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## Newsletter Article Reprint

### It's Not Only the Economy, Doctor

April 2009

The economy is a mess. That's what we hear every day, right? Unemployment is anywhere from 6% to 9% and that's become everyone's focus.

What about the 90 plus percent of the population that still is employed? Have we all forgotten about them?

Advertising for new patients has become the focus for many practices. Some practices, though are surviving quite nicely despite the current recession. No advertising, no giveaways, no promotions. How do they survive?

Most of these practices have one characteristic in common; they concentrate a lot of their efforts to communicate with their existing patients of record. You know, those charts in the file cabinets located somewhere in the office!

In a recent article in *Aesthetic Dentistry*<sup>1</sup>, the author proclaimed that "I remind myself that I have no control over the factors that govern the prosperity of the nation. I do, however, have control over what I choose to do to improve my ability to prosper."

If you find that you have fewer patients, now may be the time to take some continuing education courses to redefine the kind of dentistry you are able to offer your patients.

Will the expense of continuing education and time away from your practice be worth the investment of time and money? Will that investment in yourself to enhance your ability to provide more services and put you in a position to better serve your patients be worth it? Probably, but only if you are willing to change with the times and try something outside of your comfort zone.

Change has the added benefit of keeping you and your staff focused on the practice and things that you can actually control. If you spend time on your practice, your practice will grow, it will become more efficient, and your team will develop the kind of closeness that comes only from facing difficulty and over coming it.

Be flexible, realize that your patients watch the same newscast you do and even though 90 plus percent of them are still employed, their daily lives are bombarded with negativity. They feel about expensive dental procedures like some dentists feel about continuing education expenses. Instead of limiting your job to the mere presentation of options for fixing a few teeth, help them catch the vision of what comprehensive dentistry can mean to the quality of their life. Granted, we must make dentistry affordable, timely and quality-oriented, but we must also help patients avoid having their dental health be defined by their perceived ability to afford a needed procedure.

How we communicate with patients is critical to our success.

<sup>1</sup> *Aesthetic Dentistry* Winter 2009 - Jon Julian, DDS

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