
- Over 100 combined state senators and congress people are now women
- Over 35 Chief Executive Officers, out of the fortune 1000, are now occupied by women
- Women made up 53% of the electorate in last presidential election
- 50.8% of America’s population is female
- Women make up over 50% of the students in America's universities
- 3 Women sit on the United States Supreme Court
- The average American woman is expected to earn more than the average American male by 2028
- 51% of U.S. Private wealth is controlled by women
- Women account for over 50% of all stock ownership in the U.S.
- Women account for 85% of all consumer purchases including everything from autos to health care
- 55% of active (daily) social media moms said they made their purchase because of a recommendation from a personal review blog
- 64% of moms ask other mothers for advice before they purchase a new product
- As early as 2000, women were found to have surpassed men in Internet usage
- 23.78% of women in the US use the Internet for product information before making a purchase
- The average American women will live to be approximately 80 years of age
- Women and men alike, want to live longer and feel good about themselves

These statistics are a compilation of information I have picked up during commuting (radio), watching the nightly news and political talk shows and from the magazine articles I read while I’m waiting for the Dr. on my consulting calls.

Whether we discuss the rights of women in Afghanistan or America, it is clear that all societies have much to do. While the above statistics show enormous progress in the U.S.A., the truth is that women rights, gender abuse, lack of equality and fairness in the workplace are real global issues. In America, we believe in equality but women still make less money than men for the same work in most professions!

Women in Charge

The dental profession began recruiting women for dental school in 1971. For several decades women have been running the business operations and have assisted in the clinical operations of most dental facilities. Dentistry is one of the few professions where equal pay has been in place as dentists (associates) are generally compensated for production against
collections. Expanded roles/responsibility in this digital era will lead to higher pay for the certified dental auxiliary over time.

I believe women account for over 75% of the people working in dental facilities across America. In the future, women will dominate the profession even more as they will be in the majority as doctors (providers). There are more women matriculating and applying for dental degrees today than men and there is no evidence that men will pursue careers in dental administration, dental assisting and hygiene in the future.

In the next ten years, as the baby boomer dentists continue to age and retire, dentistry will become even more dominated by women and various ethnicities. Combine the shortage of dentists nationally and the fact that women dentists have historically worked less hours than men (balance family/career and personal responsibility) and we will have a serious access to care problem in the future. This is compounding the looming problem discussed in last month’s newsletter – “Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas For dental Care”

![Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas for Dental Care](image)

This all comes about as dentistry is on the verge of a true renaissance of relevance. The movement of Total Health (progressive dentistry) and the validation of the oral/systemic link have the potential to jettison the importance of good oral health care in the hierarchy of wellness.

**Dental Leadership**

The need for leadership has never been greater. The profession is enduring several challenges at once. The economy, the expansion of PPO’s, higher taxes, the need for technology, operating costs and salaries continue to rise and someone else may do the sealants? The dentist’s monopoly of the oral cavity is in jeopardy as the medical service organizations recognize the oral systemic link. All those areas shown above (The underserved) will eventually be served by some healthcare provider in the future. The only
way to prevent further deterioration of the dentist’s autonomy, fee determination, treatment planning and stature is strong leadership, political activism and a dynamic change in how we conduct business. While it would be nice for the Government or the ADA or some great power to take us back to another time, it’s not going to happen. There are things that you can do to put your business on the right trajectory and run profitably.

We must change the way we provide office based patient care and the way we schedule patients. Prevention must be the guiding clinical principle for dental owners and efficiency and execution must be their operational mantra. I have been in this industry for over twenty years and I have always been an advocate for FFS (fee for service) dentistry. If you are a clinician who built their practice by emphasizing their skill, accreditation, education and spa type environment then this is in conflict with what you and I have been taught and believe. Unfortunately, the flagship FFS practice is in the minority and they are becoming an endangered species. The dental landscape has changed forever.

Many senior doctors resist marketing and put operative over preventive care. They don’t see the R.O.I. of technology and lack focus on the operations side of their practice. This must change! Marketing is critical for two reasons: new patient acquisition and your brand/reputation management. Prevention is the key to growing your health provider relevance. Hygiene is where you find perio, operative and cosmetic dentistry especially during challenging economic times. You can’t fully appreciate the speed, ease of use, improved diagnostics, increase in patient acceptance and all the additional revenue opportunities you get until you integrate technology into your practice. Furthermore, technology is a key indicator when young dentists evaluate a practice for purchase. They don’t want to buy a practice and then have to renovate and re-equip it. Creating a turnkey practice will help you sell it and you’ll enjoy these technologies as long as you practice!

If the profession doesn’t change its current paradigm and if our community (Dental associations, dental Manufacturers, dental Dealers and individual dentists) fails to act, the insurance companies, and managed care organizations will push dentistry down a road comparable to our brethren in the medical sector.

