

# The beauty of a good script

**Michael Bentley** suggests that a rehearsed approach to certain areas of your dental practice can be highly beneficial

**I have been acting for more than 20 years and I continue to invest time in being part of musicals.**

One of my latest roles was Edna Turnblad in *Hairspray*, written by Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan. Previous actors to take on this iconic role include John Travolta and Michael Ball – they proved quite big heels to fit into.

What I love about great scripts – and *Hairspray* definitely has one of those – is it is all about the interpretation of the great lines that have been written, this, combined with tone and delivery, brings the character to life.



## **Michael Bentley**

Michael has been a practice manager both within optics and dentistry. In 2001 he took his first management post in dentistry and has more than 18 years of experience as a practice manager and more than 10 years of experience working as a treatment coordinator. Horton Consulting works with dental practices across the UK and Europe. For more details, visit [www.horton-consulting.com](http://www.horton-consulting.com).

I spend many months rehearsing for each role that I play. With Edna, I took some time to study the interpretations of John and Michael, while developing my own take on this colourful character with my director.

This is a challenge that I relish with each and every character I play; getting under the skin of the script and making it my own is such a pleasure.

## **Scripts in dental practices**

While I love a good script, why on earth would anyone other than an actor or actress learning the lines for an upcoming role require one? Well, in actual fact, in dental practices there are so many opportunities for scripts to be written.

A good script in a practice allows everyone within the team to be on brand and be in control of what they are saying, which gains so much success and credibility.

In my dental career, the time I spent on reception and as a treatment coordinator would have been really tricky without a good script. In many of the practices I visit and work with I see a lot of 'making it up as we go along' – and very often this is not a successful approach.

## **A GOOD SCRIPT IN A PRACTICE ALLOWS EVERYONE WITHIN THE TEAM TO BE ON BRAND**

This is because some team members may defer from the brand message, while others won't find it natural to deliver what is required without proper rehearsal. Having a script gives everyone the chance to learn your messages together, and it can also provide handy prompts at the crucial moment.

I recommend wholeheartedly that you spend time putting scripts together. It will ensure every area of your practice works seamlessly like a well-oiled machine; something that patients will definitely notice.

## **Where can I apply a script?**

There are so many areas that should be scripted. Here are a few to get you thinking:

- New patient telephone calls

- Cancellation processes
- Patient lateness
- Surgery lateness
- Patient complaints
- Comprehensive assessments – new patient assessments
- Patient handovers.

The above list is just a snapshot where I believe scripts can be key to giving your business real substance. Some of these can be awkward, such as tackling a late patient arrival, explaining why the surgery is running behind schedule, or dealing with complaints.

However, having a protocol in place that everyone understands, which has been fully rehearsed, means that when the time comes to deal with such situations, each team member will confidently deal with it accordingly.

### Rehearse it!

This brings me on to rehearsals. Not only do you need to write the scripts, they also need to be fully rehearsed. This is known in dentistry as the dreaded role play. I know everyone hates this, but it is vital to the success of your script.

Rehearsing gives every person the opportunity to practise what they are saying,

## BY WORKING THROUGH THE ROLE PLAY TOGETHER, YOU CAN DISCOVER THINGS THAT MIGHT NOT BE WORKING CURRENTLY AND ADAPT THEM ACCORDINGLY

the tone they are going to use, and find the right body language. It also allows individual interpretation of the scripts so each person can deliver it in their own professional manner without sounding robotic.

In addition, by working through the role play together, you can discover things that might not be working currently and adapt them accordingly; it provides a chance to really hone the script into something that everyone is happy and comfortable with.

The practice manager's role is to organise these rehearsals. These should be fun and productive, but you should also work hard to ensure everyone feels at ease.

To get the best out of your team, be aware that some team members may feel self-conscious carrying out the role play.

Believe me, if you write a great script and it is rehearsed well, every team member will sound on point and confident with what they are saying, every single time.

I spend a lot of time writing scripts for practices for all roles – dentists, hygienists, treatment coordinators, receptionists, and more. I love crafting them and I also enjoy spending time directing the scripts in the rehearsal process, too. If you feel like your dental practice could do with this approach, try it out for yourself, and if you need my help, I'm here.

On that note, I am off to practise what I preach, my lines for my latest role of Roger DeBris in *The Producers*, which need learning and rehearsing ready for my run of performances starting in November.

Wish me luck – or 'break a leg', as we say in the theatre trade! 🍀



Tweet us:  
@IrishDentistry



Like us on Facebook:  
Search for Irish Dentistry