



Lewisham
Dental Practice

Business Plan

Executive Summary

The purpose of this business plan is to demonstrate the strategic direction for Lewisham Dental Practice.

The partners, Dr Andrew Fries and Dr Helen Fries, have both practiced for twenty years, and have owned the practice since 1993.

The practice currently offers national health dentistry; dental restoration and preventive care as well as facial rejuvenation and other cosmetic enhancements. It is also a training practice, and has been training vocational trainees for some 10 years. The practice currently holds the BDA good practice award, (renewable 2010) and seeks to attain an Investors In People award by April 2009, the customer service excellence award by September 2009 and ISO9002 by April 2010

Over the next 5 years the practice will concentrate on developing the staff and thereby improving performance; increasing customer satisfaction by focusing on continuous improvement; and exceeding customers increasing expectations in the service and treatment they receive. This in turn will increase the customer base and increase customer loyalty, thereby increasing income.

The practice is also looking to expand its services by offering minor oral surgery treatments, through the national health service, should such a contract be made available by the PCT.

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Business Description

Introduction

Lewisham Dental Practice (LDP) is a 3 surgery dental practice located within leasehold premises, 2nd floor, Lee High Road Lewisham. The lease is due to expire in 2010. The practice is located close to a busy shopping centre and a walk away from Lewisham rail station and DLR.

The partners, Dr Andrew Fries and Dr Helen Fries, have both practiced for twenty years, and have owned the practice since 1993. Andrew achieved MFGDP and has been a dental trainer since 1999. Andrew is also a VT trainer and mentor, and is training for a certificate in clinical supervision training. Helen has a special interest in facial aesthetics and is a member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry

The purpose and rationale of the practice

The practice is a part NHS, part private service. It's purpose is to provide dental treatment, restoration and preventive care as well as facial rejuvenation and other cosmetic enhancements in a comfortable, relaxing environment.

The practice offers a wide range of treatments privately, using the latest techniques and materials, including computerized digital cameras and x-rays for diagnosis. The practice also offers Denplan care, a private insurance scheme.

The work undertaken to achieve and maintain the British Dental Association's Good Practice Award reflects the practice's aims towards clinical excellence, efficiency and maintaining regulatory standards.

Non regulatory standards for the service are currently outlined in the service's promise, which is on public display in the practice and on the practice's website.

The scope of the service

The practice offers the following dental treatment services:

- NHS and private consultations
- NHS and private fillings
- NHS and private crowns
- Inlays
- Root Canal Treatment
- Extractions
- Implants
- Bridges
- Dentures
- Preventive advice
- Hygienist Scale and Polish
- Oral Hygiene Instruction
- Mouth Guards

In addition to dental treatment and preventive care, the following cosmetic services have recently been introduced:

- Clearstep
- Tooth Whitening
- Botulin Toxin
- Dermal Fillers
- Facial Peels
- Lumineers
- Veneers

The Practice Team

In addition to the two partners, there is one associate dentist Saira Akhtar and one part time associate is in the process of being recruited. In addition a vocational trainee joins the practice annually for a period of one year. There is also a part time hygienist.

The dental professionals are supported by a team of 5 nurse / receptionists. The performance of staff and the efficient running of the practice are managed by the practice manager Sarah Lewis.

Key Partners

Key partners of the service include the Dental Deanery (in terms of dental training) PCT (NHS commissioning and dental advice / governance), British Dental Association (Governance and Advice) the Local Dental Committee, National Westminster Bank, Dental Laboratories, NESSOR for equipment and servicing and dental product suppliers.

Mission Statement

The following mission statement has recently been adopted by the practice:

This is a practice dedicated to quality dental treatment, preventive care and cosmetic enhancements at affordable prices.

We are, as a team, committed to providing excellent services to our patients, helping them to achieve and maintain a happy, healthy and beautiful smile.

We are excited and enthusiastic about our work, which we will strive to deliver with a caring and professional manner.

Our practice will always be comfortable, and our vigilant attention to sterility and infection control will ensure complete safety for our patients.

We will encourage staff through training, supervision and team building. We follow post graduate education and we are all committed to continuous professional improvement. We have in place a quality control and clinical governance programme to ensure maintenance of both clinical and administrative standards.

We want to ensure our patients tell everyone they know that this is the best practice in the area.

