



Season Two – Episode 2

## **You Sold Your Dental Practice - The Best Way to Announce the Change Your Patients and Your Team**

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**Dr. Rich Madow:** Hello everybody out there in podcast land and welcome to season 2 episode 2 of the Dental Practice Fixers Podcast. I am Dr. Richard Madow, I am here in the studio in beautiful Reisterstown, Maryland with my esteemed co - host, and business partner and brother Dr. David Madow. How is it going today Dave?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Don't forget the brother part.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** How could I forget that.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I have been your brother almost all your life.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** All my life, almost all your life. Isn't that how it would go.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I think so. So, what's going on? It is good to be back in the studio with you man, really good.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** It is fantastic; season 2 is rolling on.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I am excited; season 2 is turning out to be great so far.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Thank you much for your comments not just about the special episode, but season 2 episode 1.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Wow, that very first phone call we did on episode 1, crazy.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** It was nuts people seemed to enjoy it except for one person who found it offensive for some reason. I am not sure why but hey,

**Dr. Dave Madow:** You know what they say, when you are not offending somebody you are not doing your job right. But this there is something like that right?

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Is that your motto?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Kind of like, I am trying to offend 50%.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** You have already offended me today; I don't know if you are doing your job perfectly.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Perfect, perfect.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Fantastic, well let's get down to a really, really fantastic listener question for season 2 episode 2, what do you say Dave, you wanna take it away?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I will take it away and by the way, thank you so much for your question. We are gonna withhold your name as per your request so, just to let you know, if you ever have a question and let's say it is of a very personal nature, just send it in to us, if you wanna do it privately that's fine by email. And the email for our podcast is again it's [podcast@madow.com](mailto:podcast@madow.com) I believe right, we haven't used it for a little while.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Well yeah that's right you can always do [info@madow.com](mailto:info@madow.com) I-N-F-O @madow.com and Hope, who handles the info emails will be sure it gets to the right place.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Yeah, but if they just checked also, I'm pretty short its podcast singular because then I think on our website it's podcasts

**Dr. Rich Madow:** You know why can't we get this uniform, you know we got a podcast.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I tell you something, we got to talk to our web guy, it's just unacceptable, I think.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** I agree, but the point why can't we make it so if somebody sends an email to podcast or [podcasts@madow.com](mailto:podcasts@madow.com) it goes to the right place? How tough would that be? Is that asking too much?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I think it's a high level very, very high level.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** That's higher than my level but I think somebody could do it.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I think the point is if you want to send us a private question just tell us to please withhold your name, keep it confidential because they're so, there could be some questions that are very confidential so you don't want your team knowing that it's actually you.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Or if you are a team member, you don't when your doctor knowing it's actually you, we would take those as well.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** That's very true but let's get into today's so we're gonna read this and we will withhold the name, "Hey guys, let me start by thanking you guys for the past 15 years, maybe more, since I started getting the original Richards Reports, most of which I still have on my office shelf in the attractive gray three-ring binders. I appreciate the fact that you were wet finger dentists and had very practical tried-and-true advice. Plus, you were funny; reading back through a few of your old newsletters and didn't think you were God's gift to dentistry." You know that's, I like that first of all Rich because I think we always try even back in those days, we try to come across as and we really are just regular guys, we're not like these you know superstar wanna-be type people or just history.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Especially when it comes to clinical dentistry. I mean we were both good dentists but we certainly weren't you know the Dawson and Rose and Falls and Hornbooks of the world.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Right exactly so, hey I appreciate that compliment. Keeping your anonymous doctor, "I'm ready to say that I'm planning on changing careers also known as retirement sometime early next year. I will stay on as an employee for about six months to ease the transition; this has not been made public yet for fear of patients scrambling to find someone else and depleting my patient base. Although I'm hoping my base is loyal enough to at least try the new owner before

leaving. Anyway, how do other offices handle this transition? When do they announce to their employees who don't know yet either and to their patients? The most people send out letters to patients, a record and when do they, if they send letters? I'm not sure how to proceed here but with your vast network of doc's, I would assume you've run into this before, thanks so much." doctor beep, we can't give his name or her name, we can't even say it to he or her; we're not allowed to do that.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** I think you pretty much spilled the beans one of being a he though, let's face it.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** How did I do that again?

