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Note: In its early years, ProSynergy's regular publication was known as FaxNet. As the function of near-instantaneous communication began to be taken over by e-mail, the name was changed to Communiqué, sometimes appearing as CommUNIQUE, to take advantage of a bit of word play. We who write, edit and otherwise contribute refer to it as CommK. I mention this because you may see references to all four within the various issues. Be assured that, regardless of name, it's all part of the same series aimed at helping raise the standards in the dental community.

To link to any article, click on its number or description.

001	First Puzzler	The very first issue gets off the ground by posing a problem of how you might react to a late cancellation, and the implications of nine different responses.
002	Second Puzzler	Presents two problem-solving loops to help you figure out just about any problem without scripts
003	Flash!	Alerting subscribers to the recent publication of an article in Reader's Digest which is unkind to dentists everywhere
004	Reader's Digest Special Edition	Insightful feedback from subscribers, reacting to the article
005	Reader's Digest Commentary	Sandy's reaction to the article and a sample letter to patients
006	Another Gadget that Misses the Point	Automated appointment confirmation systems get under Sandy's skin something awful. Here's a little rant.
007	Recognizing an Opportunity	Using the newer technology of e-mail to respond to patient inquiries
008	Technology with a Mission	An article from a German weekly triggers the idea of how dentists might videotape patients' exams with commentary for the patient to review later.
009	Co-Discovery	Technology may interfere at times, with patient relationships. We need to know what they want first.
010	Meetings	Different meetings with different frequencies for different purposes and different groups of people. Ground rules for holding meetings and encouraging participation
011	Independence Day for one Delta Dentist	The agonizing decision and the letter written to patients regarding his withdrawal from the Delta Dental Plan
012	When Hiring Meets	Dr. Mark Smith sent this letter to his patients to enlist them in a search for employees
013	Barefoot Boy	If eight-year-olds can market themselves effectively, we can do it too, with pride and enthusiasm

014	Confirmation Calls	Confirmation calls are an irritating nuisance to those who have to make them as well as to many who receive them
015	The Grass is always Greener	A follow-up on the dentist from issue #11 who withdrew from Delta and also how dentists sometimes view their colleagues in the same town or neighborhood
016	Would you buy a Car from yourself?	The first discussion of Outcome, Means, Prices — one of the most important ProSynergy Concepts
017	No Pennies . . .	The first of many reports about dentistry in Australia
018	The Way It Is	Second report from Australia
019	What Goes Up . . .	The Reader's Digest surfaces nearly intact (read: plagiarized) to smear dentists in this lovely country.
020	Core Principles and Promises	An alternative to the standard and overused mission statement, this is written from the standpoint of what patients want.
021	Method to our Madness	True stories which can be shared to provide a glimpse of your mission and purpose
022	You Can't Do It Alone	Raises one of the most important questions in employee retention, "Knowing what you know now, would you hire him/her again?"
023	Oprah, Strive and Showing Up	Personal responsibility is related to a group which trains people to face the world of work, and meshes nicely with Oprah Winfrey's philosophy of edu-tainment, and also relates to the difference between patients and clients.
024	A Philosophy of Swimming	Even something as complex as behavioral skill can be learned sequentially with certain steps in mind, like learning to swim.
025	Becoming a Relationship Bottom-Liner	An introduction to the ideas of clarification and facilitation
026	Why are you telling me this?	Offering a "fix" before fully understanding the patient or the problem is very common among dentists. Bonus section: myths about high-achievers
027	That's Why We Hired You	Ever have an employee who had all the right attributes for the job but underperformed? Get that person back on track!
028	Spouses and SOs	There are five criteria for a doctor's wife, Significant Other or family member to work in the practice and make a positive impact
029	Power	Why do some people exercise their personal power in a group and others do not? Why can it sometimes be a positive influence and sometimes not?
030	Letter from Abroad	The UK's transition from National Health to private practice is a bumpy road for many practitioners.

