QDP | QUALITY DENTAL PLAN

QUALITY DENTAL PLAN AND MEMBERDENT *PRESENT*

Harnessing Buyer Behavior To Build Practice Profit:

How Using an In-House Savings Plan can Create Value for You and Your Patients

by Dan Marut, DMD

QDPdentist.com
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Over the past several years, dentists across the country have been asking themselves one very crucial question:

"HOW CAN I ENSURE STABILITY IN MY PRACTICE, REGARDLESS OF THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE?"

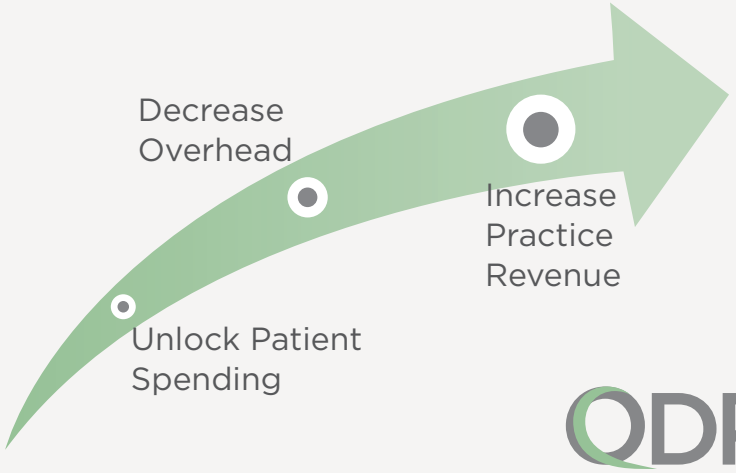
The astounding thing is that the answer already exists within your practice. There's a simple, proven way to increase your revenue, build patient loyalty, tighten your recall, reduce overhead and grow your practice substantially — and best of all, it can be found almost entirely within your existing business model.

In this whitepaper, we'll examine how your dental practice can thrive in any economy by taking a page from the playbook of membership-based retailers like Costco and by studying what they already know about buyer behavior. You'll learn how implementing a membership-like program in your practice can help you stand out from your competitors by helping your patients see the value in your products and services, which can open the door to unparalleled new levels of patient compliance and case acceptance. Plus, we'll look at how this can also benefit local employers, and show you how implementing a prepaid, fee-based plan can revolutionize your practice, freeing you from the perceived need to accept dental insurance — all while increasing profits for your practice.

Whether your practice is already thriving or needs a shot in the arm following the recent recession, this whitepaper will give you the information you need to take your business to the next level.

In-House Savings Plan

» Unlock Patient Spending
» Decrease Overhead
» Increase Practice Revenue



TODAY'S FINANCIAL CLIMATE

With the economy slowly improving, there might finally be light at the end of the tunnel. Looking back, the recession took no prisoners, and we owe it to ourselves to be brutally honest about how we can protect our practices and our patients in the future. The recession permanently changed the way people looked at spending money. This change in perception is going to remain long after the recession is over, and as business owners, we need to acknowledge this change. We may not like it, but we must accept it and find a way to work within its framework.

During the recession, Americans have been forced to do more with less. And even today, consumers' belief in value holds strong. They are questioning every dollar they spend — asking themselves if what they're spending it on is truly necessary. That presents a particular challenge to dentists because, except when facing a true dental emergency, average Americans don't really see dentistry as a priority, especially when they're on a tight budget, and certainly when they learn that their dental insurance may not cover anywhere near 100% of the cost of care.

Times have changed. It's time to realize that patients don't see dentistry the way that we dentists do and to start addressing this through communication, education and innovative approaches to selling dentistry.

THEIR CONCERNS ARE YOUR CONCERNS

In a strong economy, older patients provide a dependable source of big-ticket restorations such as implants and partials. However, in a down economy, many seniors have to rely more heavily on their retirement plans and live within very limited budgets. Twenty-and thirty-somethings are often a big market for cosmetic dentistry, but when the economy goes south, many must face the prospect of unexpectedly long-term unemployment — or worse yet, emerging from college to find a brutal job market and no real way to penetrate it.

