



ORTHO2

David vs. Goliath

Why Haven't Corporate Dental Giants Chased all the Private Practices out of Town?

by **Jill Allen**

Imagine your name is David, you live in a community, and own a private orthodontic practice. Then, a corporate dental group named Goliath announces its intention to build a new clinic nearby. What do you do?

Many times I have seen this issue become quite contentious. A fight to the death is often sure to ensue. Too many times I see doctors becoming consumed, spending their time fretting and complaining to their team members, worrying about how Goliath is going to ruin their business, but yet they do nothing about it.

One of the biggest complaints I hear is that these big corporate dental groups will cause smaller orthodontic offices like theirs to lose patients, lose money, and ultimately go out of business and die. Let me suggest that the ultimate fate of those threatened orthodontic offices may lie less in the hands of the big corporate dental groups, and more in their own approach and commitment to establishing patient loyalty.

Many successful private orthodontic offices are managing to carve out practices that not only survive, but also thrive in the shadow of some of these big dental giants – even if these big dental groups outspend them in marketing dollars 30 to 1. So how do they do it?

Ultimately, braces are braces no matter where they are placed. Yet many private practices are successfully communicating to their patients why they should and need to start treatment with them. These are the David practices! They are the doctors that seem weak to the corporate competition, but turn out to be surprisingly strong.

They convey that although braces may be braces, the quality of care and patient experience in their practices are vastly different than the Goliath dental groups out there. They are confidently presenting that although their treatment fees may not be the lowest in town, their regard for treatment care is to the highest of standards. Because

of this, patients are seeing value and are choosing to accept treatment with them instead of with the Goliaths out there.

In the end, competition is good. It can and should cause you and your team to raise the bar for your practice and evaluate everything! Evaluate your quality of patient care, pricing, fee presentation strategies, patient practice experience, and more. Then choose to change, and strive for excellence.

If you choose to do this you will start to create loyal patients who want to refer their friends and family to you. You will create a mind-set for your patients that inevitably gets them talking, blogging, tweeting, Facebooking, and referring others to you. Remember the best referral any practice can get is from a happy patient!

It is inevitable that every orthodontic practice will have some form of competition. It's how you choose to compete that can make or break your practice. So how do you get your practice to this position? By going further than merely focusing on customer satisfaction. You and your team need to focus on customer loyalty through an amazing practice experience.

Let me illustrate this with an example:

Everyone in your practice needs to be constantly asking themselves, "What am I doing right now to make sure that the next time my patient hears of someone who needs orthodontics, they will choose to refer to our office and not our competitor?"

Here are three simple examples that are easy to understand:

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About the Author



Jill Allen is the owner of Jill Allen & Associates, a full service orthodontic practice management consulting firm with a special focus on new practice start-ups and doctors who have been in business eight years or less.

- 1. Be easy to do business with.** Just like Amazon makes buying easy with a few clicks of your mouse and an Amazon Prime account, we, too, should make it easy for patients to come in, find out about us, and get started. The last thing we want is old antiquated systems creating obstacles for patients to say yes to treatment.
- 2. Create confidence in your practice.** You may be a smaller practice in comparison to the Goliaths out there but you and your team provide an expertise and experience that gives your patients comfort and confidence that they are choosing the best practice for themselves, their family, and their friends.
- 3. Educate your patients.** Your patients want to know that if they have an orthodontic problem and they come to your practice you won't just sell them on what they need to do to fix their bite. They want to know that you and your team are going to teach them and educate them about the benefits of orthodontic care in your practice. Show them what excellence looks like!

With these examples in mind, explore the reasons why patients should select you over your competition. Focus on making those attributes of your business the standards against which all others are measured. Then you'll be separating yourself from your competition and moving from basic customer satisfaction to coveted customer loyalty.

Remember in the story of "David and Goliath," ancient armies contained teams called slingers, who wielded sling-shots and could be deadly from distances as great as 200 yards. The best, like David, were lethally accurate, and Goliath was not a small target. Once David had persuaded the Israelites that single combat didn't need to mean sword versus sword, but could be by any weapon, there was only ever going to be one winner.

As Malcolm Gladwell stated in his book "David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants", "Goliath had as much chance against David as a man with a sword would have had against someone armed with a .45 automatic handgun." So remember the strong are often surprisingly weak if looked at from the right angle. People who seem weak can turn out to be surprisingly strong. Don't be a Goliath. Dare to be a David. ♡