031	Clutter	Clutter creeps up on us. Formerly clean and neat environments can become gradually messy and we who are closest to it hardly notice.
032	Return to England	More comparisons to the British way of practice
033	Big Difference	Dr Chuck Fisher helps us understand what happens when discounted fee programs deter patients from seeking the best care.
034	The In Your Face Rule	The person who is in your face will always get your full attention. Nice idea, but there are so many demands for our time.
035	Voice Mail Scripts	As much as Sandy abhors scripted anything, in voice mail, along with some dedicated lines, they can make the most of your message handling.
036	If we don't tell you . . .	In any business, you need to know very specifically the nature of your niche in that business, be it consulting or dentistry.
037	Influencing with Integrity	Read about the difference between manipulation and influence.
038	The Importance of Training	
039	Examining the Examination	Do you have a set of standards for how you will conduct a patient examination? Here are some to either get you started or help you refine.
040	Seven No's	Team functioning advice which is not the standard pablum.
041	Conflict Orientation Self-Assessment	Before you find yourself in the next challenging exchange, privately take this quiz and see how you can improve your communication.
042	Remedial Honesty	Scrupulously honest people get a virtual smorgasbord of opportunities to repair relationships and set them on a better course. Eating crow can be quite tasty if you must.
043	No Free Dentistry	Almost no one includes the value of the dentistry provided for employees when calculating the value of the compensation package. Learn how to account for it properly.
044	The Schedule	Even in the best practices, the schedule can be a major source of friction. Learn these ten principles to make your life easier.
045	Guidelines for Asking Questions	We believe that staying in a curious state and asking the questions which arise are among the most fundamental and important aspects of good communication. More asking, less telling.
046	Death of a False Hope	As dental professionals we are passing bad news to people on a daily basis. If we truly want to help people, we can understand and support them as they assimilate unwelcome information.
047	In Praise of Difficult People	Difficult people can make us stronger if we know what makes them tick and how to deal with them.
048	Consumer Decision-Making	Part One deals with the <u>social</u> factors that contribute to the decisions people make when evaluating the purchase of your services.
049	Consumer Decision-Making	Part Two deals with the <u>psychological</u> characteristics of decision-making.

050	Spice Girls	What could the departure of Ginger from the Spice Girls possibly have to do with a dental practice? Again, it all comes back to Outcome.
051	The X-Codes	A system of notational codes, long used in medicine, can help organize your thoughts, charts and procedures.
052	Where on Earth . . .	What have we learned in Australia that will help your clients in the U.S., Canada and the U.K?
053	Eye of the Beholder 1	An examination of the use of serious magnification: advantages, rationales, excuses, and other factors.
054	Eye of the Beholder 2	
055	Eye of the Beholder 3	
056	How to Delegate	Many dentists either fail to delegate enough or delegate irresponsibly. How can you find the right balance? The key is to help your team members learn how to exercise authority along with accountability.
057	Healthy Humor	While it keeps work fun, humor can often detract from our mission as health care providers. Here are a few simple rules.
058	Being Meets Doing . . .	Aside from business and managerial responsibilities, a dentist is a diagnostician, preventive strategist and a clinical therapist.
059	Theft	Most employees are conscientious and honest. This article is about those who are not.
060	Raises	The success of the employer/employee relationship is directly related to how clearly mutual expectations are defined and agreed upon from the beginning.
061	High Achievers 1	Who are they? Where do they come from? How do you find them? How do they behave? What can you expect from them?
062	High Achievers 2	
063	High Achievers 3	
064	Letter from Abroad	
065	Betty Furness . . .	Socialized medicine and dentistry in Germany and Great Britain has created a patient population which is largely disconnected from issues of their own health.
066	Triangulation	In many offices the technology used by administrators lags way behind that of the clinicians. Triangulation is talking about people behind their backs. How do you identify it in the moment and stop its devastating effects?
067	Sharing Power 1	The authority and power to make decisions (and the responsibility and accountability which go along with those decisions) must be shared.
068	Sharing Power 2	A continuation of issue #67
069	Discovering the Best . . .	Dentists must learn how to help existing employees work better and succeed. There is simply too much turnover in dentistry.

