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Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Thursday 4 June 2015 – Morning

AS GCE APPLIED BUSINESS

F243/01/CS The Impact of Customer Service

CASE STUDY

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes



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Fosegate Dental Practice

Fosegate Dental Practice (FDP) is owned and managed by Jeremy; a qualified and experienced dentist. Jeremy's team consists of:

- Jasmine, Jeremy's wife, the qualified dental hygienist
- Beverley, the fully qualified, full-time dental nurse who is very reliable
- Jodie, the trainee dental assistant
- Kerry, the part-time receptionist who has been on a course recently to improve her skills and knowledge.

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All the team have been trained in how to behave politely and professionally with patients. The team are all aware that the practice must be kept clean and hygienic.

FDP's patients

When Jeremy first opened his practice most of the patients were local families, particularly those with children. Jeremy has a good reputation for being relaxed and putting patients at ease. Busy professionals who work in or around the town are increasingly registering as patients of *FDP* as it now opens two lunchtimes per week. Jeremy is keen to grow the business further and has introduced a scheme to attract more older people. This scheme offers a 10% discount on dental treatment for new patients aged 60 and above.

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FDP's services

Jeremy tries to make sure that all of the patients are relaxed when they come for an appointment. This includes an explanation by Beverley about what is going to happen during the treatment. The reception area is always clean and has very comfortable settees and chairs to sit on. Relaxing background music is played and newspapers and magazines are provided for adult patients and a selection of toys are provided for children. Sometimes Kerry is too busy or forgets to pick up the toys from the floor of the reception area or she is not in work and nobody else is aware that toys have been left scattered on the floor. This does annoy some patients who have subsequently moved to other dental practices. Beverley has suggested that Jeremy needs to employ another part-time receptionist, particularly as the number of new patients is increasing.

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To assist patients with special needs, Jeremy has recently invested in an access ramp into the building and a stair lift for access to Jasmine's examination room which is on the first floor of the building. These improvements have proved to be popular, resulting in more people wanting to become patients of *FDP*.

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Jeremy has also invested in a range of dental products such as toothpaste and toothbrushes which *FDP* sells to patients.

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FDP's problems

Jodie is the only member of the team who cannot use the computer-based booking system. She also sometimes travels to work in her uniform, which is unhygienic.

As Kerry only works part-time, all of the practice staff are trained to stand in for her when she is not in work. This is important as sometimes calls would not otherwise be answered.

Jasmine also only works part-time which sometimes means that the hygiene service is not available.

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Jasmine is very rarely in the reception area to help out and Beverley thinks that Jasmine does not have a very strong interest in the business because she will sometimes not come into work which means that her appointments have to be cancelled. Beverley thinks that nothing is done about this because Jasmine is Jeremy's wife.

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FDP's management

While Jeremy manages the business on a day to day basis, he does use the services of a business consultant to help with other aspects such as marketing, finance and strategy. This allows Jeremy to focus on what he does best, being a dentist, and for his staff to focus on their primary duties.

FDP's future

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Jeremy has been trying to find out what *FDP's* patients think about the level of customer service they receive, and what other products or services the practice could provide. Six months ago, Jeremy noticed that some of *FDP's* long-standing patients were moving to other practices. He, therefore, asked his team to encourage patients to put suggestions in a suggestion box on the reception desk in order to improve customer retention. To date only 14 suggestions have been received, such as specialist equipment for patients with special needs and the provision of dental products; both of which Jeremy had already planned to implement. One suggestion which Jeremy is considering is to combine a dental appointment with one for the hygienist. This would allow customers to only visit *FDP* once per treatment. Some suggestions which Jeremy is not currently considering were that the practice should open on Saturdays or in the evening. However, some patients who did make a comment had done so because they felt they were not getting a good level of customer service before they had their treatment. Other comments were too difficult to read.

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Beverley is attending a team leader course at the local college for which *FDP* paid the fees. She is very keen to complete this course and she has said to Jeremy that she already has some good ideas for further improving *FDP*. Jeremy has asked her to put these ideas in an email to him (see **Appendix A**).

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Appendix A

Email from Beverley to Jeremy

Hi Jeremy

Here are my thoughts about how *FDP* can be improved.

I have noticed that sometimes the receptionist's computer screen is positioned so that it can be seen by patients sitting in the reception area. The screen often has patients' information showing. I have learnt that this breaks the Data Protection Act. It is not just Kerry who is at fault as it happens even when she is not in work. I think everyone needs to be informed of this as soon as possible. I know the computer is password protected which is a security feature but this makes no difference once the screen is showing personal information.

Many patients have asked if we could set up a website which would allow them to book appointments and find out more about *FDP*. We should prioritise this and also use it to gather feedback through an on-line questionnaire. One patient suggested to me that we could branch out into other areas such as beauty therapy and massage. I think this would be a great idea as it would add to our cosmetic dentistry services.

One of the students on my course says that his manager has just created a code of practice which has resulted in some improvements. I will find out more about this as I'm not sure what one is. I have also heard that using a mystery shopper to find out more about customer service is a good idea. Could we use one?

Beverley

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