that you can jump on the back of.

In this article we will highlight some of the events we are aware of and next month we will discuss how you can make the most of these opportunities.

February

The year kicks off in February with National Orthodontic Week (we are still awaiting dates and confirmation from the British Orthodontic Society so check their website regularly to find out more (<http://www.nowsmile.org/>) and the opportunity to talk about your orthodontic treatments and the benefits therein.

But if you're more of a health-focused practice then highlighting the links between gum disease and heart disease, and jumping on the back of National Heart Month may be right up your street.

March

There's no rest for the wicked because in March you have the much-loved Comic Relief Day on the 18th and the serious No Smoking Day on the 14th, both of which give you a fabulous opportunity to highlight the friendliness of your team and your social conscience.

April

The last week of April (commencing on the 23rd), is National Stop Snoring Week.

Perhaps not as exciting as other events but one that would be of interest to many of your patients who probably have no idea that you can help them. We will be running articles in the next two e updates about what the association does and how it and the event can help you attract new patients.

May and June have the biggie

May and June see the launch of one of the biggest events in the dental marketing calendar - National Smile Month (NSM).

Whether you are health focused, cosmetically oriented or an orthodontist, NSM provides a fantastic



opportunity to highlight what you do, offer incentives for new patients to try you out and indeed for existing patients to consider new treatments. Every dental practice team should sit down together well in advance of this event and plan how they will make the most of this annual opportunity. To get your plans underway visit <http://www.nationalsmilemonth.org/>.

The last day of May sees World No Tobacco Day and this provides a wonderful opportunity to discuss the effects of smoking, how you can offer advice on quitting and the links between smoking and mouth cancer. This is a great chance to reinforce why frequent and regular visits to the dentist are vital.

October and November

There is a nice break over the summer period before things start to warm up again with Bruxism Week and World Smile Day in October. Then in November is another big event in the dental calendar, Mouth Cancer Action Month.

Find a day that suits your practice

So there you have it, there is a day for everything! But if we haven't mentioned something you feel should have a day assigned to it, fear not, it may still exist. To find out more about days for everything visit <http://www.national-awareness-days.com/index.html>



TCs are the bridge to case acceptance

A treatment co-ordinator will change your entire approach to new patient care as well as increase profitability, says Lina Craven, the founder and director of Dynamic Perceptions.

A TC is a relatively new role to the UK but in the US where it is now a central part of any practice, it has proven to dramatically add value to the patient experience, reduce in-chair time and increase case acceptance.

What is a treatment co-ordinator?

A TC assumes responsibility for the new patient process. He or she bridges the gap between the new patient, and the practice and staff. The TC promotes and sells the practice and its services by explaining and offering the true value to prospective patients.

A good TC will manage all aspects of patient communication from phone calls and correspondence to ensuring your practice communication has the right tone and content to appeal to potential new patients.

Nervous new patients are often put at ease when a friendly, non-clinical face meets them. People buy from people so the development of a relationship and establishing rapport between the TC and the new patient is crucial to the success of your conversion.

The TC will invite the patient to the new patient room, offer refreshments and assist in the paperwork, running through medical history, filling out questionnaires etc. – saving valuable clinical time. They may then be present at the exam/consultation as this allows for a top-notch case presentation later.

After the exam the TC can help answer non-clinical questions about the diagnosis, explain options using photos or props to clarify proposed treatments, and ease patient concerns or misunderstanding.

A TC should prepare and explain the financial contracts and 'walk-out' pack. Ideally the patient should leave with contracts signed and appointments agreed.

A good TC will follow up with the new patients – too many new patients are lost due to lack of follow-up. Lack of response from a patient does not mean they have no interest, they often need more help and a TC will communicate with them and understand the right approach.

Crucially, a TC will reduce the non-diagnostic time a practitioner spends with the patient – often as much as 60 per cent. Dentist time is not always actual dentist time: a new patient appointment might take 30 minutes but only



half of that is clinical. This leaves potentially 15 minutes that could be freed up in the appointment book – think of the impact that could have for every new patient.

What qualities does a great TC need?

The TC role can be filled internally if a team member fulfills the criteria, it can be full or part time– it varies according to practice size and aspiration. However, a good TC needs to possess:

- Good understanding of the speciality they work in
- Enthusiasm about the products and treatments
- Excellent listening and questioning skills plus good empathy. A TC assists the patient with their decision-making so must be able to listen to their needs
- Effective organisational abilities
- Outstanding communication skills
- A high degree of professionalism. The ability to stay calm with difficult patients or practitioners is vital
- Be able to see the big picture. To share in the vision for the practice

Lina Craven helps practices realise their vision of success by creating a customer-driven culture that focuses on creating an exceptional patient journey. She has over 25 years' experience working as an orthodontic therapist, treatment co-ordinator and practice manager. Dynamic Perceptions regularly offers workshops and seminars. See www.linacraven.com



Get in touch. Send your news & views to denise@adam-aspire.co.uk

Column

Exciting times!

On behalf of the ADAM team, may we wish everyone a very happy new year.

2012 looks set to be a very exciting new year for ADAM. Applications are coming in for our ADAM awards and the judging will be taking place in less than a month, if you haven't already sent in your application, now is the time to do it. The categories are Practice Manager of the Year, Treatment Co-ordinator of the Year and Administrator of the Year.

ADAM will be chairing a session at the BDA conference, please come along to our session to participate in "Don't drop the cash baton".

Conference programme is well underway. We have made a conscious effort to ensure that the content is applicable to a vast array of team members so whether you are an administrator, treatment co-ordinator or practice manager you should be sure to find something of interest to you. With our parallel sessions you have the option to select the most appropriate topic to suit you and

Welcome to my regular column. Each month I hope to keep you informed about ADAM news and to talk about issues that affect, annoy and delight us as practice managers and administrators. *Jill*



your practice needs too. Harrogate is a fantastic venue and has been selected as it is in the heart of the UK and with great transport links. We are all very excited about this.