070	Occupational Half-life	Most teams have such little experience dealing with compensation issues and talking openly about money.
071	Coaching from Doug	Doug's insights as a <i>locum tenens</i> dentist are distilled down to fourteen critical points for practice success.
072	Dirty Words	Some tips on the specific use of language
073	M & M's	No, not the melt-in-your-mouth kind. This issue applies concepts from Morbidity and Mortality conferences in medicine and helps dentists create a climate for dealing with error.
074	Effectiveness Evaluations	Performance reviews and expectations can be tough for many to handle without these guidelines.
075	Watcha Say?	Developing effective listening skills
076	Yo, Listen Up!	Part two of a discussion of listening skills.
077	I Hear Music	The selection of office music can not be left to blatantly commercial interests such as radio stations. Take control of this aspect of your office environment.
078	Building Self-esteem	Your actions as a leader and manager can make a major difference in how your team members feel about themselves and their effectiveness in accomplishing the goals of your practice.
079	Kudos	Dentists often lack the ability to give positive, reinforcing feedback to members of their team. But it is a learnable skill.
080	Report from Down Under 1	In Australia there is anti-competitive legislation proposed which will have major implications for the dental practice act.
081	Report from Down Under 2	Our experiences in Australia prompt a discussion about women in the dental workforce.
082	Tall Poppies	Aussies have an attitude about people who get too big for their britches, and it's not complimentary. It also interferes with a dentist's ability to tell prospective patients who they are through advertizing.
083	Yadda, Yadda, Yadda	Effective communication involves a discrete set of skills which call into question the traditional place of patient education.
084	The Hygiene Ghetto	Integrating hygiene into the total picture of the practice has many positive effects, but far too many offices unintentionally distance the hygienist's role from the patient's experience and treatment.
085	Unzippin' Their Heads	How do we go about understanding the expectations patients have of us from the outset? This issue presents rationales and a pencil-and-paper tool to help you gain this knowledge.
806	How to Choose a Dentist 1	The standard advice given by the ADA and dentist referral services is way off the mark.
087	How to Choose a Dentist 2	Issue #86 continues

088	Mercury Aligns with Mars	The biggest complaint I hear from team members is that their dentist is unclear, inconsistent and incongruent. Ouch! What's a dentist to do?
089	Collaborative Partnerships	Which patients are truly aligned with the philosophy and goals you have for your practice? What to do with the ones who aren't?
090	Loss of a Friend	Death is a reality in everyone's life. Here's one way to look at it.
091	Collaborative Partnerships 2	A continuation of issue #89
092	How Not to Lead	Every once in a while it helps to outline behaviors which get in the way: leadership no-no's.
093	What are Friends For?	Each member of the team is responsible for ensuring the success of every new employee. Everyone plays a part in determining whether the hiring is ultimately successful.
094	Portrait of a High Achiever	How do you identify the high achievers you want? What will tell you that one applicant is the right one for you? Here are four identifiers to consider.
095	What is a Team?	Emphasis on harmony and sameness prohibits a team's growth and success in a business which demands innovation and creative substance.
096	A Tough Subject	Dentists do not have the highest suicide rate. The number one cause of suicide is untreated depression. How do you recognize depression so you might help others?
097	Trust	How does one develop a trusting relationship? Is trust earned? Is it given? Is it assumed? Here are three easily understood and concrete elements which comprise trust.
098	The New Boss	In order to move beyond an oppressive single-leader model, a group of people must coalesce around a common goal or purpose.
099	Lost Souls	There are three areas of practice building on which you can concentrate. The first is attracting new patients. The second is working effectively with those clients who are active in the practice. The third is reconnecting with lost souls — those people who once came to your practice but who have disappeared.
100	R-E-S-P-E-C-T	Defined: (a) esteem or admiration, (b) proper acceptance or courtesy, (c) to refrain from intruding on or interfering with.
101	Going off Insurance	Assumptions, employer, plan, letters, spin, anticipation
102	Rounds	Schedule review, preparation, nixing huddles, working as a team, chart audit
103	Hurt feelings	Important steps in avoiding hurt feelings, Motive and Intention, preamble, reactions, accountability
104	Hard Stuff Self Test	A self-assessment of leadership qualities and attributes

