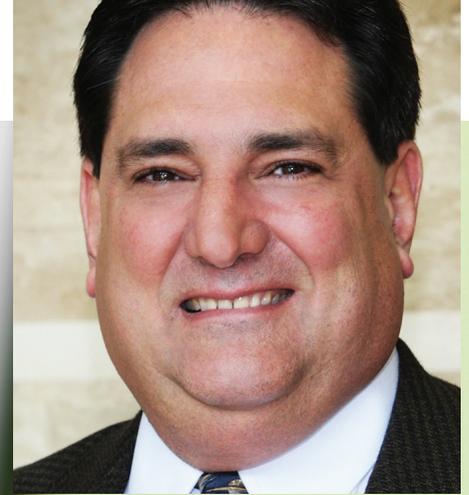




cameo

Dr. John A. Ferullo

D.D.S., M.S.



dental

Few careers are as misunderstood as that of the dentist. Mention the word, and most people cringe. This is usually due to some long-lost childhood memory of drills, pulled teeth or braces. The fact of the matter is that dentistry, at its heart, is focused on prevention of disease, a perspective our country's entire medical industry could benefit from imitating. One of those dedicated practitioners of the dental arts is John A. Ferullo, also known as "your downtown dentist" because his practice is located on Central Avenue in downtown St. Petersburg. Of course, calling Ferullo's offices a practice is a little misleading. This dentist runs his practice like a business, conducting

himself as any entrepreneur would. This means maintaining a focus on revenues and an emphasis on customer service. Make no mistake: while the people who come to see him may be called patients, they are his customers and he treats them accordingly. "We are committed to providing excellent service in a world of low service expectations," Ferullo says. "We also strive to treat all customers fairly, run an ethical business and maintain a strong sense of integrity and honesty in all our business dealings."

Assisting Ferullo is a highly skilled team of professionals. Like many entrepreneurs, he understands the importance of delegating tasks and trusting his staff. And like most business owners, his company's approach to customer service and success reflects his own philosophy. "As a business owner, my leadership style tends toward a laid back approach," he says. "However, I believe in getting the best out of good people. My

team is the most valuable asset my business possesses." While his leadership style might be laid back, don't confuse this with having a lack of focus. Recognizing how critical that can be, Ferullo enlists the aid of a business coach to help him set proper goals and maintain that laser-like focus on managing toward success. "I am coached each year by Laura Jamison of Jamison Consulting, who helps me evaluate my expenses and create a new annual budget," he says. "We then evaluate the most realistic production and collection goals based on what our most productive daily averages were from the previous 12 months. We monitor our results daily and review our monthly numbers as a team at the beginning of the following month." How has this worked for him and his business? "My business and its growth have both excelled thanks to Laura's insights and input," says Ferullo. Jamison is a consultant specializing in developing growth strategies and programs for dental practices across the country.

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cameo



entrepreneurs

Some entrepreneurs find their callings late in life; others find them sooner. This is true for Ferullo, who discovered his passion for working with smiles early on.

"I discovered a passion for dentistry in high school," he recalls. "When I visited the dentist, I was curious about what he did and how he did it. I loved using my hands and I have always been a people person. It seemed like a perfect fit."

The path to a career as a dentist is a long and sometimes arduous one. There are the eight years of study, the requirements and testing for licensure within a state and then the decision to either work as an associate in a senior dentist's practice, or to open a practice of your own. Along the way to his career, Ferullo was nurtured in the pursuit of his goals by a loving parent. In his case, it was his father. "My dad was a hard working blue collar laborer," Ferullo says. "When I was in dental school, he encouraged me to work toward my goals and never give up."

Dentists also find much encouragement and mentoring among the other dentists working in their local community. This type of insider access and experience can be invaluable to helping a new practice begin to thrive. Ferullo experienced this here in Tampa Bay. "The St. Petersburg dental community is amazing," he says. "Every dentist I met when I first came to the area was very supportive and encouraging." Still, the drive to succeed provides most entrepreneurs with sufficient motivation to see their vision become reality. Ferullo and his dental practice are no different.

He draws upon a variety of sources to keep his motivation high. "I rely on several sources of motivation," says Ferullo. "My love of dentistry, my great patients and my great team always help. Then there is my love for God and my love for my family. These are primary motivators for me in all aspects of life, but especially in the business."

And like many professionals, Ferullo works just as hard at giving back as he does at being successful in business. "As a practice, we are involved with the Better Business Bureau, The Gift of Life Program at All Children's Hospital, a chapter of the Seattle Study Club (a dental study club) located in St. Petersburg, Muscular Dystrophy, and CERT (certification for emergency response training)." As for why he is involved with these particular agencies, he has no trouble ticking off some very good reasons. "The Seattle Study Club allows me to be a better dentist through participating in continuing education efforts," he says. "The CERT program has prepared and enabled me to perform as a first responder in a natural disaster. And helping children who are less fortunate is unbelievably gratifying."

In fact, looking back at his involvement within the community, Ferullo points to one particular project as a defining moment in his career. "Doing dentistry for The Gift of Life Program was an incredible opportunity for impacting the lives of others," Ferullo says. "The program brings kids from other countries for heart surgery at Bayfront Medical Center and All Children's Hospital. As a part of the preparation for heart surgery, I provided the dentistry pro bono." Gift of Life is a program addressing the medical needs of children suffering from congenital heart defects and similar conditions. The program is largely run through the efforts of Rotary Clubs throughout the world, and is administered by Gift of Life International (GOLI), a non-profit organization formed in 2003 to significantly increase the number of children that the Gift of Life programs reach every year.

Of course, like most professions, the more you know, the more you can grow. So in this spirit, Ferullo pursues a steady stream of continuing education courses, following advice from a source not readily identified with education. "Use Dave Ramsey's financial principle: Get as much continuing education as possible and keep getting it," he says, adding some sound advice for other entrepreneurs. "Work diligently at being caring, conscientious and confident."

Another Ferullo principle for successful living involves spending time in activities he enjoys, as well as time with those he loves. "I love crew rowing," he says. "But most of all, I enjoy hanging out with my wife, JoEllen and daughter, Raven. We love to go to dinner and take in a good movie."

Ferullo's love of life is as palpable as his love of dentistry. And he believes he lives and works in the perfect place. "This is a great big little city," he says enthusiastically. "I love the people here. There is a lot to do. We are surrounded by water and beautiful scenery. You can't beat the sunsets on the west coast. We are also privileged to find many cultural events taking place here in the Bay Area."

That's the thing about John Ferullo, D.D.S., your downtown dentist. He can always be found working on two smiles. Yours...and his.



To find out more about how Dr. Ferullo can help you keep your smile at its best, visit the Web at yourdowntowndentist.com, or call 727.822.8101.

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