



I had my first appointment with my new dentist the other day. (We moved recently so I needed a new one.) It went fine, overall. Mostly because the hygienist was great. But the dentist? You know, he was pleasant enough. But he did make a couple of big communication mistakes.

First, I was in the chair, with the hygienist. She was scraping away in there. All of a sudden I hear this voice, "Uh, can you spare 10 seconds?" *What?* I don't see him. He's back there somewhere. Not speaking to me. He's asking her to leave me there. So she looks up, "Umm, okay." Sets down her tools. Says to me, "Sorry, I'll be right back" and off she goes. That was a little weird.

Number two, the cleaning is done, I'm sitting there, waiting for him to come do my exam. He comes in but stops behind me. Again, out of my sight. Doesn't say anything. Doesn't introduce himself. I just hear him snapping on his latex gloves and then he walks around the side of the chair and says, "Okay, let's take a look."

The hygienist is sitting there on the other side of the chair. She senses something's missing, so she jumps up and introduces me. "Doctor. This is David Levin, he's a new patient." And how does he respond to that? "Okay. Let's take a look."

Now, you might hear that and say, "So?" But here's why I think those were mistakes, both from a communication AND a business perspective. First, the communication.

The thing about communication is it's not the words we say, it's the messages we send. So let's look at the messages he was sending me:

Q: Am I interested in you as a person?

A: No

Q: Do I appreciate your business?

A: No

Q: Do I respect the people on my staff?

A: Not really

Q: Do I understand the emotional reality of a situation, do I get that it was sort of weird to just pull the hygienist out of there without any comment or explanation?

A: Apparently not

Q: Just as a general statement, am I the sort of person who respects, understands and cares about people?

A: No

Those were the messages I heard, and it doesn't take an expert to get that those are not the kind of messages you want to be communicating to people!

For one thing, it kills your ability to influence them. Meaning, back to the dentist, when you suggest your patient go with the crown rather than the filling, they're much less likely to take your advice on that, to trust you on that. That's a pretty big deal.

It also kills referrals. Referral business is the golden ticket, especially for a practice-type business, and they're all about connection. If I love my dentist, I'm happy to talk about him or her. If I don't, I won't. It's about that simple.

The bottom line is, communication mistakes are not just about communication. They're about your success. Communication mistakes hurt your business in the most fundamental ways.

The good news is, it's relatively easy to avoid mistakes like these. The key is this: No matter what the situation, make sure you address the emotional reality of the situation.

So in this case, rather than, "Can you spare ten seconds?," say something like, "Hey, I'm sorry. I know this a bad time. But I could really use an extra hand for a moment. Is there any way you could take a break there for a minute? I'd really appreciate it. I'm really sorry."

That's all it takes. 30 seconds. Basic human connection. It's not that hard. You can definitely do it, IF you think about it.

But the sad truth is, my new dentist, like most people, frankly, as good a person as he probably is, is likely never going to do that. Never going to think about it, never going to do anything about it, never going to get any better at it. And not because he doesn't

care, necessarily. It's because he doesn't know. He doesn't know, and no one's going to tell him.

That combination is really the biggest problem I see for most people. We don't know the communication mistakes we're making and no one's going to tell us.

Who's going to tell him? His staff can't tell him. How do you tell your boss something like that? His wife probably has told him, but that's a different subject. I'm not going to tell him, it's not really my place to do that if he doesn't ask.

No one's going to tell him. So he's just going to continue on, doing what he's always done, figuring it's good enough. And he will never know how much more successful he could have been, and how much more connected he could have felt if he'd just worked on it a bit.

But you, on the other hand, are not going to have that problem, right? You *are* going to work on your communication. You *are* going to ask people for feedback and think things through. And that is a beautiful thing! That makes me very happy.

When your communication sings, your business soars. Your career, your life, your sales, your team - soar.

Be good. Be heard! I'll see you next time.

David Levin

The "Be Heard!" Guy

When Your Communication "Sings", Your Business Soars.™

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