105	Myth Slaying	Some myths about dental employees, hiring, loyalty, etc.
106	Second Opinions	Three different types in flavors of Diagnosis, treatment and fees
107	New Spin on Teamwork	Leadership, management, team-building, hiring principles
108	Max and Willie get a bath	Performance evaluations, job expectations
109	Okay, okay, okay	More steps and considerations in performance evaluations
110	Atomizers and faint praise	Some suggestions on how to praise employees and co-workers
111	The Comfort Appointment	Rules of engagement for that emergency phone call
112	HONEST	...is an acronym for various factors influencing periodontal disease, and it's a way of getting patients thinking about and involved with their disease.
113	Overwhelm	Dentists often have concerns about overwhelming their patients with the truth about their conditions
114	Overwhelm, part 2	A continuation of #113
115	Strategic Planning	There's an art to stepping back and re-evaluating the totality of your business and practice
116	Relationship Blues	Failed relationships, causes, prevention, and Mel's unfortunate dental visit
117	Unintentional Sabotage	How hygienists are often left out of the loop in your office flow and in the patient's mind.
118	Unintentional Part 2	#117 Continues
119	Removing the Bullet...	#117 and 118 continued
120	Dental Escort Services	Resuming the saga of Mel and how Sandy put him on the right dental path
121	Losing the Connection	The most frequent relationship busters exhibited by telephone receptionists
122	Hallelujah! I have seen...	Dentists who get religion about occlusion, or whatever, need to recognize that it's not a great topic for patient discussion.
123	Who Wants to Be Here?	Demands on women in the workforce, coupled with job expectations in a professional environment
124	Excuse me, but ...	Asking people to do things in a way that produces the desired result – twelve steps that can be used in any situation.
125	Partnerships, Part 1	A starting point to avoiding the many pitfalls in practice transition
126	Resolutions	What situations do you avoid most in life? Can you face them head-on? Some suggestions for turning that corner
127	Judgment	For those who have, or wish they had, intuition about people. There are some caveats in exercising your insight, not least among them is stereotyping.
128	Rounds	Schedule reviews, preparation, nixing huddles, working as a team, chart audit
129	Expectations	The less you convey your expectations to others, the greater the likelihood that they will remain unmet.

130	In the Right Order	A discussion of Outcome, Means and Prices™ in relation to patient's perceived problems and solutions. A facilitation Must.
131	Clearing the Junk	Reaching a higher level as a group means that sloppy habits, intra-team baggage, unresolved issues, resentments, unclear expectations, calcified thinking patterns, blame, self-protective behaviors, judgmental attitudes, and unresolved conflict must be cleared away first.
132	Breakthrough	Clear up hazy mission statements. Instead, ask yourselves what promises you all can make to your patients and to yourselves as a team.
133	In Praise of Specialists	When do you call on a specialist? How do you make the decision to refer? Here are some considerations.
134	Insurance Salesman	Does the notion repel you? Here's the story of an unusually pleasant and productive encounter and how it relates to dentistry.
135	Problem-Solving Conflicts	If you are stuck, look first at conflicts. They must be addressed before you can solve your problems.
136	Purpose and Team	Dissecting the definition: A team is a group of people, each of whom brings valuable skills and perspective, who collaborate in pursuit of a common purpose none would likely attain alone.
137	Climate	A look at the factors that relate to working climate and a yardstick against which to measure the atmosphere in your own practice.
138	Leverage	Leverage points are those instances when you can affect the outcome of anything. If you can identify those points, you are more likely to be an influential person.
139	Report from Down Under	Australian dentistry differs from that in the US in many pleasant and unexpected ways.
140	Ray's Video	An Australian dentist videotapes new patient exams, complete with voice commentary and presents it to the patient for their consideration.
141	Training	Employee happiness and retention can often center on a thorough approach to orientation and training.
142	Pursuit	A high-functioning employee can be threatening to those who are not.
143	No Words	A few words in commemoration of the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center.
144	Templates	Comments on schedule templating, some necessary preliminary steps and benefits of using it effectively
145	But what if . . .	Because people frequently have specific expectations which don't match their experiences, conflict occurs naturally and is a normal part of any group working together.

