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STAY CONNECTED

WELCOME TO THE APRIL EDITION OF STAY CONNECTED

We hope you are all starting to feel the joys of Spring.

Now the clocks have changed offering the promise of longer days we are feeling increasingly positive about the coming days and weeks. Without wishing to burst this bubble of positivity, April also marks the start of the new tax year and many of you will be starting to work on your accounts for the last year. Our fully qualified and licensed Accountants are available to support you and they are offering a free financial health check for our clients.

Also this month, our colleagues at Private Practice Pro launch their new online course helping doctors set up and establish their private practice. The course content is delivered via video and provides valuable learning for doctors starting their private practice journey.

We are delighted to have a special offer to extend to the Designated Medical community so please do get in touch if you would like further information.

If you would like to know more about our accountancy services and to book your free financial health check or further details regarding Private Practice Pro, please contact Hannah Smith via email at hannah@designatedgroup.com or 020 7952 1437.

Designated Medical Team

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CLIENT SPOTLIGHT: JOANNA FRANKS



The One Stop clinic at the Platinum Medical Centre, offers real time imaging and biopsy, ensuring patients a quick, accurate and caring service.

Miss Joanna Franks is a Consultant Breast and Oncoplastic Surgeon. Her area of expertise is the assessment and management of all conditions relating to the breast, including both benign and malignant breast disease and patients who are asymptomatic with a family history. Miss Franks is always mindful of aesthetics and long-term results but will never compromise on surgical excision or oncology.

Miss Franks is passionate about, not only supporting her own patients, but also the wider Cancer patient community. She is a trustee of Future Dreams, a charity dedicated to raising funds for support, awareness and research for those touched by breast cancer. She is a member of the Breast Cancer Haven Clinical and Scientific Advisory Board and is a professional reviewer for Macmillan Cancer Support Documents. Miss Franks was also one of the Pan London Breast Hub Co-ordinators for the regional response to COVID-19, ensuring safe treatment pathways to maintain time critical breast cancer surgery with the reintroduction of complex and reconstructive surgery at the earliest opportunity.

Her particular interests are:

- Benign Breast Disease
- Breast Lump
- Nipple changes
- Detection of early breast cancers
- Malignant Breast Disease
- Oncoplastic breast conservation
- Neo-adjuvant strategies
- Mastectomy with immediate reconstruction and symmetrisation
- Discussing family history
- Risk reduction
- Breast screening

Specialties

- Breast Lump Excision
- Nipple Surgery
- Breast Pain Management
- Lactational complications
- Mastectomy
- Neoadjuvant treatment
- Oncoplastic Surgery
- Breast Reconstruction
- Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy
- Axillary Clearance

Please feel free to contact Joanna to discuss her practice in more detail.

She would welcome the opportunity to work with other consultants in the Designated Medical community and to support your patients when appropriate.

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Private Practice: Platinum Medical Centre,
The Wellington Hospital in St John's Wood &
King Edward VII hospital

Medical PA, Marketing, Finance & HR

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THE POWER OF PEOPLE. THE QUALITIES YOU NEED TO TAKE THE LEAD.

We are delighted to share the third extract from our new series on 'Harnessing your People Power', published in the **Independent Practitioner Today**.

When it comes to the subject of people management, every organisation aims to create high-performing teams and one of the key contributing factors to success is leadership and management. We know that good leadership and management is vital to gain the greatest contribution from our people, but how do we define a good leader and how does a great leader differ from a great manager?

We all have vivid personal experiences of leaders and managers and can recount stories of great bosses and those who were not so great, but articulating exactly what characteristics make a great leader or manager is hard.

Who is the best manager you have ever worked for? Try articulating concisely what made them great?

I bet most people find it much easier to describe the characteristics of their worst manager rather than their best and can offer countless examples of their failures and how truly awful they were to work for. It is much harder to state clearly what makes a great manager so great. They just are!

But to be a good manager or leader and to improve, we need to understand what skills are most important, what we want from our leaders and what our teams need from us.

The difference between leadership and management

Leadership and management are different in nature. A leader sets a vision and the direction for the team and motivates each individual team member to join together with others as one team to achieve the set vision. People follow leaders.

A manager manages the process of the work, working with the individuals in the team to ensure they are able to make their contribution in an efficient and effective manner. A manager drives for order and accountability, creating improving systems and processes.

Individuals within the team will be motivated to follow a good leader and to work with a good manager.

Characteristics of a great leader

A great leader inspires people and motivates them to act, setting the direction and the vision of where they are heading, even if they are not certain how they will get there.

Good leaders are often charismatic, engaging and outgoing, but there is, of course, an exception to every rule. They tend to cope well with chaos or a crisis situation and are able to determine a way forward and articulate that to others. Leaders are good at handling change and developing confidence in others to initiate the changes. They create ideas and engender enthusiasm to explore new opportunities and, in doing so, may be perceived as rule-breakers. You could argue that great leaders are of a more creative nature.

