

your DREAM TEAM

THE SECRET TO ENSURING YOUR SUCCESS AS AN INDEPENDENT PRACTICE IS TO BE THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC PROVIDER IN YOUR AREA.



By Conor Heaney

It used to be you could just open a practice, get a sign and a phone number and grow a practice that way. You just needed to turn up and deliver “okay” service, and you would get enough patients and customers. Today we’re living in *very* different times. The odds are increasingly being stacked against you. There is now a long list of things you *must* do if your practice is to grow and thrive in today’s conditions, and the most important must from the list to ensure your success as an independent practice is to be the most enthusiastic provider in your area.

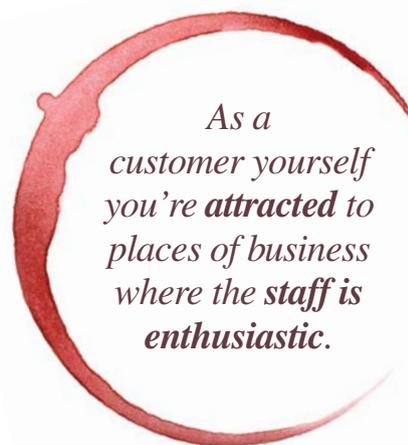
No ifs. No buts. For your practice to reach its potential this is a must. Look around and you’ll see that as a customer yourself you’re attracted to places of business where the staff is enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is good for business, good for customer service, good for morale and good for the economy. The problem is most business owners are sloppy about making themselves the most enthusiastic provider in their area.

DIFFERENTIATION

I have set my practice up to be enthusiastic about eyewear. We work with niche

independent eyewear brands that command premium prices, and we go out of our way to differentiate our practice from the average optometry practice in every possible way.

Recently, we exhibited at a local wine fair as a way to get in front of potential new clients and start some new relationships.



This event alone demonstrates the amazing power of enthusiasm if you build it into your practice.

The contrast in enthusiasm between my team and all the other exhibitors at the wine fair was black and white. The staff at

the majority of stands simply poured wine and answered questions if asked. Otherwise a lot of them looked like they’d rather be somewhere else. My team on the other hand caused a stir. All of it fueled by enthusiasm (*not* alcohol). We had the busiest stand in the place, and we were the only ones *not* serving free wine. That alone says something.

The other staff hid behind their stands. My team members were the only ones to get out front and engage people in conversation. We had a free prize drawing that over 200 people gave their full contact information to enter. We had 50 specific leads from people who we had discovery conversations with. We gave out goody bags that attracted people to us. We had little badges made up with our eyewear logo that people saw others wearing, and they came to search us out because they wanted one. We had an instant camera for a bit of fun so we could take photos of people wearing eyeglasses. Our stand attracted attention while all the others just looked the same. *Enthusiasm. Enthusiasm. Enthusiasm.*

The effort and thought and energy that went into making a success of this event happened *because* of my staff’s enthusiasm for what we do and the people we serve.



Our job as practice owners is to set very high standards and help everyone believe they can achieve them.

Everyone else just kind of turned up. My team did everything for this event by themselves. I simply booked it, directed and gave some strategic input. I was in Ireland during the event while my team *enthusiastically* gave up their Friday and Saturday evenings for this event. They wanted to do it because they are enthusiastic. All I did was relentlessly pursue the goal of becoming the most enthusiastic provider in our area.

SEE ENTHUSIASM

Start by setting this goal for your practice and your team. Relentlessly pursue it. Lead your team toward it. At Jones and Co. Styling Opticians the first bit of training any new staff member gets is how to greet clients: SEE them. Smile. Eye Contact. Enthusiasm. Start there and never let up on making enthusiasm a standard operating procedure.

All highly successful practice owners have built a team around themselves. The fact is you can't do it alone. If you rely only on your own sweat and hard work you will quickly reach the limit of what you can physically get done. Working smarter and being personally highly organized helps, but it will only get you so far. You still have a limited personal capacity.

Take the old chestnut of working "on"

versus "in" your business. Everybody understands the concept, but to make the principle work you need to build a highly skilled team around you. The components are: 1) Build a team, 2) Ensure they are following an effective system, and 3) Ensure they are highly trained.

The most important and profitable use of my time today is the time I spend communicating with and training my team. Whether you fully realize it yet or not, it is the most profitable use of your time too.

Our job as practice owners is to set very high standards and help everyone believe they can achieve them. My team members know I care about the little details but that it is their job to attend to them. Working with and through others is by far the most effective way to do things. Having a team that understands what you want and who are keen to follow is your greatest source of leverage.

Most practice owners are the bottleneck in their own business. Without realizing it, the person who is working the hardest becomes the one who chokes the growth of the practice. If you are trying to get results through your own brute force and effort, it's time to pause, reflect and start working through others. ■



Optometrist Conor Heaney's practice, Jones And Co. Styling Opticians of Manchester, England, has the highest average eyewear sale in the U.K. at over \$1,200 (£900). He is director of Optical Success Academy, working with independent practices to help them differentiate and successfully increase optical sales revenues. His free report "The 9 Keys That Unlock the Hidden Profits In Your Practice" is available at OpticalSuccessAcademy.com.