Promises & Expectations

The following promise has recently been adopted by the practice:

We promise to:

Welcome you into a caring and professional environment.

Provide an efficient service in a relaxed and friendly manner

Listen with respect and respond to your concerns.

Clearly state the cost of proposed dental treatment in advance.

Perform our very best standard of dental work for you.

Use the most up to date techniques and materials at our disposal for private treatment

Guarantee our private dental work for a minimum of two years.

Make no charges for appointments changed or cancelled where 24 hours notice has been given.

See you within 15 minutes of your appointments time (unless there is an emergency).

Only book one patient at a time to see each dentist (no double-booking).

Only recommend treatment that is necessary.

Answer the telephone quickly and courteously

We appreciate your commitment to:

Arrive in time for your appointments.

If you need to cancel, tell us at least 24 hours in advance.

Follow our instructions to care for the work we provide.

Attend review and maintenance appointments as advised.

Pay for treatment as requested. We accept cash, personal and business cheques and most credit and debit cards. We also offer interest free credit.

Talk to us, let us know what you think of what we do: right and wrong.

Help our practice grow by recommending us to your family, friends and colleagues.

Customer Analysis

The service sees mainly regular customers, who appear to be loyal to the practice. The customer database holds a total of around 16,500 customers. Of these, 783 are new patients (i.e. have joined the practice in the last 12 months.) 103 joined in the last month. Due to the fact that the appointment system has only recently been digitized, it is difficult to assess how many patients are leaving the practice each year. Currently 15900 patients do not have a course of treatment open for them.

Customer feedback has begun to be gathered on why new customers are choosing LDP for their dental treatment. It would appear that the majority of people choose LDP because they live in the borough and it is convenient.

Other reasons for choosing LDP may include

- a) word of mouth, therefore excellent customer service is essential to maintaining income and
- b) having viewed literature advertising LDP's services, therefore marketing is also important in generating interest in the borough.

No analysis has yet been undertaken on the breakdown of customers in terms of age, locality, ethnicity, medical issues etc. No regular monitoring has been undertaken on the number of new customers or the number of customers leaving the practice. Customer views are not sought on a regular basis, although there is a suggestion box in the waiting room for customers to provide their ideas on improvements.

Market Analysis

Market Trends

British people are increasingly aware of the benefits of cosmetic dentistry. General dentists are learning the techniques to whiten and straighten teeth, and remove imperfections.

Increasingly important to patients is the preventative aspects of health, and this is the case for oral and dental health. LDP already provides information and education on preventative care.

More than half the dental treatment carried out in the UK (as measured by turnover) is now provided privately (1)

Recent research shows that one in five people in Britain do not have a dentist, with around half citing the reason to be lack of access, 43% citing cost and 28% mentioning fear. (2) Meanwhile, research from the university of Bristol suggests that admissions for the surgical treatment of dental abscess have doubled in the last 10 years.

Political Trends

In February 2008 The British Dental Association (BDA) called for a more flexible way of monitoring NHS dentistry that emphasizes factors such as preventive care, improved oral health, access, quality and patient experience. BDA Executive Board Chair Susie Sanderson warned that it would be difficult to improve access to NHS care unless units of dental activity (UDAs) were scrapped as the sole measure of dentists' work. She also explained the many problems created by the new contract, including the reduced number of patients able to access NHS dentistry since the introduction of the new contract and problems with both the threat and reality of claw back against dentists who do not achieve their UDA targets. Since the implementation of reforms in April 2006, 881,000 less people across England have seen an NHS dentist. (3)

The GDC has set up draft standards to ensure patients are protected from harm, and are provided with a "safe and effective standard of care". These standards relate to medical appliances, and apply to all dentists and dental clinicians.

NHS contract provision will change in 2009.

Economic Trends

Downturn in economy may affect whether people choose cosmetic treatments. There may be a need to focus on events which may trigger people wanting to look good, link in with marketing to find ways of encouraging people to spend their ever dwindling spare cash on cosmetic enhancements.

Sociological / Demographic Trends

In an environment of increasing customer expectations, excellent customer service provided by staff is becoming increasingly important to ensure patients remain loyal. Quality dental care with a comfortable and professional and customer focused environment builds trust and word of mouth referrals for future patients.

