

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

You are listening to the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast, with David Phelps and Evan Harris. Navigating you through the uncharted waters of a turbulent economy with straight-forward advice to, transform your practice into a self-sufficient cash machine, compound your net worth assets, and multiply, multiply, multiply your passive cash flow streams.

David Phelps:

Welcome back everyone, this is Dr. David Phelps of the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast and the owner and founder of the Freedom Founders mastermind community. We've got a great call for you today. A good friend of mine, and I'm not going to tell you where he's from, I'm going to let you guess and figure that out but maybe we'll tell you after the first few minutes.

This good friend of mine is the creator of The Ultimate Patient Experience. The Ultimate Patient Experience, also known as UPE, is a simple set of very specific, common sense, patient-service steps being used by dentists all over the world to create unique experiences for their patients. These experiences dramatically enhance patient visit values and the repeat visits. The Ultimate Patient Experience is my friend's secret weapon that's allowed him to personally bill almost two million dollars in services back in 2011 during his last year in practice.

Now this was working full time but only four days a week, only 37 and a half weeks per year, while having time to vacation with his lovely wife and family all over the world. This is what every doctor and dentist should want today but we know how difficult it's becoming. There are some things that you've got to look at and some changes in the environment that my good friend is going to talk to us about today. So let me bring him on, Dr. David Moffet. David, how are you doing today?

David Moffet: I'm doing great, David. Thanks for having me on the

program.

David Phelps: Since you are like 15 or 16 hours ahead of the US, what's

the day going to be like tomorrow? Can you give us a heads up? Is there anything that's going to happen?

Anything good in the world? Anything that's going to spice

up our lives?

David Moffet: Well, I'll tell you. I understand it's going to be snowing in

Denver.

[Laughter]

David Phelps: I think you're right. You're right. I've got family in Denver

and they're getting a lot of snow today. The next couple days they're going to get a load. So I think you're correct

on that. Hey, something else—.

David Moffet: I think they might even get a hammering on Sunday in the

Super Bowl too.

David Phelps: Oh, okay. All right. There we have the first throw down.

Somebody who's for the Carolina Panthers. All right,

there you have it, folks. Putting it right out there. I like it, I

like it.

Something else that people don't know about you is that is that you're a big KISS fan, right? I mean KISS as in the band. I see you going on cruises with those guys. Did you play for them at one point? You're hanging out, you got

the shirt, you've got everything. What's the story?

David Moffet: Well, I'm a big fan. I don't think anybody can say they are

a real big fan of the music because the music is pretty—it's not really inspiring in itself, you know. It's not Lennon and McCartney. It's not Pink Floyd. But what I really am

inspired about with KISS is their business acumen and how have they kept this business going for 42 years?

And how do they get repeat business from their customers coming back basically the sets that they play when they're on their cruise, when they're in their concerts, half of the songs are from their first two and three albums, from the early 70s. Yet people keep coming back, buying products, and buying merchandise. KISS were the first band to really go into the merchandise field and make money and all the traditional bands said, "They're prostituting the music industry. That's not why we're here. We're here about our music."

But KISS has—what every business is here, is to make money and to make profits so we can spend that money enjoying ourselves and creating a lifestyle. That's what the two founding members of KISS have done. So when I'm on these cruises, David, I'm there just checking out what they're doing that keeps people coming back. When I was on that last cruise, which was the 5th, there was nearly 200 people who had been on all five cruises.

David Phelps: Wow.

David Moffet: 200 of them. And a total of 1200 were on their second,

third, or fourth, or fifth cruise. So there was about 1800 on their first cruise. That's 1800 new customers for cruising as well. How do they do that? You would think they could

do one or two cruises and then that would be it,

everybody would have enough. But no, they're lining up for a sixth cruise. Those guys know business and I think

we can learn a lot.

Most people who follow me know that I get a lot of information from outside the dental industry and I use it

and apply it back into the dental industry because there's a lot of information we can pick up from other businesses. KISS is a classic example of creating loyal fans.

