



PADDI LUND INTERVIEW

T: My passion statement is I empower organisations and individuals to implement simple referral systems to gain more perfect clients.

We have been told that you are a crazy dentist from Queensland in Australia

Could you tell us about your famous referral system that you have got within your practice?

P: It is wonderful that you can say that you have a referrals system that is famous because it hopefully means that you get more customers – good customers

T: Great customers?

P: Wonderful customers! I think that it does very well and I am very pleased with my referral system and it wasn't always so easy for me I have been a regular dentist running a regular practice and I have worked on the National Health system – that was interesting and I have been a burnt out dentist I have been a dentist that has spent more money than I have made I have been a dentist who hated coming to work and I have been a dentist who has sweated and toiled very long hours to make a modest income and now I am a dentist who has a pleasant time at work, relaxes most of the time chats and has tea and does a little bit of dentistry on the side is paid very well for what he does and has a procession of wonderful customers coming through the front door basically due to the referral system

T: so why did you hate going to work Paddi?

P: Work for me was, going back 15 years, was as difficult as it can be for a dentist. A dentist has a hard time dentists toil very hard, people think that dentists make money very easily but dentists toil very hard we toil under difficult conditions and we toil for people who we feel don't appreciate what we do. That was what I thought at the time I now know that that is an unnecessary way to run dentistry, and I hated to go to work, because who wants to go to work and hear people say that they hate going to the dentists and so that led me to think that dentistry was not a wonderful place to be. However that is not like it for me now.

T: so what did you do differently?

P: I think I thought about my problems and I thought about them in a constructive way, I had thought about them for a long time in a deconstructive way and I bemoaned my fate but eventually I got to thinking what is it that I want out of my job and after necessity what do I want out of my life. I am on this mortal plain for 70, 80, 90 years and what do I want to get by the end of my life, and what do I want to have achieved, and what do I want to be thinking during my life, and it finally struck me that the main thing that I wanted from life is to be happy and it seems very trite and simple but I haven't yet heard anyone tell me anything more desirable. Sure you can have a 70ft yacht in the Aegean sea with a bevy of beauties on the deck of varying sexes, as you choose and you can have a Rolls Royce waiting in every port or a Jag or a Daimler or you can have houses in the south of France or in Majorca or you can have private jets, you can have all that but if you aren't happy so what does it mean. Its not worth it. I saw people who had all those things and often they weren't happy, and I saw other people who were relatively poor who were happy. So I don't think being happy is related to money yet that is the conventional wisdom we all go to work to strive for money, so I decided that I would no longer strive for money I would strive for happiness. Now incidentally in doing that seemed to bring me a lot of money a lot more



easily than I had managed to achieve previously but it was a side effect so if you want to be rich strive to be happy and then riches seem to come and if they don't come well it doesn't much matter anyway.

T: So basically you wanted to find out what you personally wanted inside and went about how to get that

P: I think so, we have all sorts of systems in business for getting money for checking up how much money we are getting, for working out what our goals are in relation to financial things, we have a checkpoint to see if we are getting to our goals, we employ people to tell us what we are doing wrong with our money and what we are doing right. We have accountants to tell us exactly where the money is going, so we are very focussed on systems for money however, we are not so focussed on systems for happiness yet for me I was focussed on all those things for money I had all those systems in place but I had no systems in place for the very thing that I decided was the most important

T: Thanks for that Paddi. We had a brief background there of why you wanted to do things differently because you wanted to be happy

P: Its not so silly just to do things differently to be happy. It is a hurdle sometimes to think that happiness is the 'b' all and end all but I do believe it is. Yes I do things differently because I wanted something different than people usually want out of business or allow themselves to think that they want out of business so yes I started to do things differently

T: One of your books that I have read which is absolutely fantastic "How to Create a Happiness Centred Business" It's a great book so I would advise people to go out and buy that. The thing that I really want to focus on this morning is How have you mobilised your customer sales force it's also the title another of your books firstly can you just tell me what that title means?

P A lot of times in business we spend a lot of time and money advertising and marketing to try and attract new customers and a lot of the time it works a lot of the time it doesn't too, and you can spend vast amounts of money and achieve very little so yes you can spend money and get a lot of people through the door my problems with that is, and I have tried it, a lot of people that come through the door are not necessarily that desirable to a particular business so for me I did a lot of advertising in the early days and I got a lot of people through my door but many of those people ending up costing me money. It's hard to look back and know that a lot of the time I was spent working for people. I was doing it merely for the job satisfaction because I didn't make any profit out of it. Most people if they look at their businesses can find people in their business who actually cost them money and these people are subsidised by the very good people. I really don't want to be serving people that cause me a loss. I quite like doing dentistry but not that much and so I decided to be a little more discriminating getting people that I accepted to be in my business and I decided that I would have a 'By Referral Only' business and what that means is that I started to only accept customers who were referred by my current customers no one else. Nobody who just walked in the door they didn't have an advert to read so they couldn't come in that way and I found that it was an improvement in my business I started to make more profit and I started to have more fun all because I was serving people that I wanted to serve mostly, initially because they gave me money where some of the people had previously not given me money or not given me enough money I thought to compensate me. After a while I started to notice by doing things in a more filtered way with my new customers that I started to surround myself with people that I actually liked more. Because birds of a feather flock together. The customers that I started to ask for referrals tended to be the people I felt comfortable with and they had friends of a similar nature to themselves and so gradually my business started to accumulate people with whom I had some common sympathy some



