



Doctors, start your engines

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For over 30 years **I have lectured at least 30 times a year** and **SPOKEN TO HUNDREDS OF DENTISTS** throughout the United States. Last month I spoke to a small group of dentists near Detroit, Mich.

Three of the dentists had just completed the best quarter ever in their practices. What were these three dentists doing that the rest weren't? A lot!

Here is an overview of the thinking and behavior that separated them from the rest.

Growth is a natural process. People grow, businesses grow, and economies grow. Growth is propelled by certain foundational needs that must be met by every human being and organization if they are to survive, grow and thrive. The seven core needs built into our DNA are the need to live, grow, and procreate; the need for control; the need to give and receive love; the need for power; the need for freedom to choose how we conduct our lives; the need for fun, enjoyment, and variety; and the need for meaning, purpose, and significance.

To be alive is to be driven. Through careful study and evaluation, we believe we are all driven by these seven needs, which make up the energies that drive our growth and the growth of our practices. All humans are designed to grow, and thus all businesses must be designed to grow or they will stagnate, plateau, or die.

A dental practice, by its very nature, is like a human being — complex. There are seven driving forces, or engines, that when organized drive the growth of any practice. The

strength of one engine drives growth, whereas the weakness of another limits growth.

A dentist can get into trouble trying to solve a complex patient problem with an overly simplified solution. The same is true when attempting to create growth. Working with a single driving force is not enough to sustain growth. Continuous growth in revenues and profit is the result of enhancing the energy within all seven engines of your practice.

Identifying the seven driving forces

Traditional thinking has led dentists to believe that increasing new patients leads to growth and profit. This focus on money and production leads to poor quality of care, lack of patient retention and referrals, and an exhausted and overworked dentist and team.

The Profit-ability Management method™ that I developed is based on identifying and enhancing the seven driving forces. Almost any dental practice can double its net profit in three years! This may seem like a bold claim, but 30 years of experience shows it is possible.

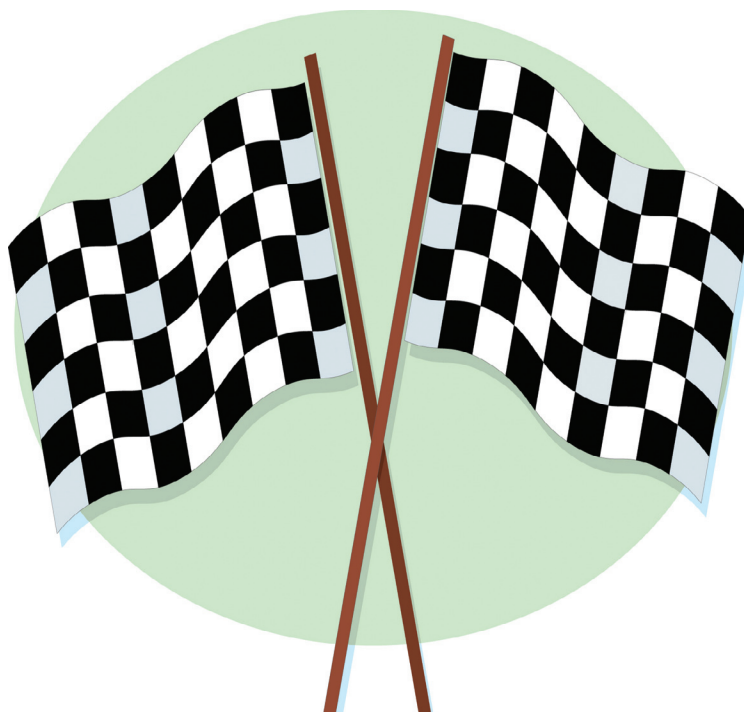
This is the starting point: Set a goal in terms of dollar growth in revenues and profits for the next 12, 24, and 36 months. The

effectiveness of your growth depends on the clarity of your goal and your commitment to achieve it!