In a crisis situation such as the all too familiar Covid pandemic, a leader will motivate the team to commit to working hard even when exhausted and build confidence that the goal will be reached despite the way forward lacking clarity.

Characteristics of a great manager

A manager manages the work of whatever nature and, by definition, requires a deep understanding of the operations of the business or team. A good manager will be analytical, assessing how things are done and looking at ways to change and improve either to create greater efficiency or to achieve certain goals. In almost any work situation, a good manager will also need to be a good people person, able to relate to individuals on a one-to-one basis and as a team.

Managers are good at creating and improving systems and process. They aim to create order and to simplify. They are problem solvers who desire stability and control.

The skills of leaders and managers are different, but to manage a business, clinic or team, the person in charge needs to have both leadership and management skills to some degree.

Examples of great leaders

During the Covid crisis, we have experienced first-hand some very high-profile leaders and managers in action. I will avoid naming any individuals to avoid tipping into a political debate, but I am sure it has become obvious to us that some individuals are better at leadership than management and vice versa.



Much has been written about great leaders over the years and, in time, I am sure we will read about the great leaders during the Covid pandemic.

Any historical list of the greatest leaders is likely to include **Nelson Mandela**, **Martin Luther King**, **Winston Churchill** and **Mahatma Gandhi** and I am sure we can all name a few others.

Each of the individuals I have included had a cause they were so passionate about, that their name became synonymous with that cause. Take, for example, Martin Luther King's cause which is well known as his 'dream'.

If we review the leadership characteristics of these individuals to look for consistencies that help us understand what makes them great leaders, in each case we see a relentless determination, incredible will power, courage and unfailing motivation even when tested to breaking point.

As leaders, they each won the hearts and minds of their people, with Gandhi being remembered as **'the father of his country'**.

In summary, we can deduce that key traits of a great leader are a clear cause, the ability to communicate that cause well, to create an enthusiastic following and an unfailing determination to achieve it.

Great business leaders

It may feel more relevant to us to consider leaders within the business community, and any current list of the 'greatest business leaders' is likely to include the following people.

- Tim Cook, chief executive of Apple;
- Sheryl Sandberg, chief operating officer of Facebook;
- Mary Barra, chairman and chief executive of GM Company;
- Elon Musk, founder of PayPal and Tesla;
- Warren Buffett, chief executive of Berkshire Hathaway;
- Bob Iger, executive chairman of Disney;
- Reed Hastings, chief executive of Netflix.

There are some big names here, some of whom have become almost celebrity figures, but that does not detract from their capabilities as great leaders. Again, we can review their leadership styles to understand what makes them the great leaders they are recognised to be and look for consistencies that allow us to learn from them. Interestingly the themes here differ from our earlier examples of great leaders where their commitment to their cause seemed to be the greatest factor.

Whilst I am certain that each of these business leaders has a cause or a vision as we tend to refer to it in a business setting, but most of what is written about their leadership style is their approach to creating and managing their teams.

They surround themselves with exceptional people and they empower these people to be innovative and take ownership. They work hard to understand the strengths of the individuals within their teams and allow them to apply those strengths. They support and encourage, acting as an enabler and they praise their team members for their great work, making a point of not taking credit themselves.

What also seems to distinguish them most is their decision-making process. They claim to make very few decisions themselves but encourage their teams to make the decisions, trusting their ability to do so which has the added impact of ensuring their teams take ownership. They are clearly defining themselves as leaders and enabling their teams to do the managing.

Summary of the characteristics of great leaders

Vision – A great leader has a vision (cause or dream), that they can communicate clearly to people and inspire them to have confidence in their vision, even if they cannot articulate exactly how it will be achieved.

Perseverance – A determination to succeed and continued confidence in the vision. A great leader has absolute faith in achieving their vision which builds faith in their team.

Create the best team – Recruit the best individuals and allow them to participate fully by empowering them to make decisions and take ownership.

Decision making – Delegate decision making as much as possible to team members. Trust the team to make the right decision.

Role model – Set a good example that your team can respect and trust.

Know your team – Develop a clear understanding of the individuals on your team. Fully understand their strengths and weaknesses. Create opportunities for an individual's strengths to be used to gain maximum impact.

Make hard choices – Being the leader means making the hard choices. Be prepared to make the tough decision and communicate clearly to the team your reasons for doing so.

Support the team – Provide your team with the support and resources they need to succeed.

Leadership and management are different and require different skillsets. We may feel that some people were born great leaders but in reality, their skills have been developed by life experience and formal training. It is possible for anyone to improve their leadership and management skills and the best starting point is improving self-awareness.

