

BEFORE YOU WRITE THAT CHECK

What every dentist must know about major technology purchases.

BY AMY MORGAN, CEO OF THE PRIDE INSTITUTE



Amy Morgan is a renowned dental consultant and CEO of The Pride Institute. A highly sought-after educator, Amy still works one on one with dentists and travels extensively to meet with and teach those looking to improve themselves. For more information about The Pride Institute's seminars and consulting, visit theprideinstitute.com.

EXCLUSIVE
More advice from Amy Morgan, CEO of The Pride Institute, on how to improve your practice.

It never fails to amaze me how many dentists have purchased “stuff” for their practice, only to have an important piece of “must-have” technology gathering dust several weeks (or months) later for lack of use. Even in this challenging economy technology purchases are still being made, although many dentists and teams appear much more cynical when it comes to silver bullet promises or fairy tale hopes for results.

The truth is, for a practice to stay cutting edge there needs to be a plan for continuous growth and improvement. Technology, clinical innovations and enhanced business processes are a must for a practice to remain viable in any situation. “No” cannot be the knee-jerk response when considering new purchases. Your yes, no or maybe should be based on clear-headed consideration:

- Why am I purchasing ___?
- When should I make this purchase of ___?
- How will I realize a return on the investment in ___?

If the doctor and team plan well for a new purchase or upgrade there is huge potential for real ROI—and that is both the burden and the solution. You have to have a plan. Impulse buys

ering devices; most often, they do very little to move the practice forward.

If you want to make a purchase count, go over these strategic questions before you write that check or pull out that credit card.

1. What are the vision, goals and strategies for our practice? And how will this new technology support all three?

2. What patient profile would appreciate and value this new innovation? Do they already exist in my patient base? Can this be a “unique selling proposition” to attract new patients?

The wrong reason to purchase new technology is when it's based on the dentist and team's personal gratification

3. What is the initial of the new technology? long before we expect to not only the ROI, but a payoff (by increased money, efficiency or quality of experience) from our purchase

When referring to cost direct and indirect expense must be included when calculating a return. Do not

“If the dentist and team do not demand ROI they are not likely to realize it.”

Too often technology purchases are made in the spirit of competitive sports. If the answer to, “Why am I buying this?” is because your roommate from dental school bought one and you think you're better than him or her, then this new purchase will automatically become the dust collector. If you have a strategy to be cutting edge and your budget and goals reflect an increase based on specific technology upgrades, then and only then do you have the green light to go shopping.

versus addressing the needs and desires of existing and potential new patients.

This reminds me of a quote from Fred Lee's *If Disney Ran Your Hospital*. In the book Lee states, “Selling is trying to get people to want what you have. Marketing is trying to have what people want.” When you have what people want, no selling is necessary because they are already inspired to say yes. If you have purchased technology and it feels like you have to force your patients to accept its use, you may have made the wrong purchase.

purchase require additional lab fees, supplies, different staffing, leasehold improvements, investment in marketing pieces, etc.?

Many dentists don't wait to take the time up front to define the costs and then are surprised to be spending a great deal more than expected the back end. Once you have the full financial commitment you can plan for the appropriate ROI. Remember, ROI can be multifaceted and include the possibilities of increased profit, productivity and efficiency while improving

Do you have a question for Amy Morgan, CEO of The Pride Institute? To ask Amy about

agement, decreasing stress, enhancing workplace and
mer satisfaction, and much more. If the dentist and
do not demand ROI, they are not likely to realize it.
asy formula for analyzing ROI from the viewpoint of
crease in productivity and profitability is to expect
ge of 3 to 10 times the initial cost of implementation.
will help you decide if the purchase will be a success-
ldition to the practice.

**What statistics or benchmarks will we monitor to
: and praise progress?**

hen it comes to tracking success, the team can manage
dgment or manage by statistics. In No. 3 above, we see
ROI comes in many different forms, so choosing the
benchmarks for success is pivotal to test, track and
it implementation. Are you looking for an increase
oduction per day/hour? Collections? New patient
' Case acceptance? Referrals? Do you expect to see
rease in expenses? You can only manage something
s measured and the right measurements help set pri-
:s and success points.

**What is the timeline to fully integrate this new
vation? What is the training plan? What resources
eeded to master the new skill?**

is is a pivotal part of the strategy for implementation.
ving what systems and staff will be affected by the
echnology, having an understanding of the training
practice required and identifying how long changes
ake removes stress and pressure. Most practices are
:ars racing down the highway at 75+mph. There is
ay a team member can open the hood and crawl out
'indow of the racing car to work on the engine. That
t seem obvious, but a fatal flaw in implementing new
ology is expecting the practice to stop everything
ntegrate the new purchase immediately. This can
to burn out and feelings of being overwhelmed for
one involved.

**How will we market this new addition to increase
est and inquiry?**

nce had a senior dental student show me a rather
d business plan. His written marketing strategy for
otential practice startup was that he was going to:
er cutting-edge, modern dentistry.

hen asked who he would do this dentistry with, he
io real answer. The moral of the story is that your
eting strategy can't be, "build it and they will come."

e needs to be a communication strategy in place from
one. Will you be promoting this on your website,
ing buzz through social media, sending "e-vites" to
ing patients, etc?

ie bottom line is that NO PLAN = NO PATIENTS.
ie great news is that any new technology purchase can
tremendous potential, if you follow these six steps.
to dream, write the check, continuously improve and
h your practice grow! ●