

Anti-Kickback and Self-Referral Laws

By: Daniel Sroka, Esq.

For several years and at an accelerating pace, Bentson Clark & Copple's phone has been ringing with orthodontists on the other end asking our advice on "how to partner with a general or pediatric dentist." The conversation starts with various scenarios:

1. One of my top referrals has invited me to see patients in his/her office. I'm afraid if I don't do this he/she will hire another orthodontist and my referral relationship will end.
2. Pediatric and general dentists in my town that once referred to me have hired an orthodontist as an employee to treat patients in their office. I have a pediatric or general dentist that still refers to me, how can we partner together?
3. I want to open a satellite with a referring pediatric dentist or dentist, how should this be structured?
4. I'm just getting out of my program and a good friend (or my spouse) is a pediatric dentist or general dentist, we want to partner together as we start out. How should we do this?

There are other variations on the theme of course, and the answers of "how to structure a relationship with a pediatric or general dentist" necessarily need to fall within what federal and state laws and ethics requirements for specialists dictate.

Light Bulb Moments: Thomas Edison Sheds Light on Marketing Efforts

By: Adam Mead

Recently I had the unique opportunity to take my family to the Edison & Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers, Florida. What a remarkable trip! If you have not been, please make a point to visit, if you find yourself in that part of the country. The grounds were tropical and lush. The lawns were well manicured and the scent of exotic flora permeated throughout the entire property. This surely had to have been an inspirational setting for both legendary innovators to conjure ideas that would change the world forever.

I was there with my family on vacation and had promised myself I wouldn't work. We have eight kids, and my wife undoubtedly appreciates my full attention while walking a property with priceless antiques and toxic plants. However, despite my best efforts to turn off everything in my head, I couldn't help but draw correlations between Edison's principles of innovation and the great big world of marketing. Fortunately, none of the children or artifacts were harmed as a result of my daydreaming.

I love Thomas Edison's candor and perpetual optimism. These were two aspects of his demeanor that my wife and I both noted from the visit. We believe these two traits fueled his imagination and never slowed him down. It's what ultimately led him to his very own light bulb moments.



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Smile For A Lifetime: Serving a Community of Needs

By: Jill Reynolds

Today I had the pleasure of meeting a tender-hearted mother and her beautiful daughter who recently graduated as valedictorian from her high school class. She told me she wants braces because she's insecure about the way her teeth look, and she hopes they will help stop her painful headaches. This girl is the youngest of eight children, works part-time at a pharmacy, and maintains an outstanding and impressive report card. An administrator at her school says she "will excel in whatever she decides to do in life," and her boss says, "She has been able to overcome personal hardships...but she and her family have reached a point where some of the difficulties of life are about to overwhelm them." Tragically, she lost her father last fall after an unexpected medical complication. She and her mother are hard workers but barely make more than minimum wage; paying for braces is simply not an option for their family.

Today, I was able to give her some hope. Our Smile for a Lifetime Foundation Board of Directors selected her to move to the second phase in our selection process for awarding orthodontic scholarships, which included an interview and a clinical exam.

After taking a quick peek, Dr. Mark Reynolds, who practices in Greensboro, North Carolina, said she was ready clinically and even offered to put the braces on today because he had time in his schedule. The tears of joy that fell from her face when I told her the good news was an incredible blessing to my heart and reminded me why we do this.

Millennial Moms: Digging Deeper On Behaviors And Influences

By: Maria T. Bailey

Millennials are all the buzz these days, and it's no wonder they garner so much attention. With 83 million people in this generation, it's the largest cohort since the Baby Boomers. This youngest generation of adults ranges in age from teenagers to 30-somethings, and have a gigantic impact on everything they touch. A subset of this generation, Millennial Moms, is the focus of my latest book, "Millennial Moms: 202 Facts Marketers Need To Know To Build Brands And Drive Sales" (Wyatt-MacKenzie, 2015).

The foundation of the book is five years of studying this youngest generation of moms, fielding extensive surveys and focus groups and interviewing moms about an array of topics and issues. The results were a fascinating look at this group of moms (and some dads) and provided fresh insights on their behaviors, which I will share here; these three areas when understood and communicated can help any orthodontic practice owner connect and build trust with your practice during the patient enrollment process.

There are currently about 13 million Millennial Moms in the U.S., and this number will only grow, as two-thirds of women of childbearing age have not yet had children. This means that a huge wave of women will become mothers over the next decade, causing even greater impacts in every sector, from retail to healthcare. The focus of my latest book is digging deep on how this generation of women thinks, their childhood influences, political leanings and much more.

Orthodontic Software: A Perspective After 35 Years

By: Reid Simmons

I first became interested in software for orthodontists when Dr. Jim Davis, a lifelong friend and orthodontist in metro Atlanta, called me in the spring of 1982 just before the AAO Annual Session. He said that "everyone is talking about computers and I have no idea what to look for." He had two goals:

1. The front desk staff would not need to use a pen.
2. Patients would be scheduled on the computer.

His thought was that if Delta can schedule 100k travelers per day on a computer, surely he could schedule 100 patients. On the financial side, his staff had just spent several months going through every ledger card, and he thought his total receivable balance was just over \$100,000. (It ended up being over 3 times that!)

We attended the convention and visited each of the twelve vendors who said they provided software for orthodontists. What we saw was software for general dentists with no modifications for orthodontists. When he asked about scheduling on the computer, most vendors laughed at him but one was willing to give him an estimate of a year to develop at a cost of over \$100,000. When he asked about printing insurance forms or appointment slips in addition to normal reports, the answer was "change the paper."