David Phelps:

Well, I wasn't planning on going down that road, but you know what, since you brought it up, and I know you are a very innovative marketer as you said. You bring a lot of things from outside the industry which I think is so smart. Is there a profile of the KISS fan base? Is it multigenerational? On that cruise, what was the demographics of the people that were there?

David Moffet:

It's hard to work it out, David, because everybody is wearing KISS t-shirts. And some of them have got their face painted. So you know a lot of them have got tattoos as well. What I found interesting on that cruise was that the majority of people, the largest section of people, their country was the US, then mainly east coast and central US. Then it was Canada. There was about 180 from Canada. Then there was about 140 from Brazil and 140 from Australia. So Australia was the fourth largest, and people have to fly into Miami to go on the cruise. So that's one demographic.

But you don't know whether the guy standing next to you in the bar, in the concert, is a lawyer, a computer programmer, a fireman, a ditch digger. You've got no idea. You've got no idea what these people do for a living. I met a guy at a KISS concert down here in Australia. He's seen KISS over 70 times in concert. We'll I've seen them nine times in concert, I'm a late starter. He's seen them 70 times and flown to Europe to see them. So what keeps people coming back when really you can just put on a CD and hear the same songs?

David Phelps:

Okay, so that's perfect. Let's talk about why that is because I'm going to take this into our niche and that's dentistry, professional practice. So how is KISS, a band from back in the 70s, keeping themselves relevant? And I'm assuming that there is some multigenerational there. You're not sure because people's faces are painted, but how do they keep themselves relevant and keep an experience there so their fan base wants to hang around with these old timers?

Because we've got doctors who are our age and I'm probably a little older than you are, but you know, I'm a baby boomer, right in the middle, right in the pack. If I'm still in practice today, how do I, in my practice, if I'm doing more implants and higher-end restorative, how do I keep myself relevant to Gen X or Gen Y millennials? How am I going to do that today?

David Moffet:

Well I think for dentists you're absolutely got to do, you've got to keep your facility looking modern and up-to-date. So if you turn up at your office and you've got wood paneling all over the place, the wood paneling went out with Mike Brady's car in the *Brady Bunch*. It's gone.

So you've got to make sure that your practice looks modern and that you've got some of the modern equipment, digital X-rays, beam, OPG machine. Whether you choose or not to do CEREC and CAD/CAM, there are certainly things that other younger dentists are doing that you need to keep up with as well. If you don't feel like doing implants, then get somebody into your office who's going to do the implants for you because that certainly is a growth factor.

So you've got to be seen to be moving with the time as opposed to being caught in a time warp as an older ... dentist. Again, tying it back to KISS, if you read some of the album covers from the 80s, when they discarded the makeup and the album covers say that's beyond them. Well guess what? In 1996, 1997, 1998, they went back to wearing the makeup. They threw out all the other animals, the foxes, the things like that and just went back to the starting four because that's what people wanted. So going back I guess to those feelings that you were able to give your patients when they first came in and lock in on those.

The other thing that surprised me with KISS, David, is that I like to buy the premium package, the meet and greet where you go to meet them before the concert. The first time I did that in Salt Lake City, you turned up an hour or two before, get your photo taken with them and get a couple of things signed. Well the next time I did that, that process in Melbourne, Australia four years later, the meet and greet was extended by four hours earlier. You had to be there earlier.

They played a concert. They played a little concert for 40 or 50 people in this meet and greet package. You have about 40 minutes on just an acoustic concert then they came around and spent a lot of time talking to you and signing the stuff. Then they fed you as well. Then you went to the concert. To me, that was an above and beyond experience.

So again, not resting on your laurels. How can we make our patients' visit better than the time they were there before? How can we keep people as loyal fans of our office as opposed to the loyal fans of our MODs and our PFMs. We want them to be loyal fans of us and our

processes and our systems and our facility and not so much of the dentistry we do.

I guess that comes down to something that you and I were talking about beforehand. That is making sure that people are getting an experience and you're differentiating yourself from other dentists so that you're not just a commodity. Because when you're just delivering the same as every other dentist out there, "Take a seat. Won't be too long. In you come. Open wide. Close. Go out. Pay. Make your next appointment."

