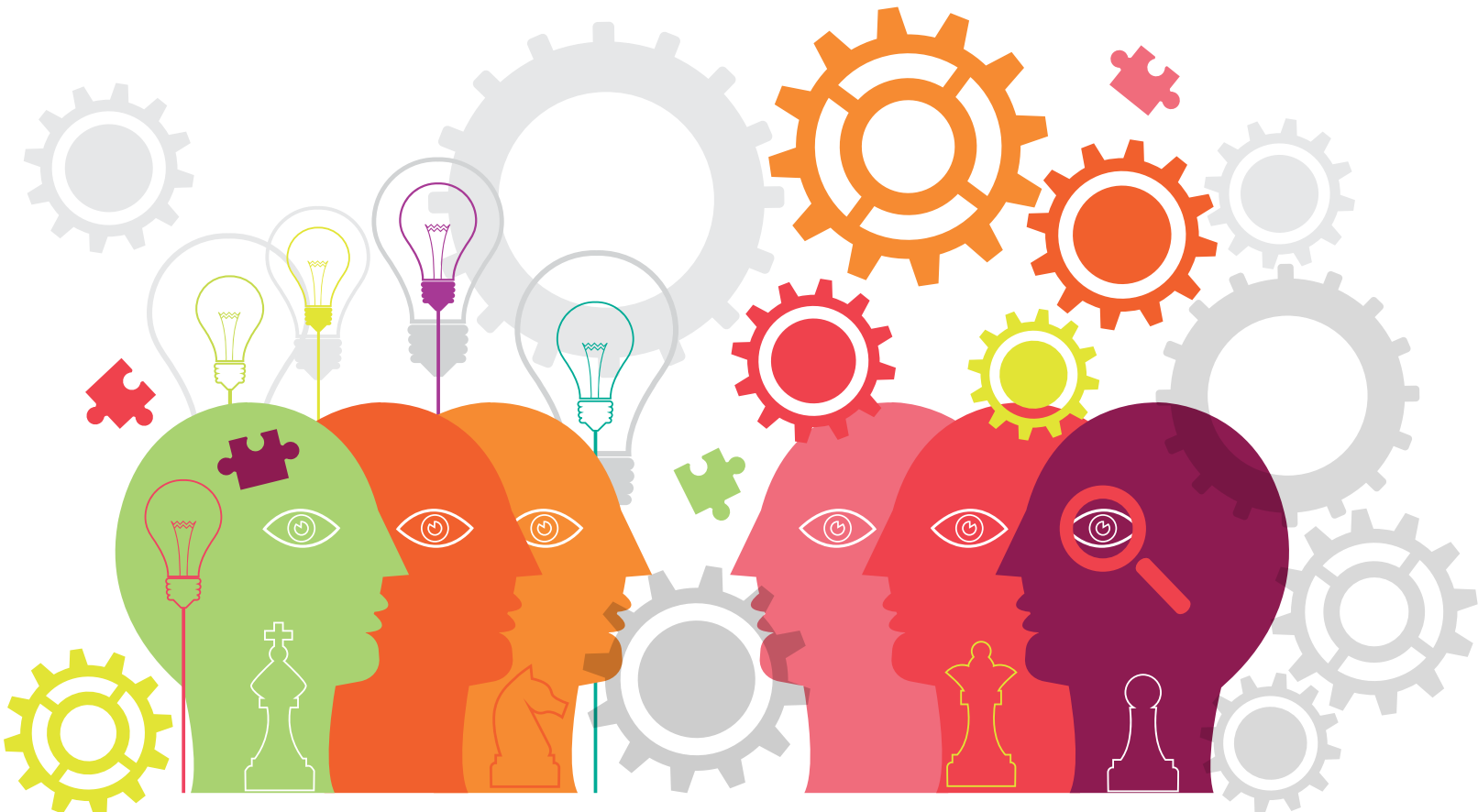


# TROJAN TODAY

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A NEWSLETTER FOR CLIENTS OF TROJAN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, INC.



## Work Systems – The Secret Sauce of Teamwork

by Tracy Baker

Teamwork has the potential to transform a dental practice into a multimillion dollar entity or simply add some calm to the workday. It can drive production, improve patient care, attract new patients, and keep existing ones in the fold. Teamwork can be harnessed to grow revenue and shrink stressors.

Touting the benefits of teamwork has become second nature to anyone who has applied for a job in the past twenty years, acknowledged a coworker, or won a basketball game. Like most buzzwords, “teamwork” has become overused to the point of cliché and lost much of its power. And, often, teamwork alone is not enough.

