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Harvard Business School & the Lotus® Plus Bracket System

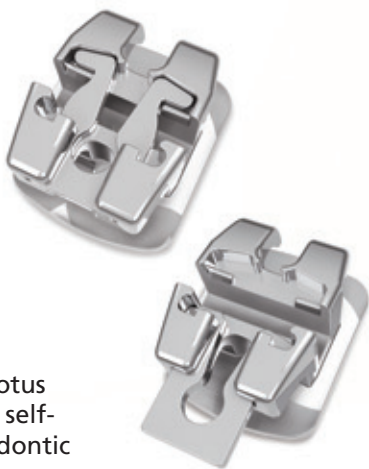
A Monthly Article on Practice Management
Presented by Dr. Roger P. Levin and Ortho Technology, Inc.

I was at an executive conference at Harvard Business School not long ago and it struck me that, for years, the professors there have emphasized one concept more often than any other. While the idea seems so obvious and simple, it is absolutely true. Successful companies, HBS professors say, constantly innovate.

Yet, if you were to ask Orthodontists about how this concept applies to passive self-ligating bracket systems, they would probably say that while the product itself has improved over the last ten years, the prices for these systems are still high. What many Orthodontists have hoped for is a company that would provide a high-quality, self-ligating bracket but at a lower price.

One company in particular is giving Orthodontists even more than what they wished for. The Lotus® Plus Passive Self-Ligating Bracket System was designed by an Orthodontist to include advancements in essential aspects such as patient hygiene, bracket placement, bracket clip reliability, rotational and torque control, and anchoring capabilities. The management team at Ortho Technology took their clever design and found innovative ways to lower the price without surrendering any of the quality that was already built-in.

The timing could not be better for the arrival of Lotus Plus since the economy has put the cost of passive self-ligating bracket systems in a new light. Many Orthodontic



clients have told our team of consultants at Levin Group that they have met strong resistance from parents and patients regarding the fees for treatment.

To this point, our data show that patients and parents visit three Orthodontic practices on average before choosing a provider. Levin Group data also indicates that one of the key reasons these parents and patients visit multiple offices is Orthodontists' fees. Patients and parents now routinely shop for Orthodontic treatment.

What is remarkable about Lotus Plus is that Ortho Technology actually added quality while lowering the price. Usually, companies demand a premium for improving product quality but in this case, Ortho Technology has found ways to lower their costs and pass the savings on to you. As our research shows, this can make a significant difference in your fees and your "consults to starts" ratio. In short, Lotus Plus is an advantage to you and your team when discussing fees with parents and patients.

Among the features that Lotus Plus offers, there are two that I believe will have the biggest impact on Orthodontic practices. The first is the unique clip design on the Lotus Plus bracket. Ortho Technology has engineered the clip to make it much easier to open it and then secure it after closing. This is significant because opening and closing the clip on some passive self-ligating brackets has been a point of frustration for Orthodontists as it has made the process more difficult and lengthier, if only by a few seconds per bracket.

If a patient were to hear that Orthodontists become frustrated when they have to spend a few seconds more time than they expect on a certain task, they might think this was unreasonable. What the layperson would miss, though, is the fact that Orthodontists and their teams are a bit like Nascar race car drivers and their pit crews in the importance they place on time efficiency. Just as Nascar pit crews train endlessly to shave seconds off of the time they spend changing tires and refueling the car when a driver is in the pit, so do Orthodontists and their teams strive not to waste any time as they treat dozens of patients each day. Just a few seconds saved here and there in an Orthodontic practice can easily add up to days saved over the course of a year.

Another key feature of the Lotus Plus system is its ergonomic design and the effect it has on patient hygiene. Lotus Plus allows unrestricted access to prevent the accumulation of plaque. Likewise, the Lotus Plus system alleviates

plaque build-up that occurs in systems with elastomeric ligatures. This is a critical aspect because patient hygiene is not only a concern for the patient but, from an orthodontic practice marketing perspective, it is highly important for the general practitioner who may have referred the patient to the Orthodontist. And having worked with thousands of general dentists in the past 26 years at Levin Group, our consulting team can tell you that when patients appear for bi-annual recall with plaque build-up on their brackets, General Practitioners are not pleased.

General dentists have three main rules for Orthodontists to whom they refer patients. What General Practitioners expect is that the Orthodontist does not cause any needless pain, returns the patient in an improved condition, and makes the dentist look good. Plaque build-up on Orthodontic brackets violates the second and third rules. For Orthodontists who value their referring relationships with general dentists, the Lotus Plus system is a real boon.

Ortho Technology has created a passive self-ligating bracket system that not only makes the Orthodontist look good with referring dentists by improving patient hygiene but also saves them time and, in a remarkable innovation, money as well. The team at Ortho Technology, it seems, would get an "A" for Lotus Plus not only from Orthodontists but from the professors at Harvard Business School.

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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.

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