



Dr. Roger P. Levin DDS
Chairman and CEO of Levin Group, Inc.



Building TOTAL PRACTICE Success™

Our commitment is to help every orthodontist grow regardless of the economy. Every orthodontic practice has the potential to transform into A Levin Practice™ and anticipate these results:

- Continually increasing production
- Continually increasing profit
- Continually increasing referrals
- A low stress practice environment
- High levels of professional satisfaction
- Reaching financial independence sooner

Our consulting programs are based on proven systems and strategies that have delivered successful results to thousands of practices for more than 24 years. Levin Group Consulting Programs are the established benchmark for practice management excellence in our profession.



Why A Referral Marketing Program Could Be Right For You

A Monthly Article on Practice Management
Presented by Dr. Roger P. Levin and Ortho Technology, Inc.

Introduction

At the recent American Association of Ortho Annual Session in Washington, DC, I was asked repeatedly about referral marketing. While there is a strong need to increase referrals for orthodontists due to the current economic times, the following question comes up frequently:

If I enroll in a structured referral marketing program, would I have to do things that make me feel uncomfortable?

The answer is absolutely “NO!” Referral marketing is about building strong relationships with colleagues. There is a misperception held by a number of doctors that referral marketing somehow involves “begging for referrals,” which is the farthest thing from the truth, especially when orthodontists engage in a referral marketing program. For example, Levin Group’s program is based on The Science of Referral Marketing™ — a step-by-step system that focuses on maintaining and strengthening relationships with referring doctors and their teams.

When done properly over the long term, referral marketing increases the number of new patients *and* referral sources, ensuring steady growth and rising production. This allows orthodontists when they reach a certain point in their careers to bring in associates without suffering a significant decrease in their own income. The associate will further increase production and eventually purchase the practice at a higher value versus a declining price.

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How a Referral Marketing Program Works

Consistency is paramount when it comes to marketing. A structured referral marketing program ensures that. Unfortunately, many orthodontists engage in haphazard marketing. When the practice is slow, these doctors devote countless hours to ramping up their marketing efforts. As the practice becomes busier, the time spent on marketing wanes. In a few weeks, the practice begins to slow down again. The pattern usually repeats over and over unless the orthodontist enters into a referral marketing program. Without consistent marketing, patient flow will continue to take the practice on a roller coaster ride of highs and lows, which ultimately increases stress for the orthodontist and the team.

There is a better way — and that’s The Science of Referral Marketing! This systemized approach to practice marketing results in a steady growth of new patients. The best thing about this program is that you’re *not* running it — a Professional Relations Coordinator (PRC) is!

Almost everything is handled by a PRC. With this part-time team member in place, the orthodontist is not burdened in any way. The PRC handles 95% of the marketing activities, such as:

- Developing an annual strategic marketing calendar
- Implementing marketing strategies
- Tracking the success of the marketing program
- Developing strong relationships with referring doctors and their staffs
- Coordinating events with referring offices
- Analyzing the number of referrals and production per referral monthly

These activities are all performed by the PRC allowing the doctor to focus on patient care, practice production and leading the team to greater success.

The Necessity of Referral Marketing

Your referring doctors are responsible for the majority of your production. That’s a scary thought! An even scarier thought is most orthodontists rely on just 3 - 5 dentists for the majority of their referrals. The loss of one top referring doctor can be devastating.

In this age of increased competition, you should be doing everything you can to build stronger relationships with referring doctors and reaching out to non-referrers. With a PRC in regular communication with referring offices, you strengthen those relationships and eventually forge new ones with doctors who aren’t currently referring.

Final Thoughts on Referral Marketing

Many orthodontists believe that referral marketing consists of sending a holiday gift and having an occasional lunch or phone call. Those activities are important, but they form only a small part of a structured referral marketing program, which has a multitude of strategies running simultaneously throughout the entire year — not just at the holidays or when the practice is slow.

Another misconception about referral marketing is that there is one pearl or golden nugget that will magically change for the practice. While there are plenty of excellent strategies, one strategy isn’t enough to generate the amount of referrals ortho practices need to grow. To paraphrase an old saying, why put all your marketing efforts into one strategy? The more strategies

you have, the more referrals you will receive. Using The Science of Referral Marketing™, our orthodontic clients are able to continually increase referrals, production and profit.

A strong referral marketing program is a necessity for ortho practices that want to experience continual growth. When a dedicated marketing employee, such as a PRC, runs the referral marketing program, the orthodontist can focus on what he or she does best — providing quality care to patients. If your practice has hit a production plateau, then it might be time to consider a proven referral marketing program.



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