What’s Up in the world of dentistry?

After spending two and a half days in the midst of private group practice owners, practice administrators and consultants at Dr. Marc Cooper’s The SUMMIT 2014, I want to share insights with you about "What’s Up."

1. **You create your future.** It is easy to get stuck in how things used to be rather than creating your own best future with your team. Dr. Cooper spoke on each of our days together and asked us continually to look at one, three, and five year goals. He said that a leader is the one who can help the team see a future and then work together to create that future. The practice goals need to mesh with the mission and values of the practice leaders/owners. If you have not done a values clarification for your practice, now may be the time. Once the values are clear, create a compelling vision for the future in one, three and five years.

2. **Dental Insurance**

   Dental insurance payers are playing hard ball in our dental world. The game will be more challenging now and into the future. What’s Up in this world?
   - Most PPOs are now averaging a 37 percent discount off of 80th percentile fees.
   - PPO plans are starting to limit dentists as members.
   - There are new plans which are EPO (Exclusive Provider Networks) that close the number of participating
dentists.

- Plans are eliminating ANY “out of network” coverage OR increasing the deductible to very high levels if the patient goes to an out of network practice.
- Practices should update their fees to the 80th percentile. Then plan to review and update fees annually. If you need help with this, contact me linda@drevenstedt.com.
- You must be in charge of RE-negotiating your contract at the renewal date. Keep a reminder in your appointment schedule to review your PPO agreement and fees at the ”sign date” every two years. If you have multiple contracts, be sure to keep track of each renewal date.
- Know your most used ADA codes and ask for increases on those codes.
- 72.9 percent of all dental insurance is PPO and that trend is growing.

3. **Hygiene Department Profitability**

A particular challenge is keeping the hygiene schedule full and the hygiene department profitable when reimbursement is reduced. The reimbursement has hit the high salary hygienists in many practices. The recommendation from this conference is to move hygienists to a straight commission of 28–33 percent of the AGP (Adjusted Gross Production). AGP is the true reimbursement and without the exam fee. OR, have a hybrid of a small guaranteed salary per day and then a commission based on AGP. The base salary paid for a period is multiplied by 3, then a commission is paid based on 28–30 percent over that number.

4. **Hygiene Time Management**

Heidi Arndt, Hygiene Consultant gave an outline for the hygiene appointment. Here is the timeline for a 60 minute adult appointment (with radiographs, 50 minutes without radiographs):

- 15–20 minutes for assessment and recording; including health history update, oral cancer risk assessment, intra-oral camera pictures, restorative screening, caries risk assessment, radiographs, periodontal risk screening and home care assessment.
• My side note – do not pick up an ultrasonic or scalers during the first 15-20 minutes of the appointment. Assess, record and educate the patient.

• 20-28 minutes for prophylaxis using ultrasonics
• 20 minutes for doctor’s exam, re-appointing, chart entry, treatment plan entry, and re-prep room for the next patient.

5. **Grow or Rot?**
Zig Ziglar said, "You are either green and growing or you are ripe and rotting." This could not be truer for today's dental practice. Growth strategies are important for the future because the dental growth trend is flat and projected to be flat over the next few years. Practices will be vying for patients in most urban areas. The consumer thinks "a dentist is a dentist is a dentist, etc." Dentistry has become a commodity like a washing machine to the consumer. AND, most dental practices say the same things on their website and promotional materials. The question becomes

**What makes you unique, different?**

And, don't say, "We care", or "We are quality" because everyone says THAT.

**Evelyn Horne**, my associate consultant in South Carolina, attended this meeting with me. We are here to help your practice GROW.

6. **Baby Boomers**
One of the largest growing sectors is seniors – with teeth and without dental insurance. As the Baby Boomers retire, they will lose their dental coverage. How can you attract them? Or as Marc asks, "To what question are you their answer?"

I highly recommend that you subscribe to [The Mastery Company newsletter](https://www.MasteryCompany.com) to know "What's Up." Plan to attend The SUMMIT next year.

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Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

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