Episode 58: How Strong Leadership Transforms a Practice – Insights for Healthcare ft. Guido Piquet Transcript

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Background and Career Path

Guido, I really appreciate you joining me. I love doing these, just these little quick, you know, 10-15 minute videos that I share on my LinkedIn. So thanks for joining.

For those who don't know who Guito is, kind of give a bit about your background and maybe the Guino elevator pitch, if you will. So the Guido elevator pitch, I've had a couple different lives in my professional career.

I graduated right at December, right after September 11, 2001. So it was a really crazy time. And so I took a job fixing computers in a student computer lab, just to get a jobs out of undergrad and started working in the IT field.

Started to build up from there by coincidence. Dr. Mann had, he was friends with the chief information security officer at the university I worked with.

And so he told him, hey, I'm looking for an IT director to come work in my ophthalmology practice. He said, yeah, got a guy I think that would be good for you.

So I came over to the practice, it's been 19 years ago. came in as the IT director for an ophthalmology practices. I didn't even know what the word opthalmologist meant or was or how to spell it.

Um, I just knew that it was some eye care doctors, that eye doctors I was going to go work and help. Over the years in the early days of my career, really learned about the business of ophtalymology just by being part of leadership conversations and, and just getting myself involved, asking questions, not be afraid to just jump in and get in there and, you know, don't worry about looking stupid.

And they noticed my ability to connect with people, communicate with, people get people moving in the same direction, asked me to come into the operations side, which I did.

And I was honest with them and I told them, you know, You're going to have to help me out because I know nothing about ophthalmology as far as from the clinical side.

And they said, don't worry, we'll help you. I didn't get much help, but that's okay. But I did, I had a lot of people helping me along the way and mentoring me and learned a lots from employees and the staff.

And then from there, we were very successful where I was. And so they asked me to take on a larger leadership role. Then I took on the role of COO for the practice.

That's kind of all she wrote. I've also in the past few years started to get more involved with more networking stuff, more speaking engagements stuff.

Because to be honest with you, it was an area of weakness for me. And so I tend to try to do things where I'm weak so that I can get better. So that's when I started doing the podcast with some other people a few years ago, and then started collaborating with on this most latest podcast, which has also been very successful as we continue to grow that.

Key Levers for Practice Growth

And it's been fun and just I try to continue to do things that make me uncomfortable and hopefully I'll get a little better at them every day. That's really cool.

Yeah, all really good context for my first question for you, which is you've been a practice leader for a long time now at a very successful practice.

What are the two to three things you think are most critical and important levers kind of for the growth of the practice? And I ask this, you know, with like the main purpose being surgery volume and revenue, right?

Reimbursements are down, volumes down. Everyone's looking at unique and effective ways of trying to grow their practice in kind of this kind environment.

And so from your perspective, what are the one or two or the three things that practice can really lean into in order to help grow the practice? Yeah, I think a practice really needs to first understand its strengths and its opportunities.

Like what are the areas where you do really well? What are some of the other areas that you're not doing so well. Because I see sometimes our practices that try to do it all and don't do a really good job at a lot of it.

So then when you understand what those opportunities are, what is your market? What's being offered? what other competition is in the area? How do you compare to other practices in your Market?

What is it that makes your practice unique? What are some things that you want to focus on? And then really dive in and make sure that. I learned this though.

Later in life, right at COVID, I decided to get an MBA and I was all set to go to the A&M MBA program in person and then boom COVID hit. And so I had to shift gears.

And I was like, let me find an online program that's really good. So I went to the Jack Welch program. He was the former CEO of GE, you know who he is.

You need to be either number one or number two in that service line. Or sell it or shut it down if that's not the case. So I think, you know, sometimes we need to evaluate ourselves as practice to understand what are we really good at?

What should we focus on? Which we focused our time, energy and efforts on. If there's things that we want to continue to invest and grow in, we either need do it really well, fix it, or we need to sell it or have it go away or shut down.

Because we have seen this as a prime example, especially over the past couple of years where we've seen refractive volume go down, you have to understand where the opportunities are because if you put all your eggs in one basket, And you don't really have a strategic growth plan for other things and understand what are the things that I can do well, then you're going to get caught with your pants down if you are one trick pony.

So I guess that would be one really understanding those strengths and those opportunities and where they exist. And then the second thing I think is the.

I guess maybe undervaluing or not putting enough time and effort into the people that are going to take your practice forward. Because sometimes we just, I think that the norm of our practice and sometimes, we get caught up in as well, just survive the daily organized chaos that we deal with every day.

And so you're being a little too reactive as opposed to being proactive about who is going to continue to take that torch and move forward and continue go to your practice.

So, you know, the way I approach leadership in my team is to, to think how do I get them to a spot where they can make decisions and they get to where their going be without me being involved at all.

That's really my mindset. And so we're trying to really grow at the next generation and crop of leaders so that as we

take whatever it is that we want to be successful in, whatever service line, wherever that culture of the organization is and that mindset that it continues to grow exponentially because you have more and more people thinking that way without them coming to have to ask you for permission.

So that's kind of a high level. I think a third thing to mention and we can talk about, I mean, there's so many different areas to talk specifically, but really understanding, I think a lot of practices have a hard time getting their head around their entire journey of the patients.

