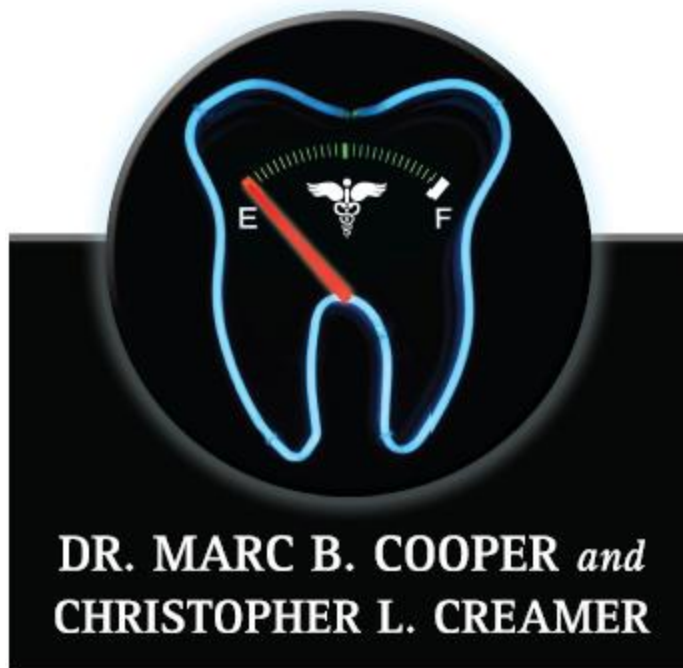


RUNNING ON EMPTY

Answers to Questions Dentists
Have about the Recession



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Matt King edited all parts of the book, Running on Empty (2009), from which this chapter was taken.

Please feel free to forward this via email to whomever you believe would benefit.

Thank You!

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by

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2009

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CORE VALUES AND REMASTERY

The emerging shift to **REMASTERY** began in January 2008 when The Mastery Company conducted a survey with dentists around the world to determine their top core values. Dentists were asked to select their ‘top five’ values from a generic list of 35 core values. At the conclusion of the survey, we tallied the scores and declared the top 15 core values as fairly indicative of dentists in general.

In February of 2009, we conducted an identical survey for dental staff members to evaluate their top core values as a group. The purpose was to determine if any significant difference existed between Dentists and Staff. The results were very illuminating.

Here’s a top five summary of both groups. The number in parenthesis is the percent of survey responses selecting the value. For example, 72% of all dentists completing the core value survey selected ‘Integrity’ as one of their top five core values, 39% for staff.

DENTISTS

1. Integrity (72)
2. Excellence (39)
3. Honesty (37)
4. Compassion (30)
5. Responsibility (29)

STAFF

1. Honesty (42)
2. Integrity (39)
3. Responsibility (36)
4. Commitment (33)
5. Dependability (32)

Dentists’ selections can be broken down into two thematic elements; 1) health care provider (excellence, compassion) and 2) business owner (integrity, honesty). Responsibility, we believe, could reside in either healthcare provider or business owner, depending on individual interpretations.

Staff's top five selections, on the other hand, relate more generally to personal values that could be attributed to "good" employees. And, as one might expect, their values are not directed at the business side of the house.

The most conspicuous difference we see from these results is that 39% of Dentists selected 'Excellence,' placing it in the second spot. This makes sense because dentists can "see" excellence in their work. Staff, on the other hand, selected Excellence 14% of the time, placing it well down the list tied for the 13th position.

So dentists hold Excellence as core. Staff holds Commitment, Dependability and Hard Work (#6) as core. This discrepancy can be the source of many issues and problems in a practice. Think about compensation, for example. A hygienist thinks she deserves a raise because she 'works hard.' You think she doesn't deserve a raise because her work is mediocre, in other words, not 'excellent.' This begins to shed light on just how important core values are to the success of your practice.

REMASTER TECHNOLOGY

We realize that core values are not new to dental practices. Most consultants spend some time working with their clients to articulate their core values. But because core values rarely become tangible or observable, they almost never impact the practice at an operational level. Our experience has shown that if the core values of the dentist and staff are not aligned, shared, and mutually embraced, the practice will be compromised and incapable of making the changes required to succeed in the future.

