

from the desk of

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Howie Horrocks



Mark Dilatush

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An excerpt from *Unlimited New Patients, Volume Three*

### The Business and Practice of Dentistry – from a Patient’s Perspective

*Your practice is a small business much like any other – but your patients don’t see it that way.*

Our good friend of many years, Dr. Howard Farran, wrote a book several years ago called “The Business of Dentistry.” It’s a great book. Both in the book and in his live presentations he draws concepts from the business world and applies them to the business of dentistry world.

One central point he makes over and over is that dentistry is not immune to the laws and axioms of business or economics - far from it. Whatever you consider your “practice” to be, it is first and foremost, a small business. Therefore it is subject to the laws of supply and demand, the need for customer acquisition, overhead management, personnel management and all the other principles, mechanics and operations of any other business.

#### But for Patients - Dentistry is Different. It’s Invasive!

Dentistry isn’t a product or commodity – it’s a service. And a particular kind of service. It’s a health service. It’s very personal, and by definition, this makes it invasive.

We in dentistry often use the term “invasive” to mean surgery - soft or hard tissue cutting. Placing implants is invasive. Crown prep is invasive. Sinus lifts are invasive. Gum surgery is invasive. Even hygiene is invasive.

But from a patient’s perspective the term has a much broader meaning. The way patients view it - ANYTHING you do (even just a cursory exam) is invasive. You are literally “IN their faces” meaning you and your team have your fingers and instruments INSIDE their mouths. Aside from heart or brain surgery this is about as invasive as it gets.

And, unless you’re using oral or IV sedation, your work (unlike that of the heart or brain surgeon’s) is performed while the patient is awake.

#### Dentists have to violate a patient’s personal space every day.

You know how you get nervous when a stranger (even a friendly one) comes right up to your face and stands too close to you? It’s a violation of your personal space. Humans naturally recoil at such invasions.

Yet YOU have to do this every day.

So from the patient’s perspective their whole dentistry experience is invasive and a violation of their personal space.

#### Can you see how they see it?

Of course your ‘invasiveness’ is necessary and required, but can you start to see why patients have a problem with dentistry? You’re immune to it. It’s part of the job, right? You’ve probably long ago forgotten that what you do is invasive at the most basic level. But to most patients – they’re NOT used to it. It’s NOT routine for them.

Add to that, what you’re doing on them can have a profound effect on their health and appearance. If you mess up, they may have to live with the results the rest of their lives. In fact, in extreme cases, what you do to them can actually maim, disfigure or even kill them. Yes, I know, these are very rare but what we’re talking about here is the patient’s perspective – not necessarily reality.

As if all this isn’t enough, unless you’ve mastered the art of painless dentistry, IT CAN HURT LIKE HELL!

Do you suppose they’re thinking about any of this every time they walk into your office? Or thinking about it even before they call you (or decide not to call you)?

*Of course they are.*

All this is what you’re up against every single day throughout your entire career.

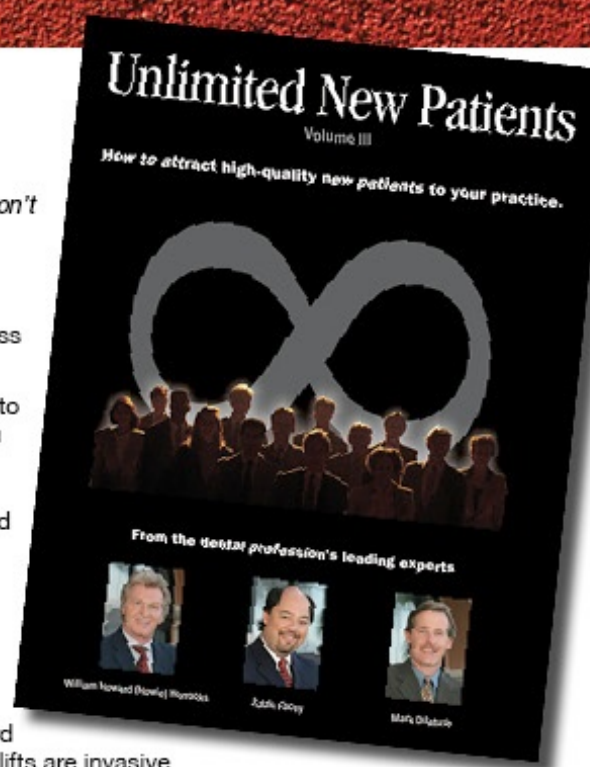
#### Our expertise is not delivering dentistry – yours is

Our expertise is the business of dentistry and most particularly the marketing of dentistry to a nervous and recoiling public.

Understanding your customer’s needs, wants, fears and concerns is a basic marketing principle. We urge you to regularly remind yourselves of the patient’s perspective on the business and practice of dentistry.

We remind ourselves of this with every ad, radio spot, print ad, direct mail piece or website we build.

What you do every day is routine – to you. It’s anything but routine for them. Please don’t ever forget this.



Order your copy of *Unlimited New Patients, Volume III* today at [www.newpatientsinc.com/books.html](http://www.newpatientsinc.com/books.html)

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New Patients, Inc. | 5935 Edmond St. #105 | Las Vegas | NV | 89118