The growth of DSO’s (Dental Service Organizations/Corporate dentistry) will continue to escalate as they are delivering relief to young dentists in debt and women dentists who seek flexible hours. These corporate dental entities use venture capital money, business strategies and data mining (population density, business growth and development, the under-served healthcare regions) to determine their next office. Once they select a location, they begin a six month marketing campaign to gain familiarity and trust in that community before it is even built. These offices are professional in appearance and have been designed for maximum work flow. They are equipped with the latest and greatest technology and when they open their doors, they are schedule two plus weeks out. These groups are already competing with traditional dental practices for the oral healthcare dollars in the communities they serve!

As we acknowledge these challenges, we are also dealing with a populous whose been severely affected by several years of fiscal uncertainty. We have high unemployment,
downward mobility and a healthcare system in disarray. Compound that by the confusion and adversity surrounding the Affordable Healthcare Act and you realize that our industry will never be the same.

Today’s dental patients are more savvy, better educated and are advocates in their own healthcare. They use Google and other search engines to find out about their care givers and search the social media sites for patient reviews. These patients have different expectations about their treatment and how it is delivered. They acknowledge the value of their healthcare insurance and see it as a vital component in their employment compensation. These highly active people do not have the time or interest in delaying treatment or doing it over several days. They want same day dentistry. They want their cake and they want to eat it too. And by the way - they want it yesterday!

This is a very different dental world than a decade ago. Many of our younger patients are multi-taskers who approach the world very differently than we do. I see it in my kids. They are the busiest generation to inhabit this earth. They no longer use the house phone. They are busy texting friends on their iPhone while they are connected to Facebook on their laptop/Mac and at the same time; they are watching a television show that they TiVo’d yesterday. BTW – they are also doing school work at the same time? If you proposed a two visit treatment plan or same day treatment plan to my kids – they would opt in for same day! If you were to ask your accountant or an efficiency expert which system is most profitable for you, they would recommend same day dentistry!

I remember attending seminars in the 90’s and the early 2000’s and every consultant told us that we should be gearing up for the Baby Boomers. They were going to inherit the earth and buy everything from us. We were going to have a dental nirvana of sorts but it never really developed as expected. Instead, we saw our savings and inheritances reduced significantly with the financial meltdown of 2008.

Today we are dealing with a new reality. Dentists are focused on improving their financial stability while profits decline because of greater insurance participation. Many older dentists have lost huge sums of their retirement savings in the stock market and the value of their homes. While these doctors attempt to recoup their life savings and retirement nest egg, their messaging and marketing must target specific groups using different marketing techniques.

According to Dr. Charles Blair; in 2005 35% of employers purchased PPO health plans and in 2012 80% did. With only 18% of Americans having indemnity insurance, the battle for these choice patients is much more challenging than just seven years ago. The key to winning in this PPO dental economy is a pronounced focus on prevention, efficiency (doing what we do smarter and quicker) and the use of technology!

The movement from need based to a need/want based dentistry marketplace occurred because of an esthetic revolution in dental materials, the Medias emphasis on beauty/esthetics and Americans had discretionary income. During the past two decades,
dental electives and esthetic services have expanded exponentially but economic factors have hurt the elective business. Now is the time when dentists should be expanding their services to include; implant placement, orthodontic services, cosmetic services, facial fillers, assisted cancer screening, smoking cessation programs, snoring and sleep medicine and saliva testing. We must protect and advance dentistry’s role in healthcare.

Henry Schein is dedicated to helping our clients grow their relevance in their communities and around the globe! We offer transitional services to senior dentists considering an exit strategy and we help young dental professionals deal with their career plans and overwhelming school debt. At Henry Schein we believe dentists should adopt the Total Health model for their private care facility. It will strengthen their position as the first line of defense, in the prevention of disease, in their community. The oral cavity is the gateway to the body and the key to prevention!

We need educated consumers to lobby their employers for better coverage and we need the A.D.A. and other dental organizations to lobby Washington on the Oral Systemic link. We need organized leadership that will address access to care challenges, a national dentist shortage and unknown Glocal (global and local) issues!

**In Closing**

Every month I receive feedback from my readers. I am always pleased by the partnership I have with my clients but I am equally disturbed by the lack of execution I see in the workplace. Dentists need to focus on the operational aspects of their practice. Employee training must be a major priority. Doctors need to become educated on practice management, business management and marketing, not another veneer course. Dentists and their team members must become experts on their practice management software and they should dedicate 2013 as the year they focused on the business side of the practice.

According to Dentrix (The #1 rated practice management software), less than 15% of the tools that can make dentists more efficient and profitable are used in the program. Sign up for the Dentrix Profitability Coaching program now. Every office that has done this becomes more efficient, more successful and more profitable! The Dentrix practice management software is not just a scheduling device!