Because we are constantly doing that. I feel like we're pretty good, you know, but I when we admit that we aren't perfect, if you look at that entire day from the time that the patient became aware of you, from that time they filled out some contact form, that they got a reminder, the time that the insurance team verified their insurance.

Patient Experience and Communication

From the time they walked into the front desk, from the times that they filled out paperwork, From time the technician, you know, understanding and really diagnosing and analyzing every piece of that journey is so critical because if any practice, and I know that we could do this in our journey as well, if that you're going to find pieces of the journey you are not really so happy with and that, we need to really take a look at and figure out how to fix it.

You can't really shut it down, but we need to really fix it and figure out how do we do it better? And either you're doing it internally or you are finding a vendor to help you do if you can.

And there's not a one size fits all. It depends on your practice size. Depends on the challenge that you trying to solve. But I think practices really should kind of take that like lean approach to ophthalmology and patient journey where you're trying to make every step in that process more efficient and better for the patient.

And then just collectively, and it's gonna accumulate over time and your practice is really gonna start to grow. Yeah, that's really good stuff. The patient experience is kind of top of mind for me.

I have been trying to get into this orthopedic foot doctor to figure out what the heck's going on with my left foot. Really bad plantar fasciitis and having a hard time training.

And so here's the patient experienced so far. Got referred by someone else who had dealt with the same issue and successfully worked with this doctor.

I give the clinic a call thinking I'm going to get someone on the admin who can schedule an appointment. So I call five times. I leave five voicemails.

finally went on their website, filled out a contact us form. To their credit, they responded within an hour, asked me 10 questions, not 10 at once, but one question kind of each email that I responded to, finally got all my information and they finally get back to me in that email thread saying, the doctor can see you November 20th.

So I'm like, well, that's terrible. So, I've had a terrible experience with you from the very second I reached out to you. And then to conclude it all, you cannot see me for over six weeks and I have got an acute problem right now.

I know that is not ophthalmology necessarily, but when you think about your like the patient experience that your team is creating right now. I know you just mentioned multiple touch points that are really critical, but is there anything that like you think about in terms of the patients experience, that might be the most important or maybe a handful of those little touchpoints that really, really are critical to get right?

Or how would you thing about that? Yeah, I think what you've just said is important and it kind of encapsulates my answer, which is It sounds like you weren't really a priority, right?

Because from the way that you were not responded to, or finally you got somebody to finally give you an appointment for a month and a half out. So maybe that's a different field and they're just having patients drop in

their lap where they can't handle it.

And maybe I need to go into feet. I don't know. It's really understanding. Like how do we make them a priority? One of the, and one of biggest ways to do that is communication.

Like, how did we communicate with them? Because we can do everything right. And then one touch point or one bad reminder or, or let's start from the very beginning.

Just one, let say we take three days to reach back out to them, but somebody else who reaches out right away. is gonna, that's gonna give you a different impression, excuse me, of that practice that they really want you to be part of their practice as opposed to somebody who's like, eh.

Like, I mean, it gives the impression of, okay, well, you took three days, if that, to get back to me. So do you really care if I come in or am I just gonna be a number to where, ya know, It's like the dating game where somebody who calls you right back away, you know they're interested if they call you, right away.

They're not calling you back. Although I don't know if that logic works exactly because a lot of people tend to go to people who they are not interested in.

I get your point though. The overall purpose of all of those touch points is communicating value. So whether it's the very first touch point after you know, an inquiry comes in or whether it's the insurance verification or the pre-consult call reminder or post up, whatever it is, communicating that they're valued and making sure they leave every interaction feeling that way seems like that would go a long ways in creating that patient experience.

And it's going to be in places where a practice manager administrator may not know. We have different messaging platforms, and I constantly peruse those platforms to see what kinds of responses our staff are giving our patients.

Even if it simple as a patient will text in to reschedule or say, hey, I want to cancel, if a staff says something like, sure, cancel your appointment, but doesn't take the next step to say Hey, oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

When is a better time for you? Can I get you scheduled on time at this day? Like little things like that makes such a huge difference. The way I like to describe that is, and I think I described that at a meeting we're at recently is like leaks.

Where are your leaks? I don't care who you are.

Where to Find Guido Online

You have leaks, it just depends on the amount and the severity of your lakes. And how do you identify those leaks and how you fix them? That's what we have to do to continue to get better.

That's really good. Guido, thanks for joining me. Where should people follow you online? How should they connect with you? I'm not a huge social media, I guess, except LinkedIn.

I mean, that's where I go mostly. So if you go to LinkedIn and search Guidopiquette, you'll find me there. It's a unique name, so you'll find it. Hopefully you can check out some of the podcasts that we're doing too, because I'm having similar conversations with practice leaders and physicians across the country, and I think they're very interesting conversations.

I learn a lot from them, hopefully you could too. Yeah, I do as well. And I think it's really for a lot of different health care verticals because it really, a of what you talk about on the show and what do you interview people really is across, you know, multiple type of health-care vertical.

So I, think your podcast is great. I. Think you are a really good interviewer. You ask really. Good questions. Your good listener. It's been a, it think, great show.

Appreciate you joining us. Yeah. Look forward to getting this on my LinkedIn account. Awesome.