### The Folklore of **Teamwork**

There is a lot of folklore floating around about teamwork. It is not uncommon for dentists to have worked long and hard to put together a highly competent team of superstars only to find that confusion, delays, errors, and drop in morale rear

*continued on page 2* •••▶

their ugly heads within months. Inevitably this breakdown gets blamed on personalities; someone is not a “team player” or is “not the right fit” for the office. There is a tendency for lack of teamwork to be attributed to forces beyond our control.

Frequently, practice owners erroneously believe that having the right people at the right time, performing tasks in the right way will yield the many lucrative benefits of teamwork.

*“If our office could just find a good (insert job title here), we’d be able to solve (insert problems here).”*

It's also common for doctors to be convinced the breakdown of team performance (and the ensuing chaos, preventable errors, and wasted time) can be solved if they just invest more time, money, or patience on the team member(s). When this fails to bring about the desired improvements, there is turnover. Weary dentists turn their hopes over, once again, to an internet Job Post in search of the missing piece to their teamwork puzzle. Hope is not a very effective strategy.

### It's one thing to create a TEAM, it's quite another to create TEAMWORK

By definition, teamwork is “cooperative effort on the part of a group with a common cause.” It conjures visions of a serene Utopian workplace. However, even if the team has a common cause and works together, it may not equate to the positive results and profits that dentists need to grow their practice and keep their sanity. Researchers have conducted studies on work teams to determine the characteristics that predict success. We've all heard them: good communication, conflict resolution, goal orientation, positive attitude, self-starters, and so on.

Interestingly, these same researchers concluded that **having the characteristics that predict team success did not yield better business performance or positive financial outcomes.** Isn't the whole point of teamwork to get positive results?

Teamwork can outperform the best individual team member. Like the Gestalt principle, the whole really can be better than the sum of its parts. Unfortunately, even the best teams fail often and frequently miss their common goals because, like the proverbial house built on sand, the foundation is unstable, and they collapse. The basics of team effectiveness were identified by J. Richard Hackman, a pioneer in the field of organizational behavior who began studying teams in the 1970s. In more than 40 years of research, he uncovered a groundbreaking insight: What matters most to teamwork is not the personalities, attitudes, or behavioral styles of team members. **Instead, what teams need to produce positive results are certain “enabling conditions.”**

### Building a Foundation to Power Teamwork

In our own work in Dental Practice Business Development, we've found that three of Hackman's conditions—**a strong foundation, compelling direction, and a supportive context**—continue to be particularly critical to dental practice business growth and increasing revenue.

In fact, today's competitive and densely-saturated dental market demands that much more attention be given to these three requirements if any progress toward improved quality of care and increased profitability is to be made.

The dental practice business model itself can and should be designed as an “enabling condition”. The foundation, strong or not, of any dental practice is constructed (whether the owner knows it or not) with **Work Systems:** The What, How, When, Who, Where, and Why We Do the Various Stuff That We Do Around Here, as Executed.

Whether or not a practice owner has given it any thought, the dental team will be involved in the execution of approximately 25 major Work Systems during the course of one dental office business day. A lot can and does go wrong when dental teams navigate their way blindly through these Work Systems, while Yelp-reviewing patients make mental notes.

## Work Systems— The Foundation of Teamwork AND Success

Work Systems can be deliberately engineered to compel direction of the **team** towards financial or patient care objectives. A well-developed, robust Work System will orient, calibrate, organize, and point team members to the next indicated step in the Work Flow process. Further, they can be created within the context of being supportive in nature. **Strong Work Systems are the Secret Sauce.** They will drive or they will dash teamwork and the results that ensue. The quality of these Work Systems is directly related to the level of success that a dentist will or won't achieve.

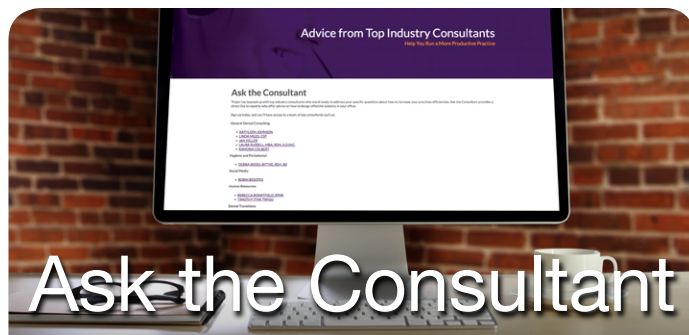
When well-defined Work Systems are thoughtfully developed and put into play, they create efficiency, organization, clarity, and time. They direct the team through the work flow, improve patient experience, keep things from falling through the cracks, hold the team accountable, make the dentist a better leader, and make the dental practice exceedingly profitable.