The current demographic information about Lewisham is that it is an area of urban prosperity, populated by Educated Urbanites who are mainly young, multi ethnic, living in converted flats. In comparison to the national average, they are more likely to own an use a home pc / laptop. The age range 20-44 is far higher than the national average Their financial profile is described as “ Young, well off private renters, less financially active” however they are more likely to have income over £50,000 than the national average. (4)

Technological Trends

The future of the dentistry profession is the development of implants to replace bridges and dentures, and laser techniques for reduced pain.

Financial Analysis

No monthly or annual review is currently undertaken into the financial performance of LDP, save for the accountant's actions.

Private fees are set annually. Salary costs are also reviewed annually. Both are usually increased in line with inflation.

Competitive Analysis

It is loyal customers who bring growth to a business, skyrocket the business' reputation and propel the business as a world class organization within the field. A customer can be satisfied with a single act; loyalty however is built through a series of acts and behaviour. (5) Loyal customers will market a business through word of mouth and will be more likely to forgive mistakes. They are also less likely to be swayed by competition.

Studies of customer behaviour indicate that, when asked why they changed from one service provider to another, almost half the customers mention poor service as a reason for change. In comparison, only 8% mention the technical aspects of the product, and only 8% mention price. 68% of leading customers did so because of what they perceived as indifferent attitude on the part of the service provider. (5)

One way that has been identified as a way to retain customers, is to treat them with respect, irrespective of their socio-economic background. (6) The distinction between

nhs and private treatment makes it difficult however not to differentiate in this way.

Marketing

LDP have invested well in a new brand, with a logo being used on all documentation and a new website being produced. In February a direct marketing exercise was undertaken in the Blackheath area, although it is unclear how successful this has been for the practice, as no analysis of new customers' reasons for joining have been undertaken. A wedding exhibition was undertaken in April, but again its success is as yet unknown.

Facial rejuvenation and teeth whitening promotions have been posted on Bromley's staff intranet, to be read by 2000 employees.

A newsletter is being prepared for distribution to existing customers.

A number of promotional packages with discounted offers have been produced to promote cosmetic treatments.

Business Drivers

1) The practice needs to build on its customer focus. LDP exists on satisfied customers who help sustain revenue on a year to year basis. However, these customers need to be loyal to the practice. To increase customer loyalty, LDP needs to share its vision with its partners and customers, listen to and consider customers needs and wants when developing the practice, and needs to understand why customers choose LDP rather than other practices.

As a start to this process, the business plan needs to be circulated to partners and customers for their opinion and feedback. A set of standards needs to be produced to demonstrate to customers what LDP will deliver. These standards need to be communicated to customers through as many communication media as possible. LDP then needs to monitor its performance against these standards to ensure it is delivering. Results should also be published on a regular basis, together with LDP's plans for the future, particularly where this performance may be affected.

LDP then needs to establish its customer base, then review customer profile regularly. This will allow early action to be taken, should any trends be identified.

LDP also needs to undertake satisfaction surveys with customers on a regular basis, and proactively obtain feedback from customers on the service they have received. New customers should be asked to confirm why they chose LDP rather than another practice, to establish the level of recommendations from satisfied customers.

2) The practice needs to build on its investment in staff. There is a high correlation between satisfied loyal customers and satisfied, loyal employees. Creating a culture of trust and appreciation enhances respect and confidence and allows an organization to operate on a fair, open and honest way. (3)

To achieve this, LDP needs to undertake employee satisfaction surveys, on at least an annual basis. Consideration needs to be given to implementing a performance related bonus as part of the annual pay review. As part of the appraisal process staffs' development needs should be identified and an annual training plan should be produced and implemented. Paid time off to attend identified training courses should be allowed. All support staff should be required to achieve NVQ level 3 in customer care, and consideration should be given to awarding a one off bonus or other award of recognition to those who achieve it

In addition to the appraisal process staff should attend supervision meetings on a regular basis (at least 6 weekly) where good and bad performance is recognized and communicated. Team meetings should take place at least fortnightly and team members should be encouraged to contribute to ideas to improve the practice. Team outings should be organized at least twice a year.

3) The practice needs to build on its aesthetic appearance to customers. In the next year the practice needs to be repainted, the filing cabinets removed and better use made of wall space with merchandising display cabinets. The television promotional material should be updated with a less explicit pictures of broken, rotting teeth, but including more of LDP's cosmetic enhancements.

