



The Practice Playbook

Where knowing meets doing, and doing creates results.

You already know what to do.

So why does everything still come through you?

It's half past seven on a Monday. One nurse is off sick. The message asking for cover came to you, not your practice manager. Two patients complained about the same thing last week and nobody has decided what to do about it. The associate wants a word and won't say what it's about.

And on the shelf behind you is the folder from a course you paid for two years ago, with all the good notes you took and never looked at again.

Nothing in that folder is wrong. You've read the books, you've been on the courses, and you could describe a well-run practice better than most consultants. And still, by ten o'clock, all four of those things have come through you.

That's the gap. Not between what you know and what you believe, but the gap between what you know and what happens in the building when you aren't standing in it.



“You are the system, and that works — until you become the thing holding the practice back.”

| Implementation is a systems problem, not a discipline problem.

| If it runs through you, it isn't installed.

| Most people problems are structural problems wearing a person-shaped disguise.

| One thing, bedded in, beats ten things started.

The Practice Playbook

12

MONTHS

24

SESSIONS

2

PER MONTH

2

PRINCIPAL & PM

Six systems, built one at a time and put into the practice while we're still working on them — so that by the end of it, the practice runs on structure instead of running on you.

The room is a video call. That's what makes twenty-four of them possible, and what keeps the work inside your practice rather than somewhere you had to travel to. We meet in person once, in London, at month six.

It isn't a course. There's nothing to catch up on, and nobody goes home with a folder filled with more things to get around to.

The Exceptional Team System is the six systems.
The Practice Playbook is how they get installed.

HOW A MONTH RUNS

Twenty-four sessions across twelve months, all recorded. Two a month, you and your practice manager at every one, and each month takes one of the six systems.

SESSION ONE

Build it

The system gets built live, with both of you in the room, against your practice rather than a template.

The fortnight between them is deliberate. Small steps aren't the compromise you make because you're busy — small *is* the mechanism, because a step only gets repeated if it's small enough to do in a week when three things go wrong. Small, repeated, kept up, and checked by someone who notices. Only the last one is hard to give yourself.

SESSION TWO

Bed it in

It goes into the practice. It inevitably falls over somewhere in week three, and that's exactly what session two is for.



Some programmes get you both in the room a few days a year, and the rest is down to you.

That's not implementation. That's homework.

THE SIX SYSTEMS

Six systems, in this order, over twelve months.

01

Get Steady, Get Clear

Steady yourself first, then point the whole team the same way.

GONE

Nobody quite sure where this is heading or what their part in it is, so nothing moves until you push it.

→ INSTALLED

The team pulls in the same direction without you pushing, and keeps going on the days you're not in.

02

Create Culture by Design

Culture happens by default unless you build it on purpose, and it shows up in behaviour, not on a wall.

GONE

The behaviour everyone works around because the person doing it is too good to lose.

→ INSTALLED

The best clinician in the building gets pulled up for the same thing a nurse would.

03

Hire for Fit, Land Them Well

Recruit for who they'll be in two years. Induct for the long term.

GONE

Hiring whoever's available because the diary won't wait, then doing it again four months later.

→ INSTALLED

A new nurse's first fortnight is planned before she starts, rather than at half eight on her first morning.

04

Say It Straight, Say It Kindly

Clarity is kindness. Early is kinder still.

GONE

The conversation that happens in the corridor and on WhatsApp, but never with the person it's about.

→ INSTALLED

The thing that would have become a grievance in March gets said in January, by the person it belongs to.

05

Get It Off Your Plate

Delegate authority, not tasks.

GONE

The “quick question” that isn't, six times a day.

→ INSTALLED

The Monday morning message about nursing cover goes to someone else, gets sorted, and you hear about it afterwards.

06

Hold the Line

Challenge high, support higher.

GONE

The standard that quietly became optional because nobody wanted the conversation.

→ INSTALLED

A standard that slips gets picked up that week, by someone who isn't you, without it becoming a whole thing.

