A guiding light: Dr. Lenard I. Linkow

By David L. Hoester, DMD, FICD
Editor in Chief

It is said that America became great because of the ability of Americans to think creatively or, as the expression is used, outside of the box. Dr. Leonard Linkow is such a man; and he has had a tremendous effect on the field of dentistry and the quality of oral care afforded to patients. Linkow forged through battles of existing stagnation, adversity and legal precipices to achieve the correct utilization of implants.

In the ’60s, Linkow designed the blade implant to avoid removable prostheses, and at about the same time he patented designs for the root form implants that are used today. Even in the ’60s, he had the foresight to utilize titanium in his implants.

Although throughout the world Linkow is considered the “father of oral implantology” and even has a street named after him in Germany, he never claimed to have invented implants. In fact, he always gave credit to the Egyptians for such an invention, and he never failed to thank those who helped him along the way, such as Dr. Cherchev from France, one of his earlier motivators.

What has made Linkow so outstanding is his passion and undeniable belief in the success of implants, along with his willingness to share. In the late ’60s, just as the Beatles came to the United States, Linkow was spending a lot of his time lecturing throughout the world. Lugging the requisite boxes of slides, he would spend hours sharing with dentists all around the globe his ideas about the restoration of debilitated mouths.

No matter whether in Germany, France, Russia, Australia, Brazil, South Korea, Peru, Argentina, Canada, India, Japan or the Philippines, he energetically shared his knowledge with all.

While Linkow was practicing dentistry full time in New York City, he found the time to write 17 books on implantology noted in one of his books.

Linkow was also a clinical professor at four universities: New York University (NYU), Temple University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, Lille University of France.

In addition, Linkow was one of the three founding fathers of the first esthetic dental society, and he helped create the American Society of Dental Esthetics, along with Dr. Irwin Smigel. He has the endowed chair in implantology at NYU, in perpetuity, known as the Linkow Chair.

Some years ago, Len and I were presenting lectures on the road and taking questions from the podium. At that time I was the first periodontist to place implants in the United States and an officer of the only organized implant academy at the time.

Someone in the audience asked a derisive question, trying to divide our positions. In response, Len placed his hand on my shoulder and stated firmly: “David and I are a team and work together.”

Linkow is a visionary with a wonderful imagination. He continues to present his vision of successful utilization of implants around the world. Foremost in his passion is his love for his family, his daughters, his grand-children and his friends.

Among his enduring strengths is his belief in the success of converting an orally debilitated mouth to a natural functioning rehabilitated one through implants.

Just as Len’s hand was always on my shoulder, I can only hope the same for all those in the dental field involved in implants, and the millions of patients who have and will receive the benefit of implants. May his hand be on your shoulder, too.

Dr. Linkow will lecture at the Greater New York Dental Meeting on behalf of the AAID at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 28.

The missing systems
Reach your practice potential and achieve continuous growth

By Roger P. Levin, DDS

Most dentists will say, “I have good systems.” However, are they the right systems? Inefficient and outdated systems create a no-win situation for practices. The worse the systems, the harder the practice has to work. Yet, no matter how hard the practice works, it can’t reach its potential.

Unleashing the practice’s potential
Step-by-step systems allow the practice to reach its true production potential. The nine areas where excellent systems result in significantly higher production for the practice are:

1. Scripting
2. Scheduling
3. Collections
4. Case Presentation
5. Internal Marketing
6. The New Patient Experience
7. Hygiene
8. Customer Service

Practices that have implemented what Levin Group calls The Missing Systems; spend little or no time on plateaus and achieve greater financial success in a low-stress environment. These dentists report that they enjoy practicing dentistry more and have additional free time.

Dentistry in the 21st century
Today, dentistry is more complex. Patients expect more from their dentists. New dentists are facing higher and higher levels of debt. Competition for new patients is more intense. Dental practices have to be prepared to meet these challenges. Practices that are able to implement effective systems will gain the following:

• Improved production, profit and profit margins
• Lower stress and a more enjoyable work environment
• Time for the dentist to focus on leadership and team-building without detracting from patient care
• Higher levels of patient care and satisfaction
• A motivated team that enjoys learning and is willing to participate in practice growth
• The ability to train new team members more efficiently
• The capability to rapidly adapt to change

Systems, the team and success
If team members do not have efficient, updated systems to rely on, stress and chaos will occur at some point. Stress will wreak havoc on you, your team and, ultimately, your profit potential.

Like the best businesses in other fields, top-performing practices understand that the time it takes to put step-by-step systems in place is critical to long-term success. Even though it may require extra work on the front end, there are many benefits. We have seen our clients demonstrated routinely as clients transformed their practices into million-dollar businesses.

Conclusion
To make the jump to continuous growth, dentists need to implement The Missing Systems in their practices.

Improved business systems allow you to make the most of your clinical training, reaping the rewards of greater success.