In next month's article we will be exploring some of the best tools and methods available to leaders and managers to improve their own personal development.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



Choosing the best Practice Management System or software (PMS) is an important decision for all doctors, dentists, clinics and hospitals working in private practice. In this article, we offer our thoughts on how to choose the best PMS for you.

It is well worth investing considerable time and effort into choosing the right PMS system for your requirements. Once you are using a PMS, the thought of moving all of your data to a new system will feel incredibly daunting and you will want to avoid doing so. You will need to explore each PMS and measure its suitability against what is important to you, so it is a personal decision, but you can also get some valuable insight from others who have made similar decisions.

Ideally, you would talk to other doctors, clinic and practice managers, who have recently made a choice of PMS, so they are well informed regarding what is currently available on the market. Be careful when talking to doctors who made their choice a few years ago as they may be missing out on some of the newer developments such as online booking.

Talk to other users such as Medical PAs. They are using the systems day in day out and will have very strong opinions on the various systems available.

Each PMS supplier will have glowing testimonials and case studies on their website which are useful, but you should also ask to speak to current users directly for each PMS.

You can search for reviews of each PMS via Google. Software review websites are becoming more and more popular by the day so it's definitely worth checking.

Also ask your potential supplier about User groups and forums. If these are well established, then there is a strong suggestion that this is a company that listens to their customers and takes on board their suggestions, so a very good sign.

Ask for a free trial before you sign up. A free trial will be limited as you will not want to spend a lot of time entering data, but it would be worth entering a few clinics lists, patient letters and using the software in different locations to check speed, functionality, and integration opportunities.

Be prepared for every eventuality.

If you choose a PMS and decide after six months that it's not right for you, what would your options be? Do you have to sign for a full year or is it a rolling monthly contract? Would your provider make your data available in a format that is easy to upload to a new PMS system? How long would they take to do this and how much would they charge for doing so?

At the very least this will give you piece of mind.

Other key considerations are:

What is the benefit of a cloud-based PMS to a server based one?

There are pros and cons of each approach but in our experience in the private medical sector we would suggest that most doctors and clinics use a cloud-based PMS solution. The exception would be a large healthcare company or series of hospitals with their own in-house IT department who would be able to cope with the demands of running a server-based solution.

Will you need scalability in your PMS for practice growth?

Scalability comes in two different respects. Firstly, ensure the PMS software allows enough storage to maintain patient notes and correspondence for a growing number of patients. This is especially important in a specialty where lots of images need to be stored.

The other manner in which a clinic may scale is in terms of the number of consultants working within that clinic. Some software is better suited to this type of environment than others so this is definitely an important factor to consider if you are choosing software for your growing clinic.

What Are Must-Have Functionalities in Practice Management Software?

The most important functions to explore thoroughly are those that you will use regularly. On a daily basis you will be checking your clinic lists and patient correspondence. Good PM software makes this quick and easy with minimal "clicks". During your clinics you will want to move quickly from one letter or set of results to the next and also from one patient to another.

When you are choosing software, you should definitely ask for statistics on speed and reliability including the percentage of "uptime".

Another important aspect for all medical practitioners is the ability to dictate letters and results and ensure these are securely made available to your medical secretary or typist ready for transcription.

Once the letters are typed you want to use a process, managed by your PMS to allow you to check new letters, approve them and flag back to your medical PA that they are ready to be sent to the patient or clinician.

The PMS should also allow for the letters to be sent easily by secure email. To check that the PMS you are considering is fit for purpose in this regard, you may want to involve your medical PA or typist in the decision-making process.

- Your PMS should allow your medical PA to take immediate payment of invoices via integration with a credit card company.
- Electronic billing is now commonplace, and a good PMS will be integrated with the Healthcode system to allow immediate, electronic communication of invoices.
- A good PMS will also offer users the option to use an App.
- Most private practitioners will regularly perform lab tests and most good PMS systems allow for tests to be requested via the PMS and for the results to be automatically received into the PMS and stored in the patient notes.
- Online booking is already well established and popular across many industry sectors and we have every reason to believe that it will also be welcomed by patients booking private medical appointments.
- Investigate the support offered prior to signing on the dotted line. If you are already established in private practice, then you may well have data to transfer from an existing system onto your chosen PMS system.
- Equally important is training for you and your team members. A good PMS will be designed in a manner that means it is fairly intuitive to use, but there will be functionality that you will not benefit from if you are not given adequate training at the start.
- The issue of data protection and security is a great concern. Any personal data being sent from one party to another is a potential risk.
- And finally, with regard to your choice of supplier, it is important to be certain that the company has a stable and a strong financial situation. You are making a long-term decision and need to feel reassured that your supplier has a long-term future.

If you would like to discuss moving to a new PMS with our experienced Designated Medical team, please contact Hannah Smith to arrange a call.

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