When an economic downturn hits, people are forced to contend with forced furloughs, layoffs, pay cuts, plummeting equity markets and deteriorating home values. As a result, your existing and prospective patients must make tough choices when it comes to their personal budgets.

Surely this is no surprise. After all, you deal with the same sort of issues. Ultimately, there's no difference between the concerns you currently have and those experienced by your patients.

As a practice owner you want to:

- Reduce your overhead
- Take back control of your finances and increase your revenue
- Find a reliable source of sustainable income
- Operate more efficiently, since you can't afford to add staff
- Strengthen you relationship with your patients
- Enjoy your retirement when you decide the time is right for it
- Make certain you're getting sufficient value for each dollar you spend

So you understand what your patients face because at some point, you've had to face the same issues in your business — and probably also at home. And since everyone is in the same boat, you know that if you can provide patients and prospective patients with something that solves even one of their problems, you'll be nothing less than a hero to them. You'll have a patient for life. Therefore, if you can implement a new system within your practice that offers your patients something they really need right now — genuine value — while also allowing you to improve your profit margin, then you have a system that will help sustain your business forever.

Dentists, along with the rest of the country, have weathered the recent storm, but we must confront the facts. The economy is cyclical, and at some point in the future, we will be faced with another downturn. So perhaps the question should become less about the economy. Instead, a better question to ask may be:

"HOW CAN I PROVIDE A FRESH SOLUTION TO THE CHALLENGES THAT MY PATIENTS FACE ON A DAILY BASIS?"

To do that, we must take a look at a few lessons some of America's most successful retailers can teach us.

Harvard Case Study:

How Membership Programs Build Value for Retailers and their Customers

Professors from Harvard and Columbia Business Schools recently conducted a study to evaluate the power of membership-based retailers. They found that:

» While many consumers equate membership plans with savings, the plans actually encourage consumers to spend more on a particular product or service, including health and wellness services like dentistry.[1]

» Membership fees unlock consumer spending because not only do customers perceive added value in "members only" retail locations, they actually buy more. In the case of a dental practice, this means additional revenue from increased case acceptance — and a decrease in collections and overhead.

» While consumers expect lower prices in membership-based stores, they also consider these retailers more exclusive, so the perceived value of products and services doesn't decrease like they might at a 99¢ Store.[2] This is why manufacturers often allow Costco to sell their brand-name items at discounted prices.

» Membership-based retailers also make a higher per-customer profit by bundling products and services together. Having patients prepay for bundled services will not only increase your predictable revenue and improve your collections, it also strongly incents patients to be more amenable to your treatment recommendations and suggested recall intervals.

A fee-based membership plan in your practice can decrease overhead while increasing revenue.

[1] Norton, Michael I., and Leonard Lee (2007), "The Fees – Savings Link," Harvard & Columbia Business Schools.

[2] Norton, Michael I., and Leonard Lee (2007), "The Fees – Savings Link," Harvard & Columbia Business Schools.

CUSTOMERS WANT VALUE — AND IN RETURN, THEY ARE REWARDING STORES LIKE COSTCO WITH UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY.

So what can we learn from the Harvard case study?

» Membership fees signal exclusive, members-only discounts in the eyes of consumers.[3]
» Membership fees actually increase consumer spending and overall store profitability.[4]
» In-house membership plan fees allow for a higher product/service quality offered at a lower cost.[5]
» Membership-based warehouse clubs are estimated to be a $120 billion industry.[6]

"The presence of the membership fees alone — independent of the actual savings on any given product — can lead consumers to infer a 'fee-savings' link, leading them to spend more than they otherwise would to capitalize on these perceived great deals..."

To see the complete study, visit:
www.QDPdentist.com/harvard

[3] Norton, Michael I., and Leonard Lee (2007), "The Fees –Savings Link," Harvard & Columbia Business Schools.
[4] Norton, Michael I., and Leonard Lee (2007), "The Fees –Savings Link," Harvard & Columbia Business Schools.
[5] Norton, Michael I., and Leonard Lee (2007), "The Fees –Savings Link," Harvard & Columbia Business Schools.
[6] Norton, Michael I., and Leonard Lee (2007), "The Fees –Savings Link," Harvard & Columbia Business Schools.