A fourth surgery should be created out of the kitchen / staff room area. This will free the third surgery for the new associate to expand both NHS work (should the UDA allocation allow) and also private work.

4) The practice needs to build on the aesthetic and cosmetic services it provides, increasing the range and the demand for services. It also needs to increase the amount of private treatments given and the number of Denplan patients. To achieve this there needs to be a marketing strategy for the practice, and an action plan to complement that strategy with progress reports on a quarterly basis.

5) The practice needs to build on its marketing activity by developing the LDP brand. Some literature within the practice may contain the old logo and this should be replaced as a matter of urgency. A number of different typefaces are used within LDP literature, forms and leaflets. Arial has been shown to be the typeface most easily readable, and should be no less than 12 font on literature to ensure ease of reading for the customer.

Mystery shopping is also considered to be vital to ensure all staff are "on message" i.e. know all the products available, all current prices, and all promotional packages currently on offer. Staff should also be asked to mystery shop other dental practices, to pick up useful ideas for the practice.

Consideration should be given to working with local estate agents, to persuade them to give out LDP literature to new residents. Lewisham Council should be approached to see if they would be willing to include LDP literature in their welcome pack to new council tax payers.

As each award is achieved within LDP, a news release should be provided to the local paper in an effort to maximize on free media advertising.

Practice management should set up a programme for attending local schools, presenting to children the benefits of good dental health and regular check ups.

Lewisham Council should be approached to establish whether it is possible to post adverts for cosmetic treatments on their website. The Bromley Council adverts should be re-posted at regular intervals.

Further wedding exhibitions in the local area should be attended and a method found for booking customers at the exhibition to secure new patients on the day.

A newsletter should be produced on a 6 monthly basis, to alert customers of changes, promotions and new services.

6) The practice needs to build on its customer choice, by opening at lunchtimes and opening on Saturday mornings. Private appointments should be available on Saturday mornings.

7) LDP wishes to recognize its excellence in terms of service, performance, procedures and customer care. In the next two years it is intended that the practice will attain Investors in People (April 2009) Customer Service Excellence (September 2009) ISO9002 (April 2010) and retain the BDA Good Practice Award in 2010.

8) The practice needs to build on its financial monitoring. To achieve this it needs to look at expenditure costs, looking at whether the expenditure undertaken is value for money, and that products and materials are not being wasted. A stocktake and inventory needs to be undertaken immediately, then a review of suppliers should be undertaken over the next 2 years to ensure the most economic suppliers are being used.

An annual review should be undertaken of turnover, % private income, % denplan income and % nhs income, % of turnover spent on dental supplies, % of turnover on dental laboratory fees, average earnings per hour for each associate, salary costs, and other admin costs. Monthly reports should be given by the practice manager to partners on forecast for end of year for each of these key performance indicators. Surgery utilization should also be monitored each month,

9) A feasibility study should be undertaken on the benefit / cost of developing an in house laboratory provision, to control the expenditure of laboratory fees (amounting to £30,000 in 2008/9). Part of this study should include the possibility of purchasing a CEREC CAD / CAM system.

10) The practice will look to expand its services by offering minor oral surgery treatments, through the national health service. An application should be made to the PCT to offer such services within the next two years, or alternatively should a contract be made available by the PCT, LDP should submit a bid for the contract.

Action Plan

Please refer to Appendix A as to how these drivers are going to be achieved as business objectives

Performance monitoring

Please refer to Appendix B as to how to establish whether these business objectives have been successful

Risk Assessment

Please refer to appendix C as to the inherent risks involved in each of these objectives, what threat (if any) they may be to the success of the practice, and what action might be taken to minimize these risks.

Notes

(1) **“Care Quality Commission” Derek Watson, Dental Practice Volume 46 No 7 July 2008**

(2) **“The results are in..” Dental Practice Volume 46 No 7 July 2008**

(3) **Information Centre statistics, British Dental Association,
<http://www.bda.org/advice/index.cfm>**

(4) **<http://www.caci.co.uk/acorn/pclookupgo.asp> 03/07/2008**

(5) **“The quest for unswerving customer allegiance”, Customer First, Vol 8 No 3 2008 Institute of Customer Service**

(6) **“Mind the Gap” Raj Rattan, Private dentistry**

