



## EMPOWERING THE “ON-TIME, DOCTOR TIME” SCHEDULING COORDINATOR

*by Ken Alexander, M. Div.*

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For more than 30 years Millenium’s “Doctor Time” scheduling has allowed practices large and small to stay on time and to use their scheduling system to develop a large competitive advantage. Teamwork is a vital ingredient to scheduling success, and no team members are more important than the Scheduling Coordinators as they insures that the Scheduling Templates are booked as designed:

### **The Definition of Empowerment:**

The authority, ability and responsibility to take independent action within the policies and systems of the practice to help achieve the practice purpose with “On-Time Scheduling.”

### **THE SIX STEPS TO EMPOWERING THE SCHEDULING COORDINATOR:**

#### **I. CLEARLY DEFINE THE DESIRED OUTCOME: What is your Purpose or Vision here?**

1. Your Practice Purpose or Vison:



Main Idea!



*“Delivering the finest Quality and Service to our customers in such a way that their happiness shouts our praises to their family, friends and dentist.”*

2. The Definition of “On Time”:

*“Meeting or beating the reasonable expectations of the busy patient and parent in the timeliness of each appointment and in total treatment time.”*

3. The Scheduling Coordinator must “Buy-in” to the practice purpose and systems: **WHO AM I?**

4. Empowerment is part of a culture of partnership where each employee thinks and acts like a business partner. **“Will you partner with me, and not be just a worker bee?”**



**II. GET THE ON-TIME, DOCTOR TIME SCHEDULING SYSTEM & TEMPLATE IN PLACE:**

*“Whatever progress the human race has made, has been achieved by making things simple through system.” Peter Drucker*

1. Determining the necessary resources & structuring them into appropriate Schedule Classes/Codes:

*Schedule "Doctor Time"* = The Doctor cannot be scheduled at more than one place at one time.

*Schedule "Assistant Time"* = Responsibility is created when assistants are assigned to a column.

*Schedule the "Ideal Day"* = See the same number and same types of procedures at the same time every day.

2. Build the Templates: Create the perfect day that takes into consideration doctor time, assistant time, chair time and the patient’s needs:

APPOINTMENTS

What Types and What Classes

How Long

When Is the Doctor Time

How Many Per Day

3. Gain Commitment from each member of the team:

Receptionist: Fill in the codes properly as the Template is designed.

Doctor: Be in the operatory when needed and "SCOOT."

Assistants: Stay on time with your individual chair and help out with others.

Patients & Parents: Arrive on time with no breakage, and take your fair share of appointments during school.

4. Work the scheduling system based on solid principles:

The Principle of the Short Appointment: *“The shorter the appointment the faster they get out!”*

The Principle of Keeping the Assistants Busy: *“Doctor be at the chair within 2 minutes!” Scoot!*

The Principle of Patient Participation (no long Patient Cooperation)

*“No regularly scheduled patient should be kept waiting because of a poor cooperator!”*



## EMPOWERING THE “ON-TIME, DOCTOR TIME” SCHEDULING COORDINATOR

### The Doctor Time is *NOT* Scheduled Properly

		#1		#2		#3		Total		
		#1	#2	#3	#4	DOCTOR	#6			
02:00p	E			OBS	B20	R		15	02:00p	
	:15							05	:15	
	:30	B15	A15	A15	A15	CK	R	21 ?	:30	
	:45	A15	A15	A15		CK		18 ?	:45	
03:00p	E			OBS		S15		15	03:00p	
	:15					DR		08	:15	
	:30	B15	A15	A15	A15			18 ?	:30	
	:45	A15	A15	A15	A15			20 ?	:45	
04:00p	A15	A15	A15	A15	CK			18 ?	04:00p	
	:15	E		OBS	A15	S15		20 ?	:15	
	:30					DR		08	:30	
	:45	A15	A15	A15	A15			20 ?	:45	
05:00p	A15	A15	A15	A15	A15	CK		23 ?	05:00p	
	:15						CN		:15	
	:30							05	:30	

### The Doctor Time *IS* Scheduled Properly

		#1		#2		#3		Total		
		#1	#2	#3	#4	DOCTOR	#6			
02:00p	OR		S20	B40	A	SA		10	02:00p	
	:10				S10			08	:10	
	:20							08	:20	
	:30		A		A			10	:30	
	:40		OBS		A	CK		10	:40	
	:50			A20		SA		07	:50	
03:00p	EX		A20		A			07	03:00p	
	:10			S20	A	SA		10	:10	
	:20				S10			08	:20	
	:30		A20			CK		10	:30	
	:40			A20	A			07	:40	
	:50		OBS		A	CK		10	:50	
04:00p	EX			A20	DR			07	04:00p	
	:10		A20		A	CK		09	:10	
	:20							08	:20	
	:30			DR	A			10	:30	
	:40		A20	S10	A	CK		09	:40	
	:50	OBS		A			CN	08	:50	
05:00p			S10	A	DR	SA		09	05:00p	
	:10							05	:10	

It may not be a perfect puzzle, but if you follow each of the little red doctor blocks of time carefully you can imagine that the doctor has a fighting chance to keep him/herself on time throughout the afternoon, whereas there is no hope with the previous Template.