If you're just doing that, you're a commodity and they're only going to be able to choose you on one factor and that is price. That's a race to the bottom. So we've got to really be providing people with experiences all along the way that the dentistry is kind of an ancillary part of their visit, the actual physical doing of the dentistry. They're there to check with everybody, share experiences, and really visit with your staff. Visit with you. Visit with your team and be in a relationship.

David Phelps:

David, you do a lot of coaching and consulting with dental offices and several private practitioners all over the globe. With what I know about what's happening in our country, and I guess we're kind of following suit with a lot of European countries, but we're going to a more socialistic medical dental delivery system. A lot of the dentists are very frustrated today in practice because they feel like the insurance companies are kind of taking over and they're part of the commoditization.

In your dealing with practices today, how do you advise them if they have a fair amount of managed care based patients? How do they differentiate themselves when

they're trying to just keep their heads above water with lower reimbursements?

David Moffet:

That's really tough, David. I guess it's a situation that they've gotten themselves into for one reason or another. Whether we're talking about dentistry, whether we're talking about going out to dinner, whether we're talking about a mechanic, people mowing our lawns, people cleaning our pools, the statistics will tell you that somewhere between 20 and 25 percent of the population don't care what the competition charges, they're happy to pay for the service that they're getting because they're considering that to be extremely good value.

When you think that that's 20 to 25 percent of the population, that's a big chunk of the population that any business can decide to carve out a little niche in, to carve out a little piece of. We don't have to be everything to everybody. Sadly, there is a big chunk of the population, 70 to 75 percent who do choose things on price and the trouble is when we get into that side of the equation then we really are competing on price and we're checking with our neighbors as to what they're charging. We're seeing if we can cut our margins. We're seeing if we can trim the fat so that we can get by to gain another customer.

You probably know women who go and get their hair done at a salon and they don't care how much it costs. When we go out to dinner at a restaurant, we don't sit there before we order, get out the calculator and add up the cost of the starter and the entrée to see whether it fits into our budget. When the bill comes we go, "Yeah, that's all right." Whatever. Sometimes we just look at the total and that's it.

People will do that with dentistry if they get an experience. However if we fall short in giving them an experience, for any reason, and there are a multitude of reasons, David, maybe 50 or 60 different touch points that we can have with our patients in their visit to us. If we fall down on one or two of those points, then we create an Achilles heel for our business and they start saying, "Is this worth it?"

So we really have to be on top of our game in terms of what we're delivering to our patients in terms of a feeling, an experience so that they really do leave our office and say, "You know, those people are just so nice. I can't wait to get back there next week and get the rest of my treatment done and visit with those people again." It's really got to make that difference, but there's a big chunk of the market there.

Back to your question about what the dentists do if they're caught in with this insurance and PPO squeeze. It's tough. I've been able to segment out a section of their client base who are fee-for-service patients. Can they create a fee-for-service afternoon and then two fee-for-service afternoons? Then three fee-for-service afternoons in their office so that they can actually give those people an experience different.

Because it is really hard to give a fee-for-service patient an experience if they're sitting in your client lounge, in your waiting room, with three families of ten people who are there on insurance when the kid's screaming all over the waiting room and climbing the walls. That's really not an experience, a pleasure, for the fee-for-service customer waiting. So can we separate that out?

Because remember, we've got a facility that's there 24/7 so maybe we can do a fee-for-service patient evening where they're coming in and we're playing nice music and we've got nice mood experiences happening and it's a relaxed-paced dental office when they come in. It's possible to create that. We've just got to work out how we're going to do it. But there is a chunk of the population out there, David, that are happy to pay for that service if they feel they're getting it as an experience.

David Phelps:

Seems like a lot of offices, David, just default to the lowest common denominator which is what insurance tends to take them to. I think that a lot of offices are guilty of training their patients, their existing patients, their prospective patients, into looking at dentistry as a commodity, as price-based, as what your insurance will pay. That's a place where a lot of offices could do a lot better but again, it takes some work, right?