Developing strong, effective Work Systems is not a quick and easy process. There are no "one size fits all" sets of Work Systems; be wary of anyone who tells you there are. They are as unique as each practice owner. High quality Work Systems will save thousands, even millions of dollars in the revenue that is lost by dental teams that try to function on poor ones. Without Work Systems, teams simply will not have the capacity to produce positive business results. Work Systems are the power source of teamwork. When teamwork has the power to transform, it loses its buzzword status and ceases to be a cliché. We need no longer cringe. The lucrative and sanity-saving benefits of teamwork abound when placed upon a strong foundation.



**Tracy Baker** is a trusted advisor to **1 Source Solutions** and brings more than twenty-five years of experience in clinical dental hygiene.

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## Ask the Consultant

**Q:** What code do we use for an Essix retainer or Essix appliance?

**A:** An Essix Retainer or Essix Appliance does have a specific code.  
**D8680 – Orthodontic Retention**  
*Removal of appliances, construction, and placement of retainer(s) is the code you should use.*

**Q:** We always have a hard time estimating for partial orthodontic treatment in regard to patient insurance. For example, for the Code D8080 and a patient with a lifetime max \$1,500 most insurance pays most of the \$1,500 or very close to it. However, for a patient in partial or transitional orthodontic, D8020 treatment we estimate half of the orthodontic lifetime but we either overestimate and are off by \$200 or underestimate and off by \$200.

**A:** You should bill your UCR fee (or contracted fee if you are in network) for **Limited Orthodontic Treatment of the Transitional Dentition**. That fee does not have to be half of the lifetime maximum. Many times the patient's benefits change if the insured's employment changes and that could reset the lifetime orthodontic maximum.

Responses provided by **Kathleen Johnson**,  
President of Kathleen Johnson Consulting.

## Quote-Worthy

“ *Being busy does not always mean real work. The object of all work is production or accomplishment and to either of these ends there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence, and honest purpose, as well as perspiration. Seeming to do is not doing.* ”

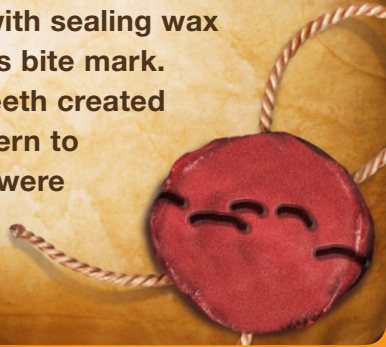
— Thomas Edison

# FUN! Fact

## Teeth!

### Old School Proof of Identity

William the Conqueror used to secure his mail with sealing wax imprinted with his bite mark. His misaligned teeth created a distinctive pattern to show the letters were from him.



New from Delta Dental of California, Delta Dental Insurance Company, Delta Dental of Pennsylvania and affiliated states

We are pleased to announce the availability of our enhanced eligibility responses for your patients. This saves time and may integrate with your dental software so you can focus on your patients!

Questions? Please contact the Delta Dental of CA team at [yourdigitalvoice@delta.org](mailto:yourdigitalvoice@delta.org).

## What Clients Say



*"I have been using Trojan for the last 13 years, but this is my first experience with Managed Care. It is incredibly helpful and saves me so much time. I was previously entering each fee schedule one by one. This system helps me by inputting the fee schedule along with the plan. It's a life saver."*

— Beth L.

## Service Savvy

### The Magic of Linking!

Do you have Trojan Benefit Service with the ability to attach Trojan Benefit Plans to your patient's coverage table? If you answered yes, you need to know this!

For every Trojan Benefit Plan you link, you stand the chance of those patient insurances and coverage tables being updated without your even knowing it! How can that be? **Here's an example:**

- Each Trojan Benefit Plan has its very own Trojan Plan Number. Let's say, you have linked Trojan Plan Number 12345 to five of your patients in your practice management system. **These five patients all have three things in common:**
  1. Same employer
  2. Same group/policy number
  3. Same Trojan Plan Number linked to their file in the practice management system
- Next, you or maybe even another Trojan client asks Trojan to update Trojan Plan Number 12345 for just ONE PATIENT.
- While only ONE PATIENT was researched by Trojan, when you process your update, ALL FIVE OF THOSE PATIENTS WILL BE UPDATED. Same Trojan Plan Number, same employer, different insurance and/or different benefits are populated into the patient's file in your practice management system!