TRADITIONAL RETAILERS VS. MEMBERS-ONLY CLUBS

Retailers know that customers see value in brand names, and that offering popular merchandise at fair prices is a sure way to increase sales. In fact, studies have shown that shoppers often buy things because of the perceived potential loss if they don't take advantage of a sale price.[7] And members-only stores know that their membership fees suggest that the process of shopping at their store holds value in and of itself. People are paying for the privilege of shopping there. They're paying for the ability to purchase at the store — to pay Costco and Sam's Club even more money!

Unsurprisingly, traditional retailers once scoffed at the members-only warehouse business model. Who, they asked, would pay a fee to shop somewhere? Several decades and billions of dollars in revenue later, Costco and Sam's Club have reinvented how people shop for household goods and services.[8]

"Retailing isn't rocket science. Costco has figured out the big, simple things and executed them with total fanaticism," according to Charles Munger, a Costco director for the past 10 years.[9]

If there was ever any doubt to the accuracy of Mr. Munger's words, the Harvard Study should put it quickly to rest. The study clearly examines this fee-savings link and teaches us what these pioneering retailers realized about buyer behavior: paying members buy larger quantities and spend more because they experience a level of exclusivity and value far beyond what they actually receive for their annual membership fee.

[7] Lehrer, Jonah (2009), How We Decide. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing. pp.76-78 8 Norton, Michael I., and Leonard Lee (2007), "The Fees – Savings Link," Harvard & Columbia Business Schools.

[8] Norton, Michael I., and Leonard Lee (2007), "The Fees – Savings Link," Harvard & Columbia Business Schools.

[9] http://articles.moneycentral.msn.com/Investing/Extra/CostcoTheAntiWalMart.aspx

DENTAL INSURANCE LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED

Ahh, dental insurance. The headache and crutch of many a practice. It's not only a frustrating business to be in for dentists, but it also has major shortcomings from your patients' perspective.[10] The great disparity between what people expect from their dental insurance plans and what they actually receive is another reason why a savings plan is a better alternative for both you and your patients.

Healthcare affordability remains one of our nation's largest problems. Insurance premiums continue to rise at rates faster than the average American's compensation.[11]

"We wouldn't charge you this fee if it wasn't going to be worth your while..."

[10] http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/dispatches-heartland/2009/nov/12/why-do-people-hate-insurance-companies

[11] http://www.bcbs.com/blueresources/healthcare-trends-report/pdfs/2010-healthcare-trends-in-america-2.pdf

In fact, the average yearly healthcare premium for an individual living in the U.S. now reaches over $5,600. For a family, that number jumps up to over $15,500.[12] And at an average of $1,500 per year, annual dental plan maximums are almost exactly where they were twenty years ago — even though fee schedules have increased by nearly 25% in the past five years.[11] What does all this mean? Simply that in 2014 and beyond, having dental insurance doesn't necessarily guarantee any true savings for consumers.

That's not all. Claims can be denied by insurance carriers even after care that was determined to be appropriate and necessary and has already been provided. Meanwhile, dentists don't want to deal with collections issues and patients don't want to be stuck with the bill when they had a reasonable expectation of coverage.

For those who do not have dental insurance, dental care is often re-categorized as a luxury to be sought only when in dire need. The irony, of course, is that dental emergencies are often far more expensive than the simple preventative care that could have kept the emergency from happening. Patients need to be better educated about the importance of maintaining their oral health. But they also need affordable options for obtaining care, and it's clear that dental insurance is not filling that need.

INSURANCE COMPANIES ARE DEALING WITH THEIR OWN PARADOX:

- They provide fewer benefits than ever and pass on costs to the consumer and the provider
- Insurance red tape is confusing for you and your patients
- The insurance billing process costs everyone time and money
- Patients lose trust in both the provider and insurance company when treatment they believe should be covered is not
- Annual premiums are often higher than annual maximum benefits

[12] http://www.ahipresearch.org/pdfs/2009IndividualMarketSurveyFinalReport.pdf

Employers are no better off. With stagnant or decreasing revenue for businesses and the rising cost of group medical insurance, employers are looking to cut costs and often this translates to reduced benefits, including dental insurance.[13]

It's not difficult to see why when you run a simple cost-benefit analysis on dental insurance premiums vs. benefits: $2,400 in annual premiums for a dental plan with a $1,500 annual maximum just doesn't make financial sense.