I mean, you have to show up and have a vision and a culture, a team, that is all on the same page, right? Because if one person, one person on the team defaults to that, "Oh Mrs. Jones, it's okay. We'll just do the one crown because that's what your insurance will pay this year." Then we've blown the whole opportunity, right?

David Moffet:

Well yeah, and again, we're allowing a third party to get itself in between us the provider of the service and the patient who is the purchaser of the service, David. I know this does happen in medical fields but if you put the scenario that we put our patients through in dentistry into medicine, could you imagine having a heart attack and then the ambulance arrives and they say, "Well, look, you're having a heart attack. So you've got four options.

"The first option, we're going to do nothing. We'll just see if the pain passes. Maybe just take it easy and don't do anything. Don't stress out and maybe that will survive until next year when you can actually have some service because you're out of benefit at the moment. That's the first option.

"The second option, we can give you a little bit of medication. With that medication, you might be able to actually go for a walk. And again, we'll wait until your benefits kick in." Yeah, we don't do that sort of... If they're having a heart attack we say, "You need surgery. We're going to do four bypasses. Otherwise you're going to die." We've got to present that sort of treatment to our patients. "This is what you need otherwise you're going to lose the tooth." You know, provided they want to keep their teeth.

I always start it off with a question, "You don't want to lose this tooth, do you? You don't want to lose any more teeth, do you?" Once they answer that then everything I did was backed up by that foundation that they had said to me was that they wanted to keep their teeth. Then when the insurance company comes in and says, "Well you can only have three fillings this year and you've got to wait next year to get the other four fillings done." Well that's not helping them keep their teeth.

David Phelps: Right, yeah.

David Moffet: So we've got to take that out. I was very lucky, David, in

my first months of dentistry to play golf at a dental golf day with a medical practitioner down here in Australia because medicine was socialized back in the 80s when I graduated. He was running a practice on fee-for-service.

I'd grown up with socialist parents, sadly, and I didn't know there was any other way.

He just explained to me that there is another way and he says, "This is just how I choose. They pay me and then they go and claim what they can get back. What they pay me is what I feel it's worth doing it." I didn't act on that at the time but I just put it in the vault and it's in the back of my mind and it's locked in a filing cabinet there and I pull that quote out all the time to remind myself and to remind my clients that it can be done.

David Phelps:

Wow. That's good. That's good. David, if there were two or three top patient experience opportunities that you find that most practices could implement pretty quickly, what would those be?

David Moffet:

Well, David, first and foremost, the easiest patient experience is to spend time with the patient and so make sure that you've got enough staff there that you don't have patients walking through your office unaccompanied and that the handovers of the patient, you know, from the doctor to the dental assistant, from the doctor to the hygienist, from the hygienist to her assistant. From the assistant to the front office, that these are done manually with repetition of everything that was done and everything that needs to be done.

Because the more the patient hears it, the more they understand it, the more they accept it, the more they will want to come back. But remember, David, small children spell love, they spell it T-I-M-E and we've got to spell care for our patients exactly the same way, by spending T-I-M-E with them. But the trouble is you know in a lot of dental offices the dental assistant, as soon as the patient has

finished treatment, the dental assistant is trying to clean the room up and the doctor is putting notes in his computer.

They just forget that there's actually a person attached to the end of that dentistry that they've just done. Really, we've got to switch it over to person mode and just spend a little bit of time with that person. Listen to their stories. Put our arms around them. Give them a hug. Thank them very much for being a great patient and let them know that we're looking forward to seeing them next time. Just those small things.

You know, when I go into an office, I see people walk in, patients walk into a dental office and the front desk person can only focus on the computer screen in front of her and the phone in her ear. She can't even wave to the patient, just acknowledge them and to point them to the lounge and just say, "We'll be with you in a minute, ma'am, we'll be with you in a moment." They can't even do that. I think that person is just about to hand over a few hundred dollars and all of a sudden we're setting it up poorly. So spend time with the patients is the first one.

