



ORTHO2

# The BIG FIVE of Customer Service

by **Rosemary Bray**

**I**n the January 2012 Ortho2\* newsletter, I talked about standing out and getting noticed, mentioning a quote by an unknown author which said, "Entrepreneurship is living a few years of your life like most people won't, so that you can spend the rest of your life like most people can't."

I asked in that article if you thought that your ortho practice was willing to do just that. Are you all putting so much energy and effort into your patient care delivery now, so that down the road all of you can enjoy the fruits of that labor? If not, you are the practice likely lagging behind in statistics, morale, and ultimately, patient-based referrals (the favored and most reliable kind).

## **Science and Technology is not Service**

This past May, I was honored to share the stage with Joan Garbo, who is also speaking at the 2016 Users Group Meeting, for the opening lecture at an AAO Annual Session that was focused entirely on science and technology, the future of our profession. The title of the lecture was, "The Service Connection – Bridging the Gap Between Science & Technology". We both feel the connector between all things scientific and technological has always been, is now, and forever will be the level of genuine, caring service given to the patient.

Orthodontics provided to patients today is nothing like 45 years ago when I began my career working in a San Diego practice. My three-foot wide appointment book worked just fine, as did the tray full of pegboard ledger cards on which I posted every payment by hand. Who needed widgets and gadgets? Ortho wasn't broken so we didn't need to fix or to change it. Well, it has been fixed and changed as both technology and science have grown and increased in importance.

However, without the service aspect well in place in your practice, all the science and all the technology possible will not make you thrive and be successful. Those things might draw the patient into the office, they might make

your work easier, better, even more efficient, yet it is the caliber and the consistency of great service which will keep patients there and make them want to refer others. Service really is the glue that holds the science and the technology all together.

## **The BIG FIVE**

Before the AAO, Joan and I had both just come off a safari together in Africa where the level of service was beyond expectation and at times, beyond belief. For those of you have not yet had the extreme joy of going on an African safari, searching for the BIG FIVE is what you do! The BIG FIVE are the animals one wants to, needs to, and pays to see! They are considered the most endangered, the most dangerous, and the most terrific to actually see. If you are fortunate to experience all five, your safari is then considered to be successful and complete.

Likewise, if your patient is at home hunting for an ortho practice to treat their family it is critical in today's ortho world to also hunt for the BIG FIVE in customer service! These are also the five things your patient wants to, needs to, and, ultimately, pays to see. They can be considered to be the most critical, most sought after, and most remembered aspects of a quality practice. The only difference in these BIG FIVES might be the location! Service around the world means the same thing to everyone. Everybody wants it, expects it, seeks it out, and pays for it.

It can be a hunt. In your practice, do you continually:

1. Capture ideas of what service means to your patient?
2. Discover the BIG FIVE service tips to enhance your practice?

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Reprinted from

**The Newsletter for Members and Friends of Ortho2**  
October 2015 - Volume 33 Issue 4

### 3. Hunt for ways to further improve your level of patient care?

The BIG FIVE safari animals are the leopard, elephant, cape buffalo, rhino, and lion. Using the first letter of each of those five great animals, a service element can be equated to comprise the BIG FIVE of patient service in ortho.

#### Leopard – Listening

Do you really listen to your patient, hearing both what is said and not said? Are you not formulating your reply while they speak or not interrupting them while they try to talk with you? People detest being interrupted, it is actually negative service. People want to be heard and appreciate when they feel they have been.

#### Elephant – Empathy

In the wise words of Maya Angelou, “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” The ability to understand your patients, to feel as they do, and without judgment is true empathy. Without the empathy in place, you cannot lead into the caring...

#### Cape Buffalo – Caring

You have often heard the great saying from Theodore Roosevelt, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” It may be trite to you because of how much you hear it. It is however, very true. Do your patients know how much you truly care about them? Do you? Are you providing patient care for them or do you truly care for your patient? They are not the same! In what ways do you consistently show the level of caring that comes from your entire team?

#### Rhino – Relationship

The late and great Zig Ziglar taught us that, “If people like you they’ll listen to you, but if they trust you they’ll do business with you.” Do you build trust by creating a genuine relationship with each patient? Can they feel it right from the beginning at the first appointment, and at every one thereafter? Every orthodontic practice is in the relationship business. It is the reason people say yes to your offer of treatment – a connection has been made, coming from a development of a trusting relationship.

#### Lion – Love

When you truly do love what you do every day, you can’t help but care about and for your patients. The late Steve Jobs (who was all about science and technology) told all of us to find something we really love to do, to keep searching, and to never settle. “Do great work,” he said, and to do that great work, “You must love what you do.” To me, that means to love your profession, love your entire team, love every patient, and love the miracle of what you do for their smiles and ultimately, for their lives.

Not all good quotes, as those mentioned above, come from people who are deceased. Rosemary Bray, the living and well ortho speaker, tells you to, “Avoid the two enemies of orthodontics, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and continue to provide a level of care that patients cannot get anywhere else. If you do that, they won’t want to go anywhere else to look for it. And if they should try, they won’t find it!”

I will be discussing these important principles once again and filling in those two blanks you see here at the 2016 Users Group Meeting.

Yes, I am obsessed with customer service! Hearing this critical message every few years is not often enough. Join Ortho2 in Las Vegas to hear many topics of practice enhancement being presented by some of the industry’s greatest voices. I am honored to be merely one of them.

\*Available at [www.ortho2.com](http://www.ortho2.com) > Resources > Newsletters. ♡

## About the Author



Rosemary Bray is an orthodontic consultant, trainer, and professional speaker with 45 years experience in the orthodontic profession. She is presenting the keynote address at the 2016 Users Group Meeting in Las Vegas.