So how can what we learned from the Harvard Study be used to make dentistry more affordable to patients and employers, and more profitable to dentists?

BUILDING THE CASE FOR A SAVINGS PLAN IN A DENTAL PRACTICE

Motivating patients to keep appointments and to accept your treatment recommendations relies on harnessing their natural buying behavior. It has been demonstrated that case acceptance goes up when patients value dentistry.[14] The reason is simple — they decide to buy because you're offering them something they actually want at what they perceive to be a fair price.

Of course, in order to ensure practice stability, we must get patients to continue to value dentistry even when their budgets are tight. It's never going to be easy, but offering your patients an affordable, flexible option — such as an in-house dental plan that motivates them to start or continue with their treatment — creates an incredible amount of value.

It also communicates a powerful message: You understand that their budget is limited and you're willing to work with them to make sure they can still afford the care they want and need.

And best of all, an in-house dental plan encourages patients to come in as regularly as possible to enjoy their benefits; the fact that most of their preventive care – including their initial exam and x-rays, twice yearly prophys and even take-home whitening – are built into their annual fee acts as an incentive for them to keep appointments and remain compliant when it comes to continuing care.

[13] http://www.usatoday.com/money/workplace/2009-04-06-employers-cut-worker-benefits_N.htm

[14] Homoly, Paul (2001), Isn't It Wonderful When Patients Say "Yes". Charlotte: Homoly Communications Institute.

You can see how offering your patients fair savings when they purchase a bundle of services in the form of an in-house dental plan can really benefit you as well. Insurance is out of the picture so you keep 100% of the fees. Collections issues are greatly reduced since payment is handled in advance of treatment in order for patients to qualify for plan savings. And patients are more likely to accept comprehensive and restorative treatment knowing that your savings plan gives them access to greater savings on your standard fees.

Even better, offering savings plans is a great way to attract new patients. This is a new and revolutionary idea in dentistry, and you'll be providing something that none of the other dentists in your area are likely to offer. And that can really help you stand out from your competitors.

COSTCO	YOUR PRACTICE
Brand Names = Value	Your Dentistry = Value
Membership Plan = Exclusive Savings	Savings Plan = Exclusive Savings
» Customers spend more $ in store	» Customers spend more $ on dental care
» More products purchased	» More treatment is sought
» Savings unlocks spending	» Savings unlocks treatment acceptance

Having insurance doesn't necessarily mean savings when additional care is needed beyond plan maximums.

A Costco-style membership plan can grow your practice by reinforcing the value of your services while making sure your care remains affordable and accessible to your patients.

APPLYING THE MEMBERS-ONLY MODEL TO A DENTAL PRACTICE

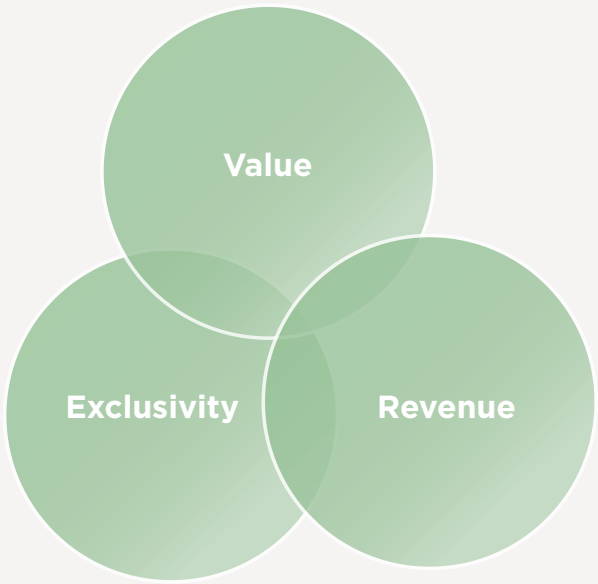
A membership-style program builds stability within your practice, allowing you to earn more by keeping more of your fees, improving your case acceptance and attracting new patients.

