

June 2009

I've been a fan of the *Smile Design Centre (SDC)* in Hagerstown, Maryland since becoming an orthodontia patient 1 ½ years ago. For many, the words *dental/medical practice* and *customer service* are an oxymoron. This is not the case at the SDC. I can tell you from experience, these folks really get it!

Their customer service philosophy is not a slogan or mantra chanted at annual company meetings to inspire the troops. It is a way of life for Dr. Paul McAllister and his exceptional staff. Their mission plays out in the myriad of thoughtful gestures they demonstrate on a consistent and routine basis.

They impress me a number of ways, but today I'll focus on three reasons why they are worthy of accolades: personality, perfection, and purpose.

Personality. "Hire for personality and attitude; train for skill" is Dr. McAllister's philosophy. I agree. One appointment reminder phone call from Scott is all it takes to realize this newest member of the team *oozes* personality. You can *hear* him smiling over the phone! His message and tone is so upbeat that, for a moment, you think you just won the \$10 million Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes!

Even the waiting room has personality. A refrigerator is stocked with water and juice for your enjoyment. In the winter, a fire blazes in its glass enclosure, warming the space. A fountain gurgles, seducing waiting patients into a zen state of mind that rivals any pre-spa ritual. However, just in case you don't want to chill, a computer is available should you need to check your e-mail. I always prefer chillin', but not for long because the wait is always *minimal*. (Now isn't THAT a concept?) ☺

Customer service is definitely a team sport in this busy practice. Billie, Maleah, and Jamie alternate helping Dr. McAllister during my visits. In addition to being highly efficient, this captivating trio keeps me engaged and entertained. The conversation flows easily and they make a point of asking about things they know are important to me. Since my treatment requires bi-weekly visits, I've gotten to know them well and appreciate their infectious personalities. Nicole and Lisa work the scheduling desk and even lend *personality* to the check out process. I always leave feeling like I just visited old friends instead of having had an adjustment!

Perfection is a word I rarely use, but taking extreme measures to make unpleasant situations more tolerable

Theme: Personality, Perfection, and Purpose

demonstrates any company's quest for perfection. My treatment required the removal of a tooth during the initial phase. I can honestly say I'd rather give birth than have a tooth pulled. I'm not exaggerating when I say I contemplated calling in sick the day of my appointment! However, Dr. McAllister and his team had a plan! *Step one:* take the sissy-girl down the hall for a paraffin hand dip so she focuses on how warm and cozy she feels with her mittens on. *Step two:* apply a warm, herbal infused neck wrap before engaging her into the reclined position. *Step three:* administer the Novacain so motor-mouth will stop talking incessantly! By this time, I'm McLovin' it. I couldn't have cared less if he yanked out all those puppies! "Bring it on, Dr. M..... bring it on!" Now that's perfection!

Purpose. For this group of exceptional individuals, service isn't limited to excellence in dentistry. It extends far beyond the scope of the professional arena. They understand and recognize the importance of giving back and serving the greater good. That takes heart and they willingly share theirs.

If you live in the greater Hagerstown area, you will soon have an opportunity to support their efforts in being good civic servants. **Sunday, June 28th** is the date of **their first annual community event** to benefit the Maryland Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Foundation for the Cure. This event will include the mother of all yard sales, a bake table, dunk booth featuring Dr. McAllister and several of the staff, and an auction of the finalist entries from their recent patient photo contest.

The event will take place from **7:00 am – 4:00 pm** and will be held in the parking lot of their office at **11151 Robinwood Drive, Hagerstown, Md.** Please come and support their efforts to provide funds for those battling breast cancer. Monetary donations as well as yard sale items to sell are also welcomed and needed. Contact Jamie, the brainchild of this event, at (301) 739-5551 or email: jamieh@smiledesigncentre.com for more information. Surely you'll recognize the patients attending. They'll be the ones with the beautiful smiles. I hope to see you there!

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