We are delighted to be having our "Working Smarter, Not Harder" workshop in March sponsored by The Dental Business Academy. This is your opportunity to learn about perfecting the patient journey, CQC inspections, building a great team, and many more essential skills to running your business. The Dental Business Academy is very kindly offering discounted rates to ADAM members on their courses too.

Finally we will be running some webinars in late Autumn this year. Watch this space for more information on how to register for this.

An interview with Jill

Jill was recently interviewed by MDDUS about her role as a practice manager and on being President of ADAM. Here is a snippet of the interview.

How has dental practice management changed over the last 10 years?

Practice management has changed hugely as more and more dentists are realising the benefit of having a fully functional practice manager. PM is not a title; it is a role that has a huge impact on the business. Dentists are highly skilled individuals and so are practice managers. Dentists are valued by their patients and that is how it should be - dentists in surgery with patients leaving the spreadsheets and staff issues to their trusted managers.

What is your biggest headache?

My biggest headache is when I speak to PMs and they tell me that their dentist undermines them. This should never happen. When a PM makes a decision and the staff member is unhappy with that decision it should never be the case that they get their own way by going to the dentist and complaining that the PM said I can't have this... and the dentist saying don't listen to her you can have...

Okay I admit I am lucky, but it also comes down to

mutual respect.

A PM can only do his/her role if she has the support of the team and most especially the principal. No staff member should ever play one off against the other. It can rip teams apart very quickly and cause huge upset.

No doubt you are very busy balancing work at the practice with your responsibilities at ADAM. Can you describe a typical week?

I work full-time in the practice as do all ADAM executive and regional team members. That's why most of our communication is primarily via email. If we need a conference call we book it for an evening. The location of any team meetings varies - last time it was Glasgow, before that East Midlands. I pick up emails before work, lunchtimes and after work. I have alternate Fridays off and do a lot of ADAM duties on these days.

What challenges do you see in the next 10 years?

The current economic climate is the single biggest challenge for any business. With the most recent evidence suggesting that it could take a further 16 years to see Scotland back to the level it was at in 2008 we are all set for tough times.



Feature

Providing answers & developing knowledge

Advertising feature

SUSAN is a Quality Management System software offering a new approach to providing instant support and expertise to dental practice managers.

Our first month of Ask SUSAN has proved very popular, with a number of your queries on HR issues and managing staff, from establishing an induction process to formal disciplinary procedures. One area of particular interest as we enter our new year is developing staff. Below is a summary of the information available from SUSAN in response to a question submitted at www.asksusan.co.uk.

What should I hope to achieve from staff appraisals?

One of the principal aims of the performance appraisal is to gain an insight into the employee's aspirations for future development. Any targets should be specific, measurable and attainable. They should also be relevant to the practice's business objectives. A time frame for achieving them should be specified.

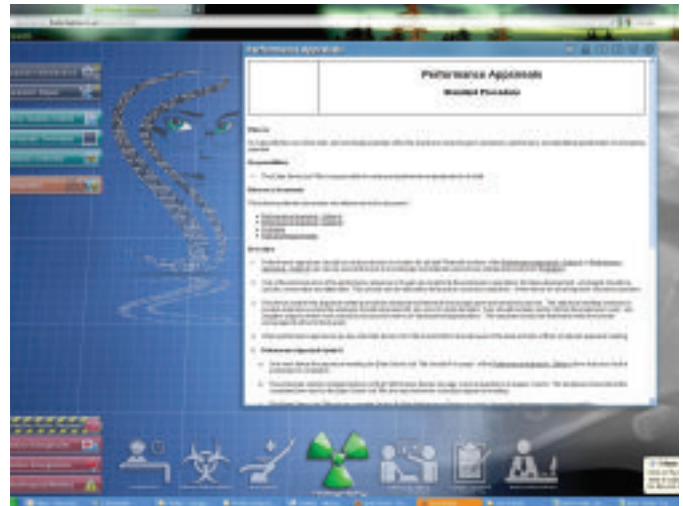
The venue used for the appraisal meeting should be relaxed and informal to encourage open and honest discussion. The appraisal meeting should be a positive experience where the employee should be praised for any work of a high standard. Care should be taken not to criticise the employee's work. Any negative aspects of their work should be discussed in terms of 'development opportunities'. The employee should be thanked for their time and be encouraged to strive for their goals.

When performance appraisals are due, the senior member of staff should inform all employees of the date and time of their scheduled appraisal meeting.

Detailed procedures and appraisal forms are included in SUSAN, giving you all the information, details and know-how to conduct effective appraisals.

SUSAN is a vast and continuously expanding reservoir of detailed information, processes and best practice developed by a team with over 100 years of combined dental management expertise. It has taken over 60,000 man-hours to collate and organise, and has been developed for hands-on practice managers.

Over the next few months we will take one of the core areas that SUSAN covers and provide answers to



questions we've been asked. Some of the key areas covered in detail by SUSAN (including forms, templates, procedures and guidance) include:

- H.R. (including indemnity)
- Administration
- Health and Safety
- Clinical
- Financial
- Marketing

Next month we will cover Health & Safety, but if you have a burning issue visit www.asksusan.co.uk to submit a question on the form provided or simply to learn more.

About SUSAN

The BETA testing phase has started. The system is being put under real life testing scenarios by practitioners just like you. Their feedback, comments and thorough testing will help us ensure that the system will deliver the best support and knowledge to help you in your daily role. Covering all areas of managing the daily practice tasks, we are positive that we will have the answer to that clinical, procedural or management query.

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