Fee-Based Savings Plan

- Increase perceived value of your services
- Increase case acceptance
- Attract new patients
- Facilitate word-of-mouth referrals
- Eliminate the cost of dental insurance as a prohibitive factor
- Create patient loyalty regardless of insurance coverage
- Reduce or eliminate your reliance on insurance
- Simplify collections
- Reduce patient no-shows
- Decrease practice overhead

Quality Dental Plan (QDP) and MemberDent Put the Private Back into Private Practice

- Establish a proven fee-based savings program for your practice
- Offer a viable alternative to dental PPOs
- Set your practice apart by providing a unique patient benefit
- Allow you to keep 100% of your profits
- Function as a fully sustainable income source



QDP

QDP, powered by PlanPro software, is an innovator in customizing in-house dental savings plans. With a QDP membership, you'll get a full-service solution including training, operational support and professional marketing services. We also offer MemberDent for those dentists looking for a more do-it-yourself approach. MemberDent is a scaled-down alternative offering the same training and support but without the added promotional features that come with QDP. Both programs are powered by PlanPro software, the industry's leading technological solution to creating and administering dental savings plans.

Typical dental practice savings plans include:

- Free initial exam and x-rays
- Free simple cleanings (two per year)
- Free take-home whitening
- Significant discounts savings on all dental procedures (as determined by you)

And remember, with both QDP and MemberDent, you determine your own fee schedule and annual fees — and you keep 100% of everything collected.

Quality Dental Plan and MemberDent provide innovative options for your patients, while also creating value for your services and reducing paperwork, freeing up your front desk to focus on more important things.

Acquiring a new patient via external marketing is 5-7 times more costly than generating an internal referral.

Make dentistry affordable again

For many Americans, the high cost of dental treatment is keeping them from achieving their optimum oral health. Patients in QDP and MemberDent practices have an added incentive to move forward with both preventative and restorative care, at a price that ensures they can afford it.

QDP

For individuals and families

Since a QDP/MemberDent practice's patients also receive a substantial savings on dentistry for other family members, there is added incentive for patients to get everyone in the family under your care.

Great employee benefit

Local businesses can offer a QDP plan (or your own in-house dental plan through MemberDent) as part of their employee benefit program. The cost to the employer is minimal, while the benefits to their employees and to your practice are huge! This is a great way to add possibly hundreds of new patients to your practice.

Treatment can begin immediately

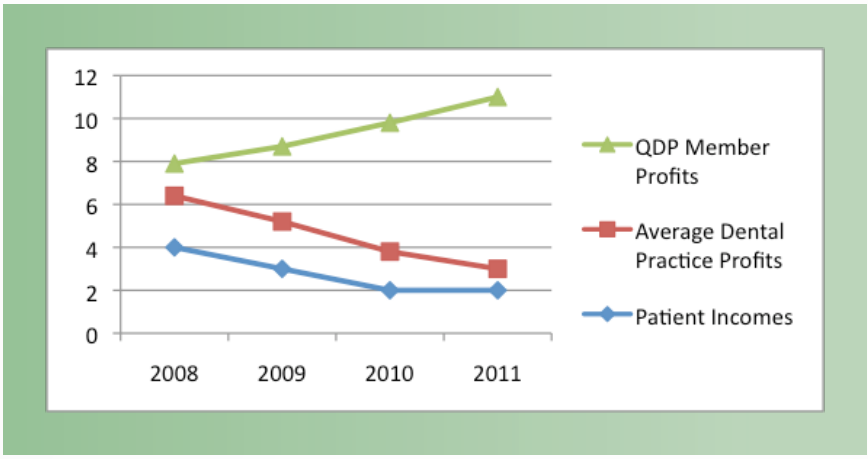
No more waiting for benefits to kick in. They start the minute your patients (or their employers) purchase a membership. You're in complete control of administering the plan.