common bond some common set of values and it went well. I started to enjoy myself more and I started to make more money so that was by referral only.

After a while because it went so well I started to think other strange thoughts and I decided that I might well become even more exclusive and I formulated a plan called 'By Invitation Only' and that entailed taking down all of my signs from the front of my door.

T: the signs that give us business?

P: The signs that tell people that I am a dentist working in this particular place

T: ok. What else did you do Paddi?

P: If I was a chemist I would take the sign that said I was a chemist if I was a Lawyer I would take down the signs that said that I was a Lawyer so no signs so that nobody passing could just call in a say I just want a little bit of dental work done because they didn't know there was a dentist there and to make it a little more difficult I locked my front door so that people couldn't get in without ringing the door bell and then we had a chance to vet who was waiting and if it wasn't someone that we wanted we would find another place for them to go and then with some difficulty I took my name out of the phone book. I say with some difficulty because it was hard for the people at the telecom to understand that a business might not want to be in the phone book and so we took it out and we managed to convince them that we wanted to take it out I had to sign a sworn statement that I wanted it to be taken out and send it on to them and then the next year they put it back in again which is a major pain and so I had to do the same thing again and eventually we managed to get out not just of the yellow pages but also out of the white pages In the end the only way I could do it was to make my number ex-directory silent so I made my number a silent number. If you care you can try this because you can get directory enquiries in Australia via British Telecom you ring up the telecom and you say I would like an Australian number and I would like the number of Dr Patrick Lund in Brisbane and then they will ring Brisbane and then you will get one of the two following answers:

1. There is no listing for that person
2. We had a listing but we are not allowed to give it out because it is ex-directory

T:.. what is the telephone number for directory enquiries in Brisbane?

P: You don't need it you just dial your own directory although you might have a different number for international directory enquiries

T: well I definitely will do

P: Our customers sometimes complain but we give them a card with the number on with dire warnings about losing it occasionally they do and they can't get us so they have to call in to get the number

T: so you have gone from a by referral only to a by invitation only

P: By invitation only means we only allow certain privileged customers to refer their friends they have to be asked. It is a privilege that is only granted not a right of being a customer





T: So if I was one of your patients what credentials or how would I have to be privileged to refer others?

P: The first thing that would have to happen is we would the people within my business family would have to decide that you are the sort of person that we would want to refer people

T: How would you do that Paddi?

P: We would talk among ourselves and basically it is a decision about money, about time with us and its about interpersonal interaction. Does this person happily pay their bills, does this person come for their times when they are contracted to come and is this person pleasant to do business with. We would look at it in those respects and if we decide that this is a worthwhile person, a person that may well have friends who are worthwhile to our business I am not making a value judgement about this person only in terms of their value to me I don't know if they will have that or not its not my job to work that out but I merely work out their value to me as a business person then we say to ourselves well is this person an 'A' person someone who interacts well with us pleasantly, who comes in on time, someone who pays their bills happily. Then we say to ourselves this person is likely to have friends of a similar nature because birds of a feather flock together and so we will say to this person it's your lucky day we have decided that you can refer customers to us because not many people get that

T: At this stage would you call them patients, friends, clients? What would you call them at this stage?

P: Basically I would call them by their name, because we are talking about third parties we have to use some word for it. Amongst ourselves we always refer to people by their name.

T: do you class you're 'A' grade clients as friends?

P: No. I believe that is a trap My friends are my friends and my customers are my customers, occasionally there is some cross over in that I treat some of the people who were originally my friends and occasionally a customer will become a friend but basically no. I don't pretend that they are friends of mine and I don't want them to pretend that they are friends of mine

T: Do you educate your patients on who you are looking for?

P: Yes

T: Can you tell us how you do that Paddi?