The second thing is you look for little things that you can do that will make the patient feel different. One of the easiest things that I did was just buy these individually wrapped moist towels, clean them up at the end of the appointment and it's just like being in a Chinese restaurant or flying first class on a plane. At the end of the appointment, they get this nice hot towel to rub their hands with, wipe their face down. What happens at most places after you used that dirty bib that's on them or a small tissue? They often walk out on the street and they've got impression material and stuff on their face.

So again, just taking care. People love that form of attention. The other thing, which is a real winner is we've got a map every day of who's coming in and when. It's called an appointment schedule. So why shouldn't we be there greeting our patients before they identify who they are? Having someone say, "Hi, you must be Mrs. Smith. I spoke to you on the phone. Welcome to ABC Dental. My name's Jenny. How's your day been?" As opposed to Mrs. Smith walks in she goes, "Hi, I'm Mrs. Smith. I've got an appointment here I think."

And, yeah, "Here's your clipboard." You know? So make it different for all of your patients by greeting them before they greet you. Everybody loves to hear their own name and if we can recognize our patients before they have to identify themselves, that's a huge winner in just building rapport in the business.

David Phelps:

A lot of that can be done, the experience can be done by the staff if the doctor builds the culture and the vision, right? Because the doctor can still be whoever he or she is and focus on providing great treatment. But how do you get, David, the staff today, and again, I'm thinking in terms of my generation, have been in practice thirty-some years, graduated 30 years ago. A lot of staff today are made up of younger generations and there's kind of a chasm there in communicating and building vision.

What have you seen or how have you helped offices build that leadership with a doctor and build the vision and the culture so that all the staff members are doing that? Because it's easy to talk about it, top-down, but what keeps it in motion? What keeps it persisting throughout, day in, day out?

David Moffet:

You've got to find people with the right attitude, David, rather than people with skills. It's very hard to train somebody with the skills and give them an attitude that they're meant to have in terms of service and courtesy to patients. However, it's also one thing to have attitude but being able to know when to use it and know how to use it as well is important in the process of dealing with your staff. I guess it's a suck it and see.

Everybody likes encouragement. Nobody likes to be, on your team, nobody likes to be, I guess discouraged from doing things. Really you're looking for people-people. We all know how nice it is when we're out and about, you know, retail. Even just when we go to the gas station sometimes and there's some really nice people serving us at those sort of businesses. You wonder what makes that person tick? It's a matter of just looking for those people.

Sometimes we can have people who are great at filing insurance but they're absolutely lousy when it comes to dealing with people and saying please and thank you and inquiring as to how their day has been and being genuinely interested in them. It's a matter of getting the right people together. But what you find is that when you do get the right people together, it's a very synergistic process and it builds upon itself far greater than the sum of the total, David. So it's a matter of putting together the right team and making sure the team mix and blend together. It's always a work in progress though.

David Phelps:

It is, you're right. But I think your point is very well taken. I know I did the same thing in my practices, is if there was a position that was not being filled or we lost somebody, the first thing you do is you go out and hire someone that quote/unquote has "skills or experience" in that position.

You've got to find somebody who you think has that, you plug them in, and what do you have? You have someone who just plugged in that's not going to adopt any kind of culture because you haven't built it in the first place.

David, let me ask you about, you talk about cases of wagging the dog. Can you talk about that a little bit? What do you mean by wagging the dog?

David Moffet: Well, I guess the tail wagging the dog, David, I don't know

if you use that phrase over there.

David Phelps: Yeah.

David Moffet: It's a situation where a wrong thing is happening, you

know. It's the prisoners running the asylum. The inmates running the asylum. And in dentistry sometimes, that actually happens where we lose touch with what we're actually trying to achieve and we end up with the thing

working its way backwards in the wrong direction.

I guess one of the classics down here is the employment issues, where your American listeners would be horrified to think that down here from day one in Australia, you have to give people warning letters, even when they're on trial if you're not going to be continuing with their employment. And you've got to have justifiable reasons for terminating them. Even if they're stealing, you have to give them warning lessons to see whether they can amend their behavior.