### III. THE DOCTOR & TEAM MUST EMPOWER THE SCHEDULING COORDINATOR:

1. The entire team must converge together with one purpose to handle the 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. rush of patients and to stay on time with fabulous customer service and quality. Help with phone calls!
2. The clinical team must select the right codes, the correct number of weeks, and close out charts immediately.
3. Inform the patient if their next appointment will be long one that it **“will be during school hours.”**
4. The doctor must not say, “Oh, just drop on by” or “just call my receptionist and she will squeeze you in.” Instead he/she must say, “Can you call one of my expert Scheduling Coordinators and I am sure she will get you all set with what needs to be done.”
5. When things back up, assistants can help by making an appointment for their patient at their chair.
6. “Please Doctor, empower us by giving us your vacation schedule at least four months in advance!”
7. If it is a complicated series of appointments, please walk your patient to the front and help us get the patient scheduled correctly.
8. NEVER tell a patient we just need to see them for “just a quick check!” (*Regular Activation*)
9. Doctor and clinical team must know the current weekly rotation and give a range of weeks, like 6-7.
10. Have patients check themselves in to free up time to serve other patients and give us an effective and easy to use Patient Appointment Reminder software.
11. If an appointment is taking much longer than planned, please inform the parents who are waiting.
12. Thank you for coming early, working into lunch or staying past 5 p.m. to handle a Comfort Visit.
13. Use an *Available Appointment Report* to help the doctor and team empower the scheduling process.



#### IV. THE PATIENTS & PARENTS MUST BE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN ON-TIME SCHEDULING:

1. The TC must communicate the importance of the patient's role in On-Time Scheduling at the Bonding Consult.
2. Give the patient written instructions as to their responsibilities with the Consultation Form.
3. Clearly define the expectations for making and keeping appointments:

***Empowerment is part of a culture of partnership where each patient thinks and acts like the Orthodontist's partner.***

**APPOINTMENTS** -- Please plan to arrive five minutes prior to your regularly scheduled appointment to allow time to brush your teeth before being seated. Each appointment is carefully planned for the time and procedures required. As many of our patients are school aged we try our best to accommodate as many patients as possible after 2:00 p.m. For this reason we request that all procedures longer than 20 minutes be taken during the school hours. Once the initial appliances have been placed the majority of your visits can be after school. Visits are scheduled every 4-6 weeks depending on the stage of treatment.

MISSED APPOINTMENTS CAUSE A DELAY IN TREATMENT TIME!

4. Clearly define how loose or broken appliances are to be handled. Excellence of quality and service demands that all patients who are late or have something broken will be seen by an assistant, but all the planned work may not be done:

**LOOSE OR BROKEN APPLIANCES** -- It is very important that you call our office if a wire, band or bracket comes loose. Special tools and supplies are necessary for most repairs so PLEASE CALL IN ADVANCE. Patients who do not call in advance will be made comfortable, but we may not have the time necessary for the complete repair. It may then be necessary for you to schedule an additional visit. Excessive broken appliances will slow down your treatment time so please pay careful attention to the list of "No, No!" foods.

5. Give an Appointment Report Card which will serve both as a grading tool and reminder of patient responsibilities:

**APPOINTMENT REPORT CARD** -- Each Visit you will be graded on a Cooperation Report Card in each of the above areas of cooperation. This is our way of letting you know how you are doing in treatment. This card will also be your appointment card for your next visit and serve as a reminder of the areas which need your daily cooperation.



6. Develop a Motivation Contest in order to help patients be excited about fulfilling their own goals and responsibilities:

**MOTIVATION CONTEST** -- In order to help our patients fulfill their treatment goals, we give out “WOODEN NICKELS” at each visit for excellent cooperation. Up to four “WOODEN NICKELS” can be earned at each regular visit if you do well in the different areas of cooperation. The nickels should be saved and can be redeemed for gift certificates, T-shirts and many other prizes. This is our way of saying, “Thank you for being such a great patient!”

7. Use appropriate language and no longer say these things:

“It is just a check or short appointment” = Instead it is an Activation which is vital to tx success!

“You need an emergency visit?” = Instead, “It sounds like Joey needs an extra visit Mrs. Jones.”

It’s No longer Patient Cooperation = Now it is Patient Participation!

#### V. EMPOWERMENT FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE WHEN THINGS GO WRONG:

As a service provider, you could be perfect and still some customers will have a problem with or take exception to your service. How you handle these “moments of truth” is vital to the health and continued growth of the practice. Handle the problem poorly, and the customer will go tell five people. Handle it well and the customer will become one of your best referral sources.

##### WINNING OVER DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS:

1. Let the customer vent.
2. Stay positive.
3. Express empathy... Say you are sorry!
4. Start solving the problem.
5. Mutually agree on a solution.
6. Follow Up... Make sure the problem is resolved by checking with the customer.
7. ***When Only Love Will Do.***

We live in a world where many people do not experience the true joy of living. Many childhoods have been destroyed by violence and relationship difficulties. It is mandatory we recognize that most difficult people have significant problems in their lives. A gentle word and a kind gesture can be very rewarding in difficult situations.



## VI. EMPOWERMENT WITH JOY IN THE WORKPLACE:

1. Information and knowledge empowers me, so when the doctor or team is patient with me and explains why things are done a certain way, it equips me to handle my job better.
2. An encouraging word or “great job” goes a long way. Positive reinforcement and a great working environment can turn any negative situation around.
3. Having fun while working hard at the same time is so extremely empowering to me. It’s like working out. I’m accomplishing so much at once – for the company, myself, mentally, etc.
4. Most of all truly try to please others, not just your customers, but your doctor and fellow staff!

**If you are not helping others, you are not helping yourself!**



***Ken Alexander is Director of Alexander & Sons, (formerly Millenium Management) and is joined by his son Ryan, Consultant/Broker, and son Steven, Orthodontist. He is considered one of the top consultants in practice management and transitions working almost exclusively with Orthodontists for more than 30 years. Few possess his knowledge and expertise, and fewer yet have the ability to understand every part of an Orthodontic practice and be able to move each practice to its maximum potential. Ken enjoys his work and the relationships he has built as a lecturer and effective consultant having worked with well over 600 orthodontists and their practices in the US and Europe, all of whom he calls his friends.***