

## **ALAN D. ERICKSON, D.D.S., P.S.**

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Feb 16, 2009

Margaret Boyce-Cooley  
Director, Practice Leadership Center, Burkhart Consulting

Dear Margaret,

As I look back at the past 18 months I've been working with Practice Leadership Center, I'm constantly reminded of how my team and I have benefitted from your services. Each member of your team brings a unique talent that is carefully applied to our practice situation; further, the knowledge and experience each possesses allows for topic overlap and continuity.

The practice of dentistry can be a strange and complicated endeavor. We are taught in school the basic knowledge to perform most procedures, but there is little attention paid to running an office on a daily basis. From solid business systems, to personnel issues, to proper zone scheduling, you have given me an "experienced partner" in the running of my practice.

I had been in practice for about 10 years when I decided I needed some help. Having never worked in another office besides my own, my only measure of success was whether my chairs were full. I surrounded myself with good, experienced employees, thinking they would show me how to run things while I just kept the drill in my hand. But at the same time, they were looking to *me* for real leadership, which I was unable to provide. Thus, whenever we attempted change in our office, confrontation often arose. All of us were overworked, overstressed, and on edge. The schedule was out of control, accounts receivable was sky high, we were just trying to survive the day. I knew I was missing out on what dentistry could bring to my life.

At first, I was skeptical about bringing on a consulting team, especially one in a different physical location from my office. I didn't want to deviate from my practice philosophy of not "selling" patients unnecessary dentistry to prop up the bottom line. While meeting with Dave Baker, I was enlightened on just what your services could provide for me. Sure, there was a predicted financial return on investment, but I wanted something much more than that. I wanted my practice to be a finely tuned machine with a system for every scenario that would reduce stress for myself and my employees, and at the same time provide an outstanding experience for all of my patients.

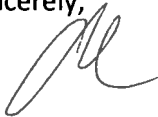
After nearly 18 months of working with your team, I am nearing my goal of having just that practice. We now have block scheduling and financial goals. Our fees are near where they should be. Accounts receivable is under control and monitored. We have morning meetings, monthly meetings, an employee handbook, and monitors to track every aspect of our practice. We have an effective internal marketing system, front office systems and patient financial systems. We developed a fantastic "new patient" brochure. The benefits are too great to list! But most importantly, I feel I've become a much more effective leader in my practice. I now go to work each day fully confident that each and every staff member knows exactly what is expected of them, and they in turn know what to expect from me.

My only regret from working with PLC is that at some point in time, our professional relationship must come to an end. I remember as a small child, my father took part in that time honored tradition of teaching his son how to ride a bike. He'd point me in the right direction, give a little push, and after a short while, I'd fall. Sometimes it hurt, sometimes not, but he was always there to pick me up. Then we'd try again. Sometimes I wanted to quit, but he would be there, gently offering encouragement. Then, after a while, I might be able to go 20 feet. He'd run alongside, shouting instructions and various warnings. Later, I could ride farther than he cared to run, but I could still hear him shouting and cheering behind me. Then one time, I made it all the way to the corner, turned it, and was gone. As his voice faded away, I knew I was on my own, that I could ride.

This is what PLC has done for me. I feel that now I'm turning the corner and soon I will be riding by myself. It hasn't been easy. It was emotional sometimes, and overwhelming other times. At first I didn't believe it would take this long, but now, I wonder how we accomplished all we did in so little time.

Thanks again to you Margaret, and to your team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan D. Erickson', written in a cursive style.

Alan D. Erickson DDS