146	Hey Buddy, Got Change?	When it comes to change, you don't get a vote. Change is a given. It will happen all around you and you cannot stop it. You either acknowledge it, address it, and accommodate to it or it will have its way with you.
147	Fraud	Insurance fraud is more common and more serious than you may think.
148	Marketing and Sales	Marketing is smart business and each practice should be able to attract all of the patients they want and need to make their business stable, productive and thriving.
149	Influence	What does it take for your opinion to be a significant influence in the decision-making process of your patients? Ultimately, it takes a relationship which is based on understanding and respect, but it all begins with curiosity. Your curiosity.
150	Standards of Performance	How are standards of performance determined by more sophisticated groups? Who is responsible for determining whether performance is up to snuff? Whose standards will prevail? Who determines each person's value and worth to the practice?
151	Red Flags	Red flags in hiring interviews are not STOP signs, they are "pause and find out more" signs. How do you recognize them? What do you do when you hear one? What are the disqualifiers?
152	Just Do It!	Don't sweat the small stuff. But small stuff can develop a life of its own and demand attention. Seven steps are offered to define and deal with obstreperous problems and have everyone pulling together.
153	Internal Interviews	Sometimes a staff vacancy requires that current employees redefine their roles and duties.
154	Protocols	Protocols are sets of guidelines that give structure to the basics of everyday practice life. They reflect the team's agreement on the goals to be accomplished in each circumstance as well as how resources will be used. Examples are offered, and other protocol-worthy areas suggested.
155	Nice	While experts call it relational aggression, to the rest of us it just looks like mean-spirited behavior. Why would an otherwise nice person do this? Perhaps the answer lies in how adolescent girls, who grow into adult women, learn to deal — or not — with their anger.
156	Tail Wagging	Systems serve the people, not the other way around. Too often, in cookie-cutter approaches to practice management, the tail wags the dog.
157	Offense	Truth-telling often takes a back seat when other's feelings are concerned. Clarification of motive and intent can lead to resolution.

158	Image	Do you believe yourself to be competent and wish to be seen as so? How about mature or wise or generous or sensitive? No matter what you choose, the behaviors in which you engage must be congruent with the image you wish to convey.
159	Contracts, Part 1	Employment contracts must be developed with a certain degree of precision to avoid misunderstandings.
160	Contracts, Part 2	#159 continues.
161	Contracts, Part 3	Conclusion of three parts.
162	Paperless	Paperless offices are becoming a thing of the present. Presented are many advantages, and some objections dentists often raise in defense of the old way.
163	O-M-B-D	When people are experiencing Overwhelm it leads to Mistakes and their frustration causes them to Blame one another, which triggers a response of Defensiveness
164	Discounts	Are discounts for cash, family, seniors or professionals really a good idea?
165	Privacy	The early stirrings of HIPAA and a rationale for privacy in matters of patient care.
166	Partnerships Revisited	The failure of so many dental partnerships raises serious questions about the nature of the business.
167	Antiques Roadshow	The submissive behavior of antique collectors in the presence of an expert appraiser is repeated every day in dental offices worldwide.
168	Disappointment vs Dis...	It is understandable and professionally appropriate to experience (and express) disappointment when what we had hoped for does not come to pass. On the other hand, it is highly inappropriate to move into disapproval of either the patient or his decision.
169	Merchant Accounts	A world-wide credit card scam hits home. Merchants can be liable for losses incurred as a result of these fraudulent schemes.
170	Private vs Secret	We examine the difference between things that are private and those that are secret, and the impact these two concepts have on staff and patient relations.
171	Little Things	Regardless of role, every member of the team and what he or she does makes a difference for the success or decline of the practice. Behaviors, attitudes, spirit, functions, performance – they all add up.
172	That's The Job	Some jobs, like insurance liason, are fraught with frustration. But it's a very necessary position and one that requires a specific set of skills.
173	Hyperbole	We all have a few ups and downs in our lives. That is a likely fact of life. How we respond to those inevitable events is a measure of our maturity and sometimes of our character.