Therefore, the foundational first step of the **REMASTERY** technology is shifting core values from intangible ideals (designed to motivate) to daily relevance and application (concrete, impactful). This positions core values as the nucleus of your practice, not as mere orbiting electrons. By integrating your core values into every thread of the fabric of your dental practice, you enable the business to sustain itself in a rapidly changing world.

STAFF ALIGNMENT

We believe that in designing a practice for the future, it is critical you build a team that is fully aligned and committed to your core values. When there is a difference between the core values of the doctor and the core values of the staff, trouble will find you. When there are different core values, expectations vary. And expectations unfulfilled lead to upsets. To use the earlier example, when staff doesn't deliver 'excellence' in their work, the dentist gets upset. When staff 'works hard' (even though the result may not be produced in the owner's eyes) and is not acknowledged for it, they get upset.

With our clients we start by having both the dentist and the staff complete a core values survey. We then evaluate which core values are on the same page and which are in different books. The ultimate purpose of this step is to help the doctor and staff establish a general alignment on

the core values of the practice. This requires assigning ‘meaning’ to the core values. Integrity could be assigned the meaning, “We are honest. We do what we say we will do.”

Following this, we work with dentists to express these core values as measurable behaviors for each staff position. You cannot improve what you cannot measure. In our example of ‘excellence,’ by asking the dentist to articulate specific behaviors that assert and reinforce ‘excellence’ in the practice, it not only informs staff as to what is expected, it grows and cultivates a culture of ‘excellence’ and develops a habit of ‘excellence’ in each and every action and patient interaction.

In an effort to support this work, we coach dentists when offering staff corrections or acknowledgements that they bind these comments to a core value. For example, you might say, “Shannon, when you went that extra step with Mrs. King, that really supports our core value of Exceptional Service.” In doing so the dentist continually affirms certain behaviors as contributory to the practice culture and identifies those which fall short.

STEP ONE

So your first step is to identify, mutually commit to, and define on a behavioral and operational level, the core values of the practice. Practices with clearly aligned core values amongst the dentist and the staff outperform practices where the core values live only in the framed poster on the waiting room wall—even in areas where the recession is being strongly felt.

STEP TWO

The second step is to then structure the elements of the practice standing totally in the core values. Begin with the cornerstones of vision, purpose and mission. Now establish governing policies, management by accountability and key performance measures. Then, set up financial processes and goals. And finally develop marketing and brand. Do this all under the umbrella of your core values.

STEP THREE

The third step is execution, measurement, correction and producing results.

The process of identifying ‘core’ values, assigning ‘meaning’ to them and then generating ‘measurable behaviors’ that support the core values in action is challenging. It’s hard work. You’ll hit brick walls and you’ll become very familiar with frustration. But in the end you will have a practice declaration from which you can construct governing rules (See Rules for Change), establish management by accountability (See Accountability), and create a culture of excellence and contribution (See Carl in Valueocity) that will absolutely carry the day.

When we say, “Be Fearless,” we mean be courageous, listen, acknowledge, take chances and share your vision with your staff and your patients.



BOOKS by Dr. Marc Cooper

Mastering the Business of Practice

Partnerships in Dental Practice

SOURCE; The Genesis of Success in Business & Life

Running on Empty; Answers to Questions Dentists Have about the Recession

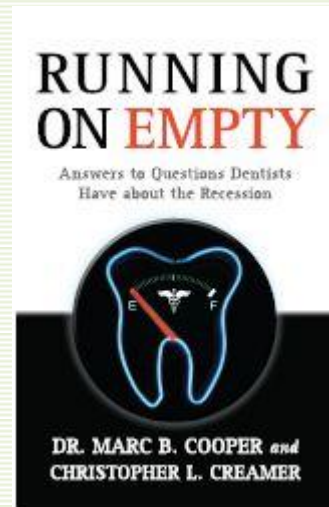
Valuocity; A Fable about Dental Practice (Fall, 2009)

Available at Amazon.com

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ORDER INFORMATION***

*The book will be available July 31st at
www.Amazon.com for single copies.*

*For 50 or more copies, please contact
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