We'd say that's pretty magical!! Each time you process your weekly update, many of your patients are being updated behind the scenes!

**To make the best use of your time, prioritize the patients for linking in this order:**

1. New Patients
2. Patients of Record with new insurance
3. Patients whose coverage hasn't changed. (These patients can wait until their insurance has changed.)

Don't forget to link! Take a little time today to save you a lot of time in the future.

**FMI: To learn how to link properly, please contact Software Support at 800-451-9723, ext. 1**



## Seminars

**Academy for Scheduling Excellence**  
*Presented by Sandy Pardue*

**JULY 26, 2019**

Hosted by Trojan Professional Services  
Los Alamitos, CA

[Click here for more information](#)

**2 Day Hands-on Dental Medical Billing**  
*Presented by Christine Taxin*

**AUG 1-2, 2019**

Hosted by Trojan Professional Services  
Los Alamitos, CA

[Click here for more information](#)

**Dental Assistant Rocks**  
*Presented by Julie Varney*

**AUG 9, 2019**

Hosted by Trojan Professional Services  
Los Alamitos, CA

[Click here for more information](#)

**Front Office Rocks**  
*Presented by Laura Hatch*

**AUG 16, 2019**

Chantilly, VA

[Click here for more information](#)

**Dental and Medical Insurance Extravaganza**  
*Presented by Christine Taxin and Teresa Duncan*

**OCT 17-18, 2019**

Las Vegas, NV

[Click here for more information](#)

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for some of our favorite "classic"  
Trojan Today articles:

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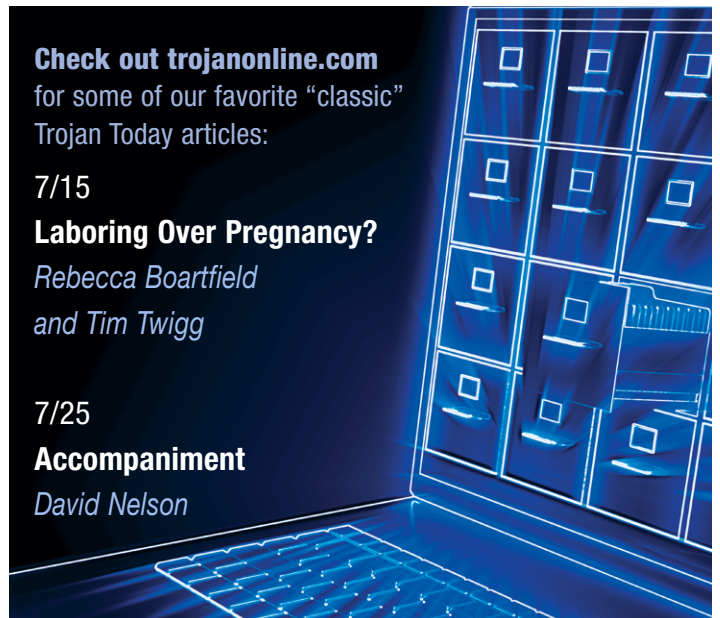
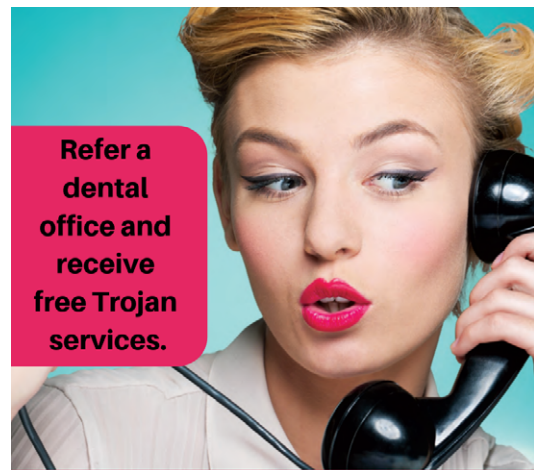
**Laboring Over Pregnancy?**

*Rebecca Boartfield  
and Tim Twigg*

7/25

**Accompaniment**

*David Nelson*

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**T** *Accelerating dental practices to excellence by providing services that increase case acceptance, production, and collections.*

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