Patients work directly with you

With QDP and MemberDent, patients work directly with you and your team. Patients can discuss their treatment and options with the freedom to make decisions regarding their care without having to go through an impersonal insurance company who cares little about them or their health. The more patients come to rely on you and your team for oral health advice, the sooner they'll come to trust you and your team and provide you with valuable word-of-mouth referrals.

Benefits are unlimited

With QDP and MemberDent, there is no cap on benefits, as one would find with insurance plans. You and your patients will no longer have to wait for insurance payments or authorizations, or wait until the year changes over to continue a treatment plan. Patients will see this as a tremendous advantage, especially when opting for larger cases or more comprehensive treatment.



A WIN-WIN PROPOSITION

Dentistry is hardly unnecessary, but if your patients can put it off, they will. Therefore, it's crucial that dentistry is presented to them in a compelling way that also reminds them that holding off on their care may not be to their advantage.

Offering savings plans, either on your own through MemberDent or via Quality Dental Plan, is effective at creating perceived value for your services because it taps into proven buyer behavior. It gives your patients a simple and affordable way of obtaining preventative care, while all but assuring that they'll make their recall for as long as they stay members. It builds loyalty within your patient base, attracts new patients, increases case acceptance, reduces your reliance on insurance, provides a sustainable source of revenue and puts you back in control of your business.

Adopting a fee-based savings program like Quality Dental Plan or using MemberDent to build your own in-house plan can allow you to thrive in any economy by creating an arrangement that is a win for both you and your patients. It's as simple — and as effective — as that.

NEXT STEPS

Contact us to see if our programs are a fit for you.
Call us at (888) 960-1221 today!

Visit www.QDPdentist.com or www.MemberDent.com for more whitepapers and information on:

- How implementing a few simple management systems can greatly reduce existing administrative and collection costs.
- Techniques to significantly lower the cost of attracting and keeping new patients.
- How to greatly reduce and/or eliminate burdensome insurance company paperwork and insurance company control of your fee structures.
- Ways of reaching out to local businesses to discuss valuable employee benefits you can provide, while adding potentially hundreds of new patients to your practice.

Take the QDP Quiz on the next page for a free evaluation and explanation of how QDP and MemberDent can benefit your practice!

DO YOU NEED QDP OR MEMBERDENT? TAKE MY 10-QUESTION QUIZ...

For a free evaluation of how Quality Dental Plan or MemberDent can potentially benefit your practice, call (888) 960-1221 or fax this quiz to us at (323) 210-7011 today!

First Name_____ Last Name_____

☐ Dentist/Owner ☐ Dentist/Partner ☐ Associate ☐ Other: _____

Practice Name _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Find out if QDP and MemberDent are right for you!

To what extent does each of these statements apply to you and your practice?

(please mark as appropriate : Strong Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree)

	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree
Increasing my practice's revenue is important to me.	☐	☐	☐
I want to know how to continue to build value for patients.	☐	☐	☐
I want to generate more revenue without reducing the value I provide to my patients who trust me.	☐	☐	☐
I don't want the hassle of dealing with insurance companies about patient care and reimbursement rates.	☐	☐	☐
I am too busy with my practice to invent and implement a new marketing program.	☐	☐	☐
I wish someone could provide me with turnkey advertising campaigns and marketing efforts.	☐	☐	☐
I want to know about inexpensive yet effective ways to increase and retain my patient base.	☐	☐	☐
Creating more enjoyment at work and a balanced work/home life is important to me.	☐	☐	☐
Any new systems I implement cannot disrupt the ones that are already in place.	☐	☐	☐
Even though I'm not a "marketer", learning skills to market my practice is important to me.	☐	☐	☐
I'd like to increase word-of-mouth referrals to my practice.	☐	☐	☐
I've been looking for new marketing systems to implement.	☐	☐	☐
Creating predictable revenue with simple, tested methods and systems is important to me.	☐	☐	☐
I want to know how to creatively reinvent myself and create changes that sustain my practice over the long term.	☐	☐	☐
I'd like for local business owners to know more about me.	☐	☐	☐
Keeping costs low while increasing profit is important to me.	☐	☐	☐

Fax this completed quiz back to (323) 210-7011 today for your free practice marketing evaluation.

QDP