



# Could your practice go from GOOD to GREAT?

By Julie Parker

**I**f I asked you whether your practice could be one of the great practices in the world, what would your response be?  
 “That standard is too high.”  
 “Not with my current team/premises/situation.”  
 “One of the greatest according to whom?”

What if told you that despite your current perceptions, your practice CAN become GREAT!

Let’s look at an elite athlete as an example. The goal a would-be Olympian sets is not the same as every other athlete, but to be BETTER than every other athlete. The planning, focus and training is then structured around this goal.

Is it possible that most dental practices have the goal of being relatively the same as their colleagues? I think so. I have not yet come across a practice whose stated goal is to be better than every other dental practice in the world!

## How do you go from Good to GREAT?

**T**he first step of the would-be Olympian is to determine:

- Who is currently the greatest?
- What are my current capabilities?
- What level of performance am I aiming for?

Once they have the answers to these questions, they get a coaching team

around them and formulate the strategy and action steps required to achieve their goal.

The same is for dental practices.

I often suggest to practices to gather the team together for a brainstorming session. Allocate a good chunk of time - about two hours. Encourage everyone to bring their creative minds.

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Set the scene by asking everyone to imagine that there is a dental practice who, year after year, is awarded the trophy of *Greatest Dental Practice in the World*.

Ask everyone to imagine how this magnificent practice would service ITS patients. Then slowly move through the following list of questions, spending a

quality amount of time on each. Appoint someone as a scribe to write down your team’s thoughts and ideas.

Thinking of this award-winning GREATEST practice in the world, consider how its team members would...

- Welcome a patient into the practice?
- Answer the phone?
- Welcome patients to the waiting room?
- Manage running late?
- Deliver treatment plans?
- Quote?
- Issue recalls?
- Follow up on incomplete treatment?
- Manage complaints from patients?
- Manage particularly anxious patients?

Shifting the focus to an imaginary practice helps to disempower the limiting beliefs you and your team may have about your own practice. All of a sudden, you’re all imagining what is possible.

The feedback generated from this brainstorming session can form the goals you adopt for your practice. You may not reach the lofty heights of “greatest in the world” in all areas, but you will realise how many things you can introduce to substantially improve the service you deliver to your patients.

What you will also discover from this exercise is that there are many changes you can make without spending any money at all. So much of your practice success is about the relationships, rapport and connection you and your team build with your patients.



To give you an example of what I mean, let me tell you about a new dental practice that opened up about a year ago. At the time, I was driving by and noticed it. I decided to drop in and take a look (I love seeing newly designed practices!). As I parked, I saw the beautiful landscaping and appealing signage. The premises itself appeared beautifully designed and welcoming. I walked in through the entrance and was met with a waiting room I had never seen before. The seating was not in its usual position along the walls, but at small tables just like you would find in a café. There were essential oils burning and soft lounge music strumming away in the background. The aroma of freshly ground coffee was coming from the commercial-sized coffee machine in the corner which was surrounded by a selection of different teas and treats. The rustic, wooden flooring was covered with beautiful Havana rugs that lead to the reception desk. Wrapped around the front of the desk was a long blackboard with charming notes in chalk about happy smiles and happy lives. The lighting seemed soft. The smells were calming. The environment this practice had created would have cost a pretty penny, but boy, it was worth it! I was seriously impressed – ten out of ten, I was thinking.

I looked over at the two receptionists seated at the front desk. I walked towards them. There were no patients in front of them and neither was on the phone, so I waited until they were finished working on their computer screens so I could tell them how much I loved this space.

And I waited.

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I counted, 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8 seconds.

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And that's when it happened. That's when it was again powerfully reinforced to me, with my now quickly-deflating enthusiasm, that what makes a dental practice successful is not the money spent on the premises and furnishings, but the quality of the team members who work in it.

If I had walked into a practice that displayed no bells and whistles but had a receptionist who immediately connected with me and warmly welcomed me into the practice, I would have been so much happier. Raising the expectations of your patients without ensuring you remain consistent to that message with a great team will result in a long line of disappointed clientele.

Becoming one of the greatest practices in the world is possible. Like the would-be Olympian, you need to know what great looks like. Plot a path to get there and then implement, train and practice your way to the finish line!

### About the author

*Julie Parker's whole career has been devoted to the dental industry, starting in 1987 as a dental nurse. In 2003, Julie became the first non-dentist to buy a dental practice in Australia. She owned and managed her practice in Brighton, Victoria for 10 years. During this time, she more than trebled the turnover and her staff base grew from 3 to 12 members. Julie successfully cultivated a winning team and a winning business. Her business programs on how to accomplish a dream dental business are gleaned from her wealth of experience, intensive education and an inquisitive business mind. Julie is a Certified Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Time Line Therapy and Hypnotherapy.*

*Julie Parker Practice Success provides dental teams with coaching and training so they can work together and achieve successful outcomes for their dental practice. Contact Julie on 0407-657-729 or julie@julieparkerpracticesuccess.com.au and discover what is on offer to help your team members develop the skills to run an efficient, productive and happy practice.*