The order isn't a preference. You can't hand real authority to a team you haven't got pointing the same way, and you can't recruit for fit until you know what fit means here — so each one holds up the one after it.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

- **Both of you, every session.** Principal and practice manager. You can't install anything from one half of the practice.
 - **Recruitment and onboarding support** every time you hire, with a session whenever it happens.
 - **Your whole team on the recorded material** at no extra cost, CPD hours counted.
 - **Direct access** when something's on fire, so you don't wait until the call.
 - **An onboarding session** before month one, on your practice and the last three things that didn't stick.
 - **A day together in London** at month six, included in the price.
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Our cohorts are small enough that I see what's actually happening in your practice, big enough that you're not the only one solving it.

IN THEIR WORDS

“There's still the pressure of running a business, but it's not that all-encompassing weight it used to be. We feel freer. Looking back to last year shows us how far we've come.”

AMY BARNES

OWNER, THE LYTHAM DENTAL CLINIC

“Mark is a clear thinker, a calm leader and a brilliant communicator. He leads by example, listens deeply, and inspires the people around him to grow and succeed.”

CHRIS BARROW

AUTHOR, SPEAKER AND BUSINESS COACH

“I was sorting out problems constantly, rather than having my set days to plan what I needed to do to manage the business. Now I can focus on the things we've been missing for a while.”

VICKI MCQUILKEN

PRACTICE MANAGER, CHERRYVALLEY DENTAL CARE

Four practices have signed on for another twelve months in the last few weeks.

Kind words are easy to give, and I'm grateful for every one of them. A renewal is the only review that costs the person writing it, and these four gave it after a full year of knowing what it takes.

I qualified as a teacher before I ever set foot in a dental practice.

That was thirty years ago, and it's simultaneously the least interesting thing about me and the reason any of this works. Most training in dentistry is built by people who are very good at the subject and were never taught how a person actually learns anything, which is why so much of it is interesting on the day and completely gone by Friday.

I also burned out once, properly. That's why every decision in this programme gets judged on one question: *does this take load off you, or pile it on?*

And what I'm trying to change is bigger than one practice.

Dentistry is organised around a hierarchy that stopped making sense years ago, and almost nobody in it was ever taught to lead. Then we call the results a people problem. It's structural, it's fixable, and it isn't peculiar to dentistry — any profession that promotes on technical skill ends up with the best practitioner at the top, running something nobody trained them to run.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

In and around dentistry, working with practices of every shape and size.

THIRTEEN YEARS IN TANZANIA

Running Bridge2Aid, training rural health workers utilising teams of UK volunteers — where you learn what makes people commit when you can't buy compliance with a paycheque.

WRITING AND SPEAKING

A monthly column in Dentistry, regular pieces in Private Dentistry, and the stage at the BDIA and the Dentistry Show.

JUDGING

The Private Dentistry Awards, the Dental Industry Awards, and now, the DSO Awards.

Ten practices at a time

Twelve months, two sessions a month, you and your practice manager at every one. Committed six months at a time, so nobody signs away a year on day one.

Priced on what's true in your practice at the end of it, not on the size of the diary entry.

BY THE END OF THE TWELVE MONTHS

A practice manager who decides things without checking with you first.
A team that picks up a slipping standard that week, and not from you.
Recruitment, induction and delegation running on something written down.
A fortnight away, and the building runs the way it does when you're in it.

Two weeks to change your mind — a full refund, no conditions, no conversation needed. After that, turn up and run the projects, and if it isn't installed by the end of month twelve we keep going until it is, at no extra cost.

£11,964

Twelve months including VAT.

£5,982 covers the first six. £997 a month, spread at 0% — no finance company, and no premium for paying that way.

In-practice team days available as an add-on.

A new cohort starts every three months, ask me when the next one is.

THE NEXT STEP

Let's have the conversation.

Twenty-five minutes, and it isn't a pitch. You tell me what's most broken right now and what you've already tried that didn't stick, and between us we work out whether this is the right thing for your practice — or whether it isn't.

You and your practice manager on the call if you can. It tells me more in ten minutes than anything else does.

[MARKTOPLEY.CO.UK/APPLY](https://marktopley.co.uk/apply)
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BOOK A CALL