

# THE PARAGON PROGRAM™

SINCE 1986

## THE FRANK SINATRA PRINCIPLE



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# The Sinatra Principle

## Your Ticket to Greater Case Acceptance

by Ken Runkle – America’s Profitability Expert™

Like him or not, Frank Sinatra was an icon in the entertainment industry. As a performer, “Old Blue Eyes” packed concert venues with people entranced by his smooth voice and unique interpretation of songs. As a celebrity, he schmoozed with famous people from Washington to Hollywood. As a personal brand, he earned millions of dollars through the years.

Frank Sinatra was the brand. Frank Sinatra was the business. People filled concert halls to see Frank Sinatra, not his band or stage manager. He was the headliner, the main act. The show was about him. The tickets and posters announced “Frank Sinatra” in concert. People bought records to hear Frank Sinatra, not his piano player or record producer. The album covers proclaimed and pictured Frank Sinatra. It was all about Frank Sinatra.

What does Frank Sinatra have to do with your dental practice? Who is Frank Sinatra in your practice? Who is the main act? If you are the doctor and owner of your practice, you are the Frank Sinatra of your practice. You are the main act.

### CAUTION

Let me offer a word of caution before we continue. This article should not be construed as license to set free any uncontrolled, egocentric arrogance you may have within. “Main acts” with staying power in dentistry possess and present a humble confidence that draws a great team, develops long-term relationships with existing patients, and attracts new patients. Yes, you are the main act and everyone should know it. However, be careful not to let your position of power become an excuse for pride and condescension.

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*Doctors who are esteemed highly by their teams and patients always have higher case acceptance.*

## **STEPS TO BECOMING FRANK SINATRA**

### **1. REVIEW THE TICKET**

If you are the owner of a single doctor practice, you are the main act. You are the headliner and your name should be on the ticket. Chances are good that most new patients are referred to you, the doctor. Most likely your practice is known in your community by your name. A simple experiment will reveal who the main act is in your practice.

Ask your team the following question, “*When new patients are referred to our practice, who are they referred to?*” In other words, are they referred to the doctor, the name of the dental practice, a specific hygienist, or another team member? In most cases, new patients are referred to the doctor. “*You should definitely try my dentist. Dr. Edwards is a great dentist.*”

*When your patients buy a ticket to your practice, they are coming to see you. You are the Frank Sinatra of your practice.*

### **2. GET THE ENTIRE TEAM ON BOARD**

Does your entire team act in ways that reveal you as the Frank Sinatra of your practice. Do they defer their own stories and anecdotes to your personal patient interactions? Do they promote you with every conversation? Do they continuously plant seeds of your expertise and experience in the minds of your patients? If they do, you have a fantastic team. If not, you are

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probably losing more cases than you realize and it's time for a heart-to-heart talk with your team. (This kind of talk could be awkward for you and may be received better from your consultant if you have one.)

The attitudes, words and actions of your entire team must position you correctly in the minds of your patients. As team members interact with you, patients should get the sense that you are highly respected, have excellent dental skills, and are fully embraced by your team. Most patients are keenly aware when team members do not fully support their doctor. Demeaning words, jokes about the doctor's faults, glaring looks, and other debasing actions lead patients to believe that the doctor might not be the best suited to care for their dental needs.

For case acceptance to increase, every team member must buy into the Sinatra Principle. Every team member either builds you up or tears you down in the patient's view. There is no middle ground. If you have team members who do not brag on you, promote you and support you, it is probably time to find new team members.

***Remember, team members will come and go, but as long as it's your practice, they must promote you as the main act.***

### **3. SUPPORT THE MAIN ACT**

In practical terms, when the doctor walks into the room to see a patient, team members should draw attention to the doctor. "Here's the woman of the hour..." From the front office, to the assistants, to the hygienists, all attention should continually be directed to the Frank Sinatra of the practice. Your team keeps the main spotlight concentrated on you throughout the day.

When it comes to treatment presentation, I highly recommend training a treatment coordinator to present cases to patients. Whoever presents the case, the history and philosophy of the practice should be shared along with the biography and expertise of the doctor. The treatment coordinator must learn to brag about the doctor, communicating that he or she is the very best doctor to complete the case being presented.

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If every team member throughout the practice esteems the doctor highly, case acceptance will increase. There is a direct correlation between case acceptance and patient confidence. The level of confidence a patient has in the doctor makes them more or less likely to accept and complete the case presented. The greater the confidence, case acceptance and case completion numbers rise. The lower the confidence, case acceptance and case completion rates fall.

***Case acceptance rises when patients believe  
they have the very best doctor possible on the case.***

#### **4. TAKE THE STAGE**

The bottom line is – if you want case acceptance to rise, it's time to get on the stage, get your whole team behind you, and be Frank Sinatra.

Go for it!

– **Ken Runkle, America's Profitability Expert™**, is the founder and president of Paragon Management, Inc. and has been helping dental practices reach peak profitability for twenty-four years.

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