P: when we select people who are allowed to refer to us we give to them an instruction sheet which tells them what sort of people we are looking for basically, what characteristics we are looking for and much the same things as I have said to you. It is important that people understand what to look for because there is nothing worse than having a customer refer one of their friends and having their friends not happy with us or us not happy with their friend that is not good for referrals. People want to refer to businesses because they think that they will get something out of it and what they get out of it is an emotional boost because their friend says to them I am happy you referred me to this business. That is the biggest reward that people can get. I think it is a real trap to give people money, gifts or hamburgers! I think that it diminishes the service. I think that what people are looking for when they refer their friends is the thanks of their friend and when that happens that is very powerful. When they get complaints from their friends then it is very powerful in the other direction too. So it is very important that customers





refer new customers who become good value and happy clients of a new business or the business that they are referring to.

T: Can you tell us what makes your patients refer their friends to you. What is it about your practice that is unique that wants them to make their friends come to you?

P: I think it varies a lot from person to person some people are attracted by one thing in my business and some people by another but I do set out to give people particular stories to tell to their friends. I think it is exciting for people to tell unusual stories to say I went to the dentist is not a very exciting story there are many negative stories around about dentists some of them deserved some of them not because often I won't say always stories are exaggerated. A bad experience becomes terrible and a good experience becomes even more wonderful which we tend to take things to extreme to make a good story, do you agree with that? Very few of us totally object. So I don't want my customers to be telling bad stories about me that's the first thing. No business does because the stories only get worse. So the first thing is, it has to be a good story and I engineer stories for my customers to tell and I engineer it by providing unusual things in my business I call them 'super critical non-essentials' but that's another story. For instance when you walk into my front lounge you will see a large espresso machine its made in Italy it cost me many thousands of dollars its gold plated its got a big eagle badge with handles like the old fashioned espresso machines that you don't see anymore with little buttons that you press with a handle. So this is a big commercial machine. I had to import especially from Italy to get the big handles and it's very impressive. It is very hard for my customers who come here for the first time not to say to their friends I went to a dentist today and he had an extremely large espresso machine in his front lounge. Its very hard for my customers not to say that, in fact I think they don't avoid saying it, I think they say it with a passion I think they even exaggerate the size of the machine.

T: Is it because they are shocked, or because they love coffee, is it because they don't see this anywhere else, what is it Paddi?

P: It is not that they don't see it anywhere else you do see large espresso machines but I don't think you see them in dental surgeries. So it's an unusual thing for a dental surgery, so a good story in that respect.

T: So this is your critical non-essential because dentists don't need that coffee machine do they but you want to have it

P: I call it a 'super critical non essential' actually critical non essentials are a little different its just in the detail but yes dentists don't have it. If you go into a business and ask for a cup of coffee you will occasionally get a cup of coffee but usually it's not very well presented not as well presented as if you go into a fine restaurant. My thought was why don't we do something that was a little unusual and then do it wonderfully well with an impressive espresso machine. You can find large espresso machines like this one in coffee lounges but not quite as opulent as I have with gold plating and eagles put on it and it's got big dials on it a very impressive looking machine.

T: So do you serve this coffee in plastic cups?

P: I think you know the answer to that question. We have Royal Dolton china, we have silver trays, we have silver tea spoons a choice of maybe 15 to 20 different kinds of coffee all freshly ground and the place smells beautifully and it does not smell like a dental surgery because indeed people do not like the smell of dental surgeries it brings back unhappy memories.





T: Do you have any other pleasant smells in your practice Paddi?

P: We have a couple of other pleasant smells and the first one I would say is the French perfumes in our bathroom. There was someone who had been spraying the perfume in the bathroom I think it was Rive Gauche so that is one of the pleasant smells that we have. So we have in our bathrooms a selection of French perfumes probably \$2,000 worth for people to use for ladies but there is men's perfume there too and its fun for them to go in and try the perfumes it gives them something to talk about when they go home more importantly, and we are getting onto a slightly different subject here but I will digress slightly. Me putting the perfumes in the bathroom shows my customers that I trust them. I trust them not to steal the perfume and so far and it has probably been 15 or 20 years nobody has ever stolen the perfume. When I show my customers that I trust them it makes it easier for them to trust me. It's a mutual thing I do want my customers to trust me.

T: Paddi what is the benefit to you because I coach people on how to gain more referrals from their clients and the key element is that our client, customer or patient has to trust us or they will not refer their sphere of influence to us so would you say then that when you ask your patients for referrals. Do you ask your patients for referrals?

P: Yes. No that's not actually true, we give them the privilege of referring, there is a subtle difference there. I have asked in the past however it is better to feel incredibly privileged, they are given a little gold case with cards in which gives them the authority to refer customers to us

Warm regards

Tony Gedge

P.S.The 7 month Abundant Referrals Coaching Programme is empowering individuals and organisations with the self belief and skills necessary to implement simple, yet powerful and proven referral systems to gain more perfect customers and clients through upbeat training, feedback and coaching, bespoke consultancy, meticulous accountability and continuous measurement in order to provide a fast payback cycle and an incredible return on your investment.'

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