

The importance of never underestimating the value of what we do

A glowing thank you letter from a recent new patient created a great opportunity for promotion and sharing information.

By Sarah Arnold



“When you’re working ‘small miracles’ every day, it’s easy to lose sight of the value of what we do... So if you have a good story, share it...”

When we last spoke in the July/August issue, I was 39-and-a-half weeks pregnant with child number five. Baby Beatrice was born happy and healthy on July 13, leaving me once again amazed by small miracles. Mother and child are very well, thank you.

Of course the “miracle” - like beauty - is in the eye of the beholder. I was recently reminded of this fact by a glowing thank you letter from a new patient. It’s easy to take for granted the value of the work we do day in, day out. To our patients, what we regard as the simplest procedure can be a life-changing experience-by relieving discomfort; by fixing something broken; by making something work better; by preventing future problems; or, as our new patient Debbie recently reminded us, by helping people to look and feel good.

On her first visit to our practice, we took Debbie through our usual new patient procedures. After talking with her for some time, it became obvious she was deeply self-conscious about her teeth. In her own words, she “loved to laugh, but hated her smile”. Debbie did all the usual tricks for hiding her smile: covering her mouth when she laughed; avoiding photos; never wearing lipstick.

It was obvious to us that porcelain veneers could make the world of difference to Debbie’s smile, and how she felt about her appearance. So we prepared a treatment plan and presented our recommendations. Debbie couldn’t believe improving her smile would be such a simple and easy process. She couldn’t book in fast enough!

Debbie was overwhelmed with the results, telling us in a lovely thank you letter that she cried all the way home. She told us how she felt happier and more confident - what’s more, she even

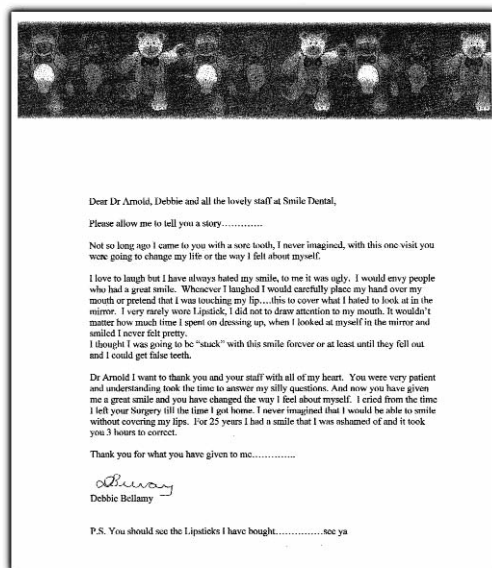


Figure 1. The thank you letter from our new patient Debbie.

received a promotion she never thought she’d get. While we’re not taking the credit for Debbie’s promotion, it’s obvious that we’ve gone a long way towards mending a major impediment to her self-image and confidence.

Of course, we all have wonderful success stories like Debbie’s, and we all receive glowing letters of appreciation from time to time. And whilst we shouldn’t let praise go to our heads, nor should we let the chance pass to share a positive story about the benefits of what we do.

With Debbie’s permission and approval, we shared her story through a regular column we



Figure 2. Telling the story in our regular column in Duo magazine.

contribute to *Duo* - a local lifestyle magazine. Getting stories like this in the local press and print media is a valuable vehicle for communicating with our existing patients, as well as reaching new ones. It's information as well as promotion.

We're constantly telling our patients that their smile is one of their greatest natural assets. And that a nice smile and a sound bite are essential for a happy, healthy you. We've even based our brand identity - "Smile Dental" - on this very idea. But when you're working "small miracles" every day, it's easy to lose sight of the value of what we do.

So if you have a good story, share it. Write a column or story for your local paper. Post it on your website. Print some case histories. Ask your patients for a quote. You may be surprised who you reach (and what you hear!). It's the best way of communicating the services we provide. And the value of what we do.

Editor's note: *The Dental Act in some states of Australia such as Victoria prevent patient testimonial being used in advertising. Check with your local dental board as to the regulations in your state.*

About the author

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