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## Putting the principles into practice

Project management process put to the test in real-world situation

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In the previous article in this series, we outlined how to create a MegaPlan, the fifth and final step of the Magic Megaphone project management process.

Now let's see how others have used this process to get their projects unstuck in less than 60 minutes.

John has had a dental practice for 15 years. His patient base has been solid but not growing. His staff turnover has been below the industry average, but he suspected their productivity was not what it should be.

He had two teenagers nearing college age. John, a single father, wanted to spend more time with his kids while they were still at home.

He didn't have the energy for a long-term business plan, and he saw no value in a wordy mission statement. What's more, John had just spent \$25,000 on a consultant he thought would solve his problems. "I felt stuck," he said.

He turned to the Magic Megaphone to get himself unstuck.

### The mission

He asked himself a simple question: "What is it that I am really trying to accomplish?" John applied a key principle of the Magic Megaphone: Simple is better. His project focus became "grow the dental practice." With that in mind, his MegaMission was equally clear: Grow his dental practice by 50 percent in three years, abbreviated simply as "50 in 3."

### The benefits

Step One was done in about five minutes. Step Two, outlining the MegaBenefits of accomplishing his MegaMission, came easy and took John about 10 minutes:

- Financial security
- No-worry college funding
- Greater disposable income
- More efficiency
- Grow opportunities for employees
- More opportunities to give back to the community

The list could have been longer, but John remembered another principle of the Magic Megaphone process: 85 percent is OK. After all, if John realized all six of the listed benefits, any additional benefits would likely fall into place all by themselves.

### The targets

Step Three is to identify MegaTargets ... and eventually the main MegaTarget. John took only a few minutes to outline the choices he felt were obvious:

- My family
- My staff
- Current patients
- New patients
- My vendors
- Community organizations I volunteer with
- Dental associations I belong to

For his primary MegaTarget he chose his staff. It quickly hit him that he needed to engage his staff in this entire process. "I can't make it happen without them," he said.

Let's check our watches. From the point John identified what he really wanted to accomplish, the time elapsed through Step Three of the Magic Megaphone had not yet reached 30 minutes.

### The magic

Step Four is the real magic of the process, and that's why we call it the MegaMagic. John pretended time had jumped three years ahead. He imagined being hidden among the MegaTarget, his staff, so he could listen to them discuss the success of his "50 in 3" project. In the best of all worlds, what did John really want to hear them say? The third principle of the Magic Megaphone spells it out: Think Wow!

- "Wow! This is a great plan ... and I'm part of it."
- "Wow! Dr. John is on it. You can feel the renewed energy and excitement among all of us. This is the best dental practice you can work at."
- "Wow! I am so happy to be working here. Dr. John is awesome. He really listens to my ideas on how to run things more efficiently."
- "Wow! Where are all these customers coming from?"

### **The plan**

The final step, as you may recall from past columns, is a MegaPlan to make all the MegaMagic happen. And it might be the step that takes the most careful thought. John knew he couldn't accomplish everything with limited resources, so he again remembered the 85 percent rule and chose a few select actions:

- Hire a qualified financial planner
- Develop a five-year business plan
- Define and execute a staff training plan
- Develop an incentive program for staff members
- Improve patient scheduling
- Improve patient/insurance payment processes
- Hire an associate
- Have the hygiene staff develop a plan for hygiene business growth
- Get serious about fitness and nutrition with a personal energy plan

Time check -- John did all this in less than 60 minutes. And notice that some of the MegaPlan action items are delegated to staff as part of an overall goal to empower them and integrate them into John's Megaphone.

### **The results**

So how has John's dental practice advanced two years into his Megaphone? John credits his Megaphone as the catalyst for changing his life and his practice.

This month, he will close escrow on an office building that is part of his five-year business plan. His practice has met its productivity goals, and the number of new patients is on target. On the personal level, John is now on an exercise regime, and his eldest son is a freshman at Loyola Marymount University.

Of course, you can engage an expensive consultant to do this for you, or you can spend many a tiring evening at night classes to learn elaborate systems. Or you can do what John did: Get a major project unstuck in 60 minutes using the Magic Megaphone. It's your money.

Next month we'll introduce another case study of a stuck project that was heading nowhere until the owner used the Magic Megaphone.

*Nick Montoya and Roger S. Peterson are co-authors of "The Magic Megaphone: How to get your projects unstuck and back on track in under 60 minutes." Visit [magicmegaphone.com](http://magicmegaphone.com) for more information.*