

# How to prepare for the biggest trends in dentistry

By Gary Kadi

Almost a decade ago I had the privilege of attending a YPO – young entrepreneur’s organization workshop. The keynote speaker was a hip, young economist. I remember one thing he expressed that evening. The growth of the economy is not based upon who is president, where the moon is in relation to Saturn or the growth that happens with every even numbered Liz Taylor husband. Nope, he broke out a chart and showed that there is a natural 30-year expansion-and-contraction cycle. Now I know numbers lie and liars use numbers, but there was a certain confidence had me really take a look at his logic that basically negated countless hours of family debate and my business degree from Rutgers.

Whether I agree or not, we may not be the hippies of the mid-’70s, but things sure do smell the same. Remember the gas crunch where you had to do the odd-and-even number thing? The weak dollar? The housing meltdown?

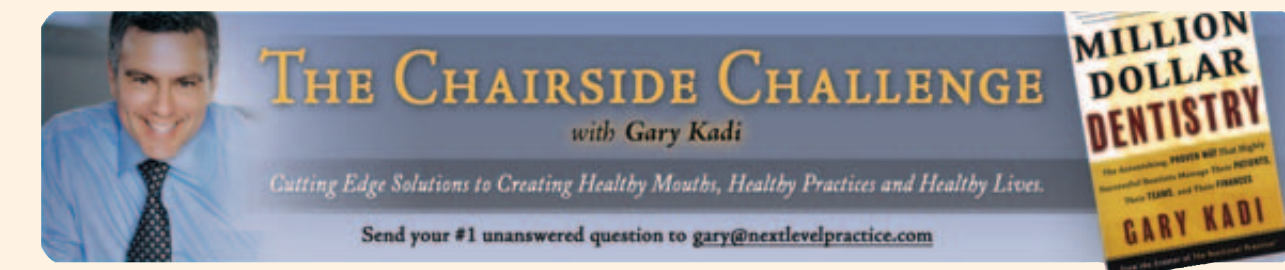
The biggest indicator for me are the dentists in Detroit. While 30 years ago the only thing I was working on was puberty, I’m sure the practices in Michigan were dealing with the same lack of consumer confidence they are dealing with today.

I believe the economy is going to tighten in 2007 and we will dip into a recession. As harsh as this may sound, I believe recessionary times can be huge opportunities for those who know how to take advantage of them.

The solution is to go back to the fundamentals. One of the reasons many of us got into dentistry because it is “recession proof business.” (I do not think our colleagues supported by automaker employees would agree with this statement right now.) Whether or not our industry is recession proof, we cannot control it.

What we can control and positively affect is what how we react to it. Going back to the basics will not only allow you and your team to survive but actually to thrive.

It is vital to take a counterintuitive mindset. Every newspaper, radio and TV station is going to be talking about the slowdown, and your job is to focus on expanding your practice. There is no better time to expand when everyone around you is going into agreement with the mass consciousness. Marketing budgets will be dramatically reduced and, that’s right, so will the flow of new patients. This



means less clutter in the minds of potential patients and therefore higher rates of response for you the successful dentist – because only the successful dentist could “afford” to market during challenging times. Only the marketing message changes during downturns in the economy not the reach and frequency. Whether to market or not is based on ROI (return on investment) not on inflation.

Now let’s turbocharge your marketing and build on going back to the basics.

Consider these facts: 50 percent of American families don’t have a dentist they call their own. Of those who do, only half receive continuing care. Yet four out of five adult Americans have some form of gum disease. And only 7 percent of those in re-care programs have had some form of advanced periodontal treatment.

One more statistic for you to consider: The average dentist we work with has at least \$1 million in diagnosed untreated dental care sitting in charts within his or her practice. A million dollars worth of diagnosed—and necessary treatment—that isn’t getting done. And we haven’t even talked about adding a subspecialty like aesthetics, ortho or sedation!

Focus on your patient education system. Patients do not buy solutions to problems they do not think they have. Sit down with your team and establish a healthy mouth baseline and soft- and hard-tissue standards for care. Use intraoral cameras on every visit and have the patient experience for themselves what they need and take the time to explain why they need it. Stop “watching” your patient’s dental health deteriorate because of your own considerations – i.e. “they

don’t have the money,” “they will think I’m trying to pay for my new laser,” etc. When you shift your attention on having the patient understand their problem, the consequences if left untreated and only then the recommended solution you will have more work that you can handle – even in the deepest of recessions. **DT**

## About the author

Gary Kadi innovated the NextLevel methodology and is one of America’s leading dental practice developers. His 12 years of transforming and developing dental practices are captured in his latest book, “Million Dollar Dentistry.” He can be reached at:

**Phone:** 480.361.9955

**E-mail:** gary@nextlevelpractice.com

**Online:** nextlevelpractice.com