That's one thing. The other thing down here is that once they've been taken on as a permanent employee, they're allowed to have four weeks annual leave per year and get this, ten days of sick leave, paid sick leave, per year. It's a crazy sort of situation where sometimes it's very very

difficult to, in a small business environment to actually get some momentum happening because of all the leave that people can have when they're working for you.

You would know, David, when you're a boss that the most valuable employees are the ones who look forward to coming to work, are inspired, and they never get ill. They take their leave when you're off because they understand their responsibility to the business. They almost have owner's eyes. That's something that we're looking for in clients—sorry, in employees. So in this sort of situation, David, in a cottage industry like dentistry where we're trying to keep providing that service, we've really got to be looking for the right people as opposed to people trying to flip us on our ear.

The classic case of the tail wagging the dog is that the employees actually run the business and yet they've got no skin in the game, you know, they don't own the business. They haven't put any money up for the business. The owner is bending over backwards to try and keep the employees satisfied with some of the most menial requests and yet at the end of the day, the employee can leave and the owner's left holding the can for some of the decisions. So I think we've got to give back to the dog wagging the tail.

David Phelps:

Yeah, good point. We do use that phrase over here but you put it in a good perspective. So I know you spend a good deal of your time over here in the states. I get to see you fortunately at least a couple times a year. It's always fun to get to see you. I know you're going to be in New York City doing a meeting there on April the 22nd and 23rd. Can you just tell us briefly about what's going to happen there? Who this is for?

David Moffet:

I'm putting on a meeting that's a Friday and Saturday, I'm just finalizing my venue now, David, it will be midtown in Manhattan. It's an excellent two-day presentation of what it is I guess that The Ultimate Patient Experience is about. So how to build an Ultimate Patient Experience in your practice as well as a couple of the key points that the fundamentals of helping you improve your dental practice straightaway.

So at the end of the first day, you'll leave knowing how to reduce your cancelations and reschedules and also you'll leave knowing how to increase the conversions of new patients calling the dental practice to make appointments and eliminate that question that seems to worry so many dental offices about, "Do you take my insurance?" and how to increase the number of people who will actually end up making an appointment when they call and the insurance question will almost be taken out. So that's the first thing.

The second day we dive deeper into some of the intricacies of The Ultimate Patient Experience. Some of the things to do within the dental office in terms of what to do for the patient. When we greet the patient. When we're looking after the patients out at the front. How we can actually make that a world-class experience. How we handle our checkouts and make those world class. And we'll be touching on several of the 57 magical moments that I developed in my business over the 27 years that I was in practice for myself, David.

So it's going to be a really good workshop. We're limiting it to somewhere between 20 and 40 people just depending. So it's not going to be a big room where people get lost. There will be room for discussion

between attendees as well. We've got some people coming from, we have some people coming from Dublin, Ireland.

David Phelps: Outstanding.

David Moffet: As well as even a couple of Texans as well. So that's two

countries, Texas and Ireland.

David Phelps: [Laughs] That's right. Yeah, two countries represented.

Definitely want to bring some key staff members. This is not something for the doctors to show up alone. You've got to have some staff there that can take this back and

help you implement, correct?

David Moffet: Absolutely, absolutely. Because you know that sometimes

the staff can hear something and a dentist misses that and vice versa. So it's really nice to be able to brainstorm at the end of each day and brainstorm when you get back to your office as to what to do. So 22^{nd} and 23^{rd} in New

York City, in Manhattan.

If they want more information, David, they can find it on

the events page on my website, which is

www.theultimatepatientexperience.com. Just go to the events page and they can find the New York information there or they can email me direct and I can give them information, David@TheUPE.com, David at T-H-E-U-P-E

dot com.

David Phelps: Outstanding. Well listen, it's always fun to talk to you. I

thank you for your time today, the great nuggets you

shared. From my good friend, the doctor, the dentist, from the land down under, this is David Moffet, with your host

Dr. David Phelps. Thanks for being with us today.

David Moffet: Thank you again, David. It's been lovely chatting with you.

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