

7 STEPS FROM OPERATOR TO OWNER



INTRODUCTION

In my 30 years of cooperation with private dental offices, I can say with certainty that the largest number of dentists are in the role of operator/artist.

They need an artist to design a high-quality and aesthetically appealing therapy plan, and the operator is the one who will implement it.

The problem with the artist is that he is "in love" with the service/product and that he basically does not know how to make money - we all know at least a few dentists who are clinically excellent, but are under constant financial stress.

But there is a much bigger problem with the operator - because he reacts to the problems of the "day", which start to appear from the moment he steps into the office. And in the end, regardless of the amount of money, he becomes tired and frustrated, because he does not use the skills and strategic knowledge of the owner, but responds to tactical problems with tactical solutions - which usually mean investing additional hours of his own work.

In short, the owner thinks about and deals with the cause of the problem, and the operator reacts and deals with the symptoms or consequences of the problem.

If I had to choose the most important, but also the most demanding transition in business, then it would certainly be the transition from the role of operator to the role of owner.

These two roles are so different, and on the other hand, almost equally important for our business success - the chances of us succeeding without even one of these roles are minimal. I would venture to say that it is impossible to succeed without representation of both roles.

However, I can say from my own example that we all need a lot more owners in our business, because we are all too "trapped" in the role of operator.

The reason is simple - technology and social networks have built the myth of employment. If we are not and do not seem busy, something is definitely wrong with us.

I struggle with this feeling day by day, aware that every time I jump into the "operation" to put out fires, unplanned events in the environment and interpersonal relationships, is a temporary relinquishment of the role of owner.

Tactical problems generate tactical solutions. Treating symptoms and consequences does not solve the cause - it only makes us busy.

From this perspective, I can freely say that one of my biggest tactical mistakes was creating a business plan for certain business segments, instead of leaving that part to my colleagues.

Instead of dealing with the cause of the problem, I felt useful by creating plans - often for problems that weren't there. Taking away the right and autonomy from my team members to create the plan themselves and be responsible for its execution.

The successful transition from the role of operator to the role of owner becomes one of the key changes that we must implement in our business if we want to succeed.

If we want to make our business sustainable. If we want to make money and keep it.

There is no magic formula that makes this journey easy and simple.

If anyone tells you it's easy, they're probably trying to sell you their book, course, or webinar.

However, there are parts of the road that I'm sure we have to go through and can't skip - I've broken it down into 7 categories, steps or disciplines that will help us bring even more owner skills to our operator business.

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1. CLARITY ABOUT THE CURRENT POSITION

The first thing or discipline that is critical to success is brutally honest clarity about where our business is right now.

We're all pretty good at fantasizing and visualizing the destination of our business journey - it's often easier to tell ourselves a story and convince ourselves that we'll end up there, because we've survived all the way to this point.

But, much fewer entrepreneurs have the courage to look at the real situation in which their business is currently located - including the author of this article, who told himself a whole series of stories in certain stages of his three-decade-long business journey.

We must muster the courage to tell ourselves, first, and then everyone else, where we really are - directly, accurately and rationally. We have to turn off emotions, because at this stage of the journey, emotions are not our friend - we will need them later.

2. LEVERAGE OF MEASURING

We can't establish where we are if we don't measure key outcomes and actions taken, so the second discipline is measurability - one of the owner's strongest levers.

We have to measure - there is no alternative to this. Because what we measure, we can manage. And what we manage can grow exponentially.

Employees who don't want or avoid measurability aren't top players and probably don't want to take responsibility for the outcomes they set - so don't repeat my mistake and set the outcomes for others.

If I had to choose a discipline crucial to success, then it would be measurability. When we know which key actions result in which outcomes, then we know what we need to focus on.

When our employees know what outcomes and indicators they must achieve in order to achieve success, then communication within the team is transparent and builds a culture of responsibility.

3. CLARITY ABOUT THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE

When we know where we are and when we have the discipline of measurability, which at the same time creates and supports a culture of responsibility for outcomes and activities, the next step in this part of the journey is to define the obstacle that stands in our way to our destination.

Only when we identify the obstacle, we can define the strategy, resources and activities to overcome it.

4. THE PLAN (MADE BY YOUR TEAM)

Once we have defined the obstacle, we can start creating a plan to overcome that obstacle.

It is worth pointing out that the skill of planning is much more essential and important than the plan itself. The plan will change, because the only sure thing in business is change - planning allows us to adapt the plan to new circumstances, because through the planning process we are familiar with all parts of the plan.

The biggest mistake you can make is to create the plan yourself and present it to your team. The problem is that it's your plan, not theirs.

It is much better to have your team create the plan with your supervision and corrections, because then it is their plan - which must include outcomes, deadlines and delivery dates.

5. STRUCTURE

The owner's two strongest levers are measurability and structure.

The structure includes systems, processes, protocols, guidelines and tasks, which will ensure the effective execution of the plan.

Remember, in real life we never rise to the level of a set goal - we always fall to the level of the process and system by which we want to achieve that goal.

6. "A" PLAYERS

Without top-notch employees, we cannot put any plan into action., we cannot put any plan into action.

How will we recognize if we have such an "A" player next to us?

Here are some characteristics that will help you recognize them:

- They have a strong internal motivation and emotional need to succeed
- They like to be measured - like students who can't wait for the end of the school year, to show the final grades from their report card
- They are focused on completing tasks
- They value high standards and excellence

7. SCOREBOARD

"If you don't have a scoreboard, you don't know if you're losing or winning." - said the most famous investor in the world, Warren Buffett.

I would add to that - "If you don't know how to read the score on the scoreboard, you won't succeed in business."

Yes, dentistry is a business. Clinical skills are necessary, but not sufficient to succeed in today's competitive world of dentistry.

The scoreboard for your business must contain key indicators such as the number of new patients, the number of first visits, the conversion rate of first visits and the like, along with other financial indicators such as daily/weekly income and average hourly income. board for your business must contain key indicators such as the number of new patients, the number of first visits, the conversion rate of first visits and the like, along with other financial indicators such as daily/weekly income and average hourly income.

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Without a scoreboard light with real indicators, we will most often get a "story" from team members who do not contribute to the business in a quality way.

Scoreboard shows us what we need to know, not what we want to believe.

CONCLUSION

These seven disciplines are crucial for the transition from operator to owner, because they require strategic thinking, not the appearance of being busy and tactical and tacti.

But be careful - I can testify from my own experience that this transition is not for the faint of heart. I made mistakes countless times and allowed daily problems to pull me into my "rabbit hole" again.

Learning from your own mistakes is the most expensive version of education. The trial and error method will do more harm than good to your business.

So learn from my mistakes, step into your business journey with a brave heart and bring even more owner skill and forethought to your life as an operator - the operator in you will thank you.