174	Fees	Some principles involved with setting, raising, justifying and living with fees for our professional services.
175	Gone	A long-term key team member leaves. Patients inquire about her absence. While many people may express an interest in and concern for her situation, the majority are really expressing an interest in their own situation.
176	Social, Superficial, ...	Interaction with patients occurs on one of three levels, social, superficial, or substantive. The first two come naturally, the third requires some personal work.
177	Difficult Situations	The first few steps in preparing yourself to address situations which are ones you might prefer to avoid but probably should not.
178	Facilitators	The facilitator is an essential role in modern day dentistry.
179	Anticipation	Patients will begin to trust you if they feel you have anticipated their needs. It makes them feel that you understand them and are in tune with them.
180	Relationships, Part 1	Taking a look at the differences (and their implications) by comparing acquaintances, friendships and relationships.
181	Relationships, Part 2	#180 continued.
182	Telemarketing	Why do we take such offense at these types of calls? Mostly, I suspect, we find them irrelevant, intrusive and impersonal. Many outgoing calls from dental offices are received much like telemarketing.
183	Outcomes	Everything a patient wants from dentistry can be reduced to four categories: Appearance, comfort, function, or peace of mind.
184	Co-discovery, Part 1	Co-Discovery is simultaneously a mindset as well as a set of processes. When done well, engaging in Co-Discovery can bring the patient and dentist together as co-collaborators.
185	Co-Discovery, Part 2	Part 2 focuses on the fine art of asking questions.
186	Elevator Speech	It's the core of your message compacted into the most vibrant, expressive words so that the listener will hear the essence of what you want to convey in the time it takes for the elevator to go from the ground floor to the seventh floor.
187	Martha Stewart	Martha's magazine is famous for long-winded answers to reader's questions. Dentists can learn that the fullest, most technically correct response to a patient's question is not always the best. Three strategies are presented to give the most satisfying answers.
188	Four Asks	If you are feeling underappreciated by your patients, ask yourself if that is really part of the implied contract you have with them. This article lays out the four things you can reasonably expect from your patients.
189	The Story	The more you know about each patient's story, the more likely your patients will respond positively to your clinical recommendations. Why is that? Because human beings want to be understood and respected. When they feel otherwise, they

		disregard the opinions and recommendations of those around them.
190	Deep Competency	Cross-training: one of the most poorly implemented ideas ever to be embraced by dentistry. It may be an effective training technique for athletes and, under certain specific circumstances, a useful corporate tool, but it has had terrible implications for dental teams.
191	Brochures	In the huge array of promotional possibilities, brochures can be one of the most inexpensive and, if handled correctly, effective marketing approaches.
192	Difficult Situations	Everybody has tough people in their lives to deal with. It is possible to make some progress on these relationships if you understand yourself and the situation better. Review this checklist before entering into your next "sticky" conversation.
193	Failures	We all have a great deal to learn from not only our own failures but also those of our colleagues, and studying failures can often be the best form of learning for the mature dentist.
194	Failures, Part 2	
195	Teams	Many dentists long to have an effective team, yet few ever achieve that goal. When you bring others on board, you must do so carefully, for each addition must demonstrate four characteristics that are conducive to building a team.
196	Facilitator Training	One outstanding facilitator we know had an unfortunate and brief period of employment recently. The experience gave her some clarity about the support a facilitator needs from the team and dentist. Her comments are quite insightful.