

# A Reason to Smile!

News and Ideas For General Dentists

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DENTAL LAB

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## Practice Ideas: *Sending the Right Message*

Current and prospective patients judge you based on the images you project.

If the sign out in front of your office says 'DENTIST' in big bold letters, then that's how people will see you...as yet another dentist in a sea of dentists. What would people's perception of Lexus be if they advertised "CARS?"

The key to promoting yourself and your practice is to figure out who you are, and project it in everything you do.

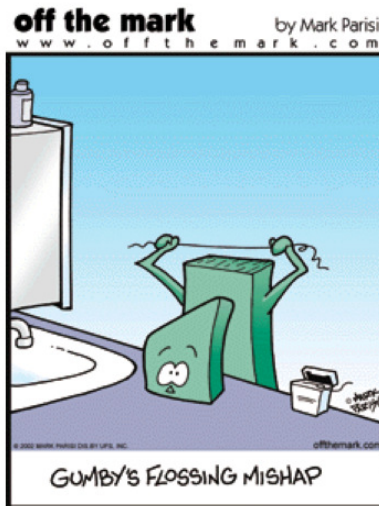
If you have a friendly and inviting personality, don't be afraid to let it show...in your bright, cheerful sign, in the colors of your waiting room, and in every interaction with your patients.

Enthusiasm really is contagious! If you get excited by all of the latest gizmos and gadgets, tell your patients. Let them know how excited you are about the benefits they'll get from that new laser.

If you've been at it for 40 years and believe in doing dentistry the old fashioned way, there are a lot of patients who would like to know you. "Celebrating 40 Years!" on your sign, in

your ads, and in the waiting room communicates more than you might think.

Put some serious thought into how YOU are unique, and how you can communicate the real YOU. Give patients and prospects a reason to want to get to know you. By projecting who YOU are, you'll attract more patients who want a dentist just like YOU, and retain them for a lifetime.



## The Bottom Line: *"Warning Signs"*

In any business, it's necessary to delegate responsibilities. However, when those responsibilities include handling the practice finances, finding a trustworthy person is not enough. It is critical to put control measures in place, and to constantly be on the lookout for impropriety.

Here are 9 common signs of embezzlement:

1. Company books are not kept up to date by the employee responsible.
2. Employees who regularly turn down promotions or refuse vacations.
3. Employees who are frequently entertained by suppliers.
4. Standards of living that are much higher

than salaries would indicate.

5. Frequent inventory shortages.
6. Unusual bad debt write-offs.
7. Slow collections.
8. Frequent complaints by customers that invoices are inaccurate.
9. Customer invoices being habitually mailed late.

If you see any of these signs, it doesn't necessarily mean somebody's stealing, but it probably does mean it's time to tighten up your financial controls.

Council for Better Business Bureaus

Dental Stocks <sup>52</sup> Low <sup>52</sup> High

Colgate Symbol CL	66.07 54.0	67.1
Patterson Symbol PDCO	35.94 29.6	39.76
Amer Dental Partners Symbol ADPI	21.60 13.0	21.6
Dentsply Symbol XRAY	33.28 27.7	33.76
Hnry Schein Symbol HSIC	55.38 44.4	55.4
Nat Dentex Symbol NADX	14.00 14.0	24.5

## Hot Off The Press

With people living longer and oral health improving, the number of teeth to be cared for is increasing at a faster rate than the population. The mean number of teeth present in adults (18 to 74) has trended upward in all age groups.

The decline in the percent of adults who are edentulous has been most significant, falling from 14.7 to 7.7 percent since 1971. The decline has occurred in all age groups. In the 65 to 74 age group, edentulism fell from 45.6 to 28.6 percent.

Based on current trends, it's certain that the total number of teeth retained and to be maintained will continue to increase in the future. Data suggests that the burden of oral disease, in each age group, is, and will continue to be, borne heavily by individuals with low socioeconomic status.

Source: *Journal of Dental Education*

The Quote "Consumers are statistics. Customers are people.." Stanley Marcus