Here are brief descriptions of the seven engines:

1. The Attraction Principle™: You must have a process to know, attract, serve and keep patients. Patients are attracted to your practice because their needs are satisfied in an environment of great service. If patients are not continuously attracted, this engine isn't working.

2. The Professional Advantage™: Employ the right team members for the right roles and help them



achieve personal and professional growth. Your team must contribute their ideas, talents and energies to activate the Attraction Principle.™

“Good people with good systems produce outstanding results.”

W. Edwards Deming

3. The Business Blueprint™: Create a clear and coherent design for your practice — no loose ends. Organization is essential to create energy within the other driving forces. Energy is dissipated and growth is thwarted if all the driving forces don't work together.

4. The Time Treasure™: Control the most valuable resources you have — your time and your life. How you manage your time determines how things go in your practice and life. Planning, prioritizing or gaining control of time is a vital driving engine to empower and release energy.

5. The Profit Creator™: Have complete understanding and control of your money and cash flow to make sound business decisions. To create wealth you must control the flow of money or money will control you, and limit your growth.

6. The Patient Journey™: Create a patient engagement process where patients arrive at making good choices. Pushing patients into treatment choices that don't fulfill their needs is a mistake. Never be afraid to sell. The referral sells, the first phone contact sells, the office décor sells, the first visit to the office sells, the smiles of doctor and team members sell. Every contact is a “moment of truth” in the selling process.

7. The Communication Connection™: Develop a clear, consistent communication style that articulates the future (where you are headed and why) of your practice and encourages people to go to the next level. We will find purpose in our practices when we connect to others and do work that is meaningful to us. No matter how high the quality of dentistry you offer, if your communication style doesn't engage people, your practice will not grow.

Whatever the primary engine driving your practice is, it is dependent on what the other six are doing. It may be easier to handle the money engine, but only when all engines are working together will growth occur naturally. Some cars work better than others, just as some practices work better than others, and with far less stress and effort.

I like the driving force and engine analogy because it implies you have the power to control your destiny, regardless of city, type of practice, specialty, or current economic conditions. When all engines are identified and improved, growth is the natural result.

When I speak of the Attraction Principle™, I'm referring to your perception of your market, the emotional needs of your patients, and whether what you are offering fulfills the emotional needs of your patients.

When I speak of the Business Blueprint™, I'm referring

to the way you use your technical capability to fulfill the needs of your patients.

When I speak of the Profit Creator™, I mean the way

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in which you proactively control the flow of money in your practice and your life.

When I speak of the Professional Advantage™, I'm referring to activating the energy that your team can bring to the practice every day. Do they display enthusiasm? Are they engaged? Do they have fun at work?

When I speak of the Business Blueprint™, I'm not referring to an abstract organizational chart that is limiting. No organizational chart ever doubled anything, except perhaps excess payroll and bureaucracy. Organization is the most misunderstood and unappreciated driving force.

Organization, in its truest sense, is what creates the synergistic relationship between all the other engines. When working together, the seven engines can produce almost unlimited growth, fun, freedom, and a sense of meaning and purpose in our practices. And yes, wealth creation and abundance are natural outcomes.

Seldom do we step back and look seriously at the biological energies that drive growth. We all want to grow, and we all need to grow. Growth has been designed into our DNA, but the knowledge and skills of growth must be learned and applied to our personal lives and businesses.

True growth, consistent long-term growth, is never an accident. There are always principles, methods, models and actions that create growth, driven by needs and the seven driving forces.

Doctors, start your engines. **DE**

A practicing dentist, Dr. Michael Schuster founded The Schuster Center in 1978. Guiding over 3,500 graduates to achieve wealth and freedom, The Schuster Center is the first business school created exclusively for dentists. It will celebrate 30 years this year. Dr. Schuster is a cadre and former director at The Pankey Institute, adjunct faculty at The Dawson Center, OBI, and LSU Cosmetic Continuum. Visit www.schustercenter.com.