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Pushing into the 'stretch zone'

by Dr. CJ Mertz

Since more people are expected to try chiropractic this year than ever before, I offer you the same challenge I've sent to our clients throughout the world: double your practice in 2007. In order to do this, you must be willing to think differently about what makes your practice grow.

It's a fact. Successful people make changes unsuccessful people won't.

There are essentially two types of changes -- those you *want* to make and those you *need* to make.

Only 20-25% of the time do the changes you want (are ready and willing) to make also reflect necessary change. You'll have to enter into the other 75% "needs" change space in order to see your practice experience a career year.

The problem that's always been associated with the "be-do-have" paradigm is that of focusing too easily and quickly on changes you want to make. I want to challenge you today to stretch beyond the next set of changes you're comfortable making, and instead seek to execute core changes.

Let's say you're seeing 100 patients per week. Growing to 200/week gives you a pure double. If your retention is less than 25 visits per patient, you must institute a retention-doubling set of strategies to achieve your double. If your retention is more than 50 visits per patient, you must institute a lead generation-doubling set of strategies right away. Anywhere in-between and a combination of the two strategies must be set in motion.

Unfortunately, most chiropractors seldom get the chance to utilize the right strategies for their practice circumstance.

Did you know that the average DC, after five years in practice sees no more than a 25 visit increase for the rest of his or her career? It's certainly not because these chiropractors don't have the potential or the desire to grow. I've given our clients worldwide the challenge to double because it will force them to reconsider how they apply their best strategies for growth this year.

If you truly have the passion to transform the lives of many more people in 2007, you must know what the standards are to achieve your double.

Here are a set of standards in concert with big growth: 20+ new patients per month, 70+% conversion to corrective care, < 10% missed visit average, 85+ % re-sign to wellness care, 60+ % cash practice, 45+ visit retention, average patient age under 25 years old, 10+ average workshop attendance, 1 print ad per month and 1 screening or outside talk per month and \$30+ visit average.

Consider where your strengths and weaknesses lie relative to these standards, and then commit to seeking the right set of strategies to move forward toward your double in 2007.

There are just three reasons why you can't realistically make the right changes this year:

1. You're in poor mental, emotional or physical health.
2. You have no money to invest in your future.
3. You're unwilling to improve a technique you currently use that requires a long time (10 minutes or more).

Nearly all other issues are completely correctable in 90 days or less to get you on track for big growth.

The mindset you should have moving into 2007 (especially if you had no formal coaching last year) is to not even come close to repeating what you did in 2006!

By the way, growing by 100 adjustments per week requires just a 40 net new patient increase to your practice. You've got to believe your town needs that level of healing and you deserve to provide that level of service. You must be willing to push yourself beyond your "comfort zone" and into your "stretch zone." This is where all your new growth lives, along with all the right changes to get you there.

Take a critical look at the vibrancy of your growth plan. Ask yourself if it calls for at least three bold changes to your practice. Will it meet or exceed at least three new standards? Does your growth plan lead you into the stretch zone? Nothing big happens until you emotionally commit to your growth plan and your team signs up with you a thousand percent.

Now is the time to invest in your practice by insuring you have the right people, the right strategies and the right tools to get you where you want to go. A majority of DCs who'll be doubling their practice in 2007 will be using a coach, so don't hesitate to call me and ask for help. It would be an honor and a privilege to show you the way.

(Dr. CJ Mertz is the founder and head coach of the prestigious Waiting List Practice chiropractic training organization. See the WLP 300 patient per week opportunity on the back page of this issue. For information on WLP coaching services, please call The Waiting List Practice at 877-TEAM-WLP).