**Dr. Rich Madow:** When you said we can't give his name

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Or her.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** That's okay, it doesn't narrow it down all that much.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** We are not sure of the gender, let's just say that.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** I okay it might be one of those names where you can't tell the gender either like you know Pat.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Dr. Pat.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Terry were some other.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Pat Terry.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Dr. Pat Terry, Marian used to be a man's name way back in the day, right? I think these days I don't think even women are named Marian anymore. But remember one Marian was

**Dr. Dave Madow:** That's you dear.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** A grandma, was there of a faculty member at University of Maryland Dental School...

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Marion, Marion Barry. There's Marion Ratliff, he was the he was in Period Department at the Omarion, well anyway let's get back to the question from him or her, you know do we send, how do we how do we let our patients know, do we send a letter and?

**Dr. Rich Madow:** First of all, there was something that he or she first I think is really important and that is when do you tell the team? And I know I certainly went through this when I sold my practice Dave, I'm not sure if you went through because you sold your practice to your partner so it's a little bit of a different situation.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Yeah, I never told my team I was just out of there.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** They didn't even, they didn't even notice.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** They didn't know I was gone; just darted out there one day.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** This is something I really struggle with because my team and I were tight Dave, as you know we were great. I really loved and respected every one of them. Some of them loved and respected me maybe not all, but in any case, I didn't want to just surprise them or you know come in one day and say hey guess what the practice is sold here's your new boss. But the thing is I had to do it that way and this is something that the practice broker that I worked with advised me on, and once you understand the logic it makes sense because, let's just say you tell your team hey in two months I'm, the practice is gonna be sold. I won't be here anymore; you're gonna have a new boss. They might start scrambling looking for new jobs you know, no matter how much you ask people to keep things quiet, you know they tell a spouse then the spouse tells a friend and a friend tells, so the word gets out. And it's just not something you can risk because that's not fair to the buyer; it can decrease the value of the practice; all kinds of bad things can happen. So as tough as it was for me and it's difficult Dr. Anonymous as I'm sure it will be for you, I would recommend, I'm not happy with this recommendation but I think you cannot tell anybody until the ink is on the contract, do you agree Dave?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** There's no other way around it; you have too many, too many problems are gonna arise if people know early so yeah totally agree.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** You know you may remember we had already started doing TBSE when I sold my practice. And at that time a lot of my practice team members came out to help us with TBSE.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I remember that.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** And I sold the practice right before one of the TBSE's and then had to go in and announce it to them and one of them got so pissed that she didn't even show up at TBSE, she just kept on yelling, "Screw you!"

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Who is that?

**Dr. Rich Madow:** I'm not gonna mention any names.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** She's not listening to this podcast.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** You never know, you never, she was really sweet, and I felt really guilty because it just was the wrong side of her and it was, it was not a cool thing, well cool or no cool, but something that had to be done.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** You had no choice, there's really no other way to do it?

**Dr. Rich Madow:** And I agree I totally agree. So, how about contacting the patients?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Yeah, I think a letter should just be sent down said I've sold my practice I found somebody to buy it and he's really good; hopefully try them, see you later.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** I was thinking god I hope he's kidding.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** See you later I'm out of here bye, it's been a great twenty years.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** But yeah letter, letters are always great. I think in the lot you know it's funny I think people like patients, whatever don't really think of a dental practice as an entity that could be sold necessarily. I think what they like to hear is that you've, after careful thought about your retirement and the direction you want to take, you've carefully selected Dr. Big Check to come in and be entrusted with the patients' care.

So, let me ask you doctor, how did you, how did you select this person, this doctor is it, was he, did he have like the best clinical skills; did he, was he like number one in his dental class, is he just an incredible personable person?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** He's not called Dr. Big Check for nothing, though he's the one that gave me the most money, you never say that though. No but hopefully, but all kidding aside, hopefully this doctor that you're selling your practice to, is gonna be a good guy or good woman and

**Dr. Rich Madow:** You've got to feel good about.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** You got to feel great about good clinical skills, personable you got, you got it, yet hopefully or else you know it's not really fair to them either because it practices, let's face it, it's a kind of a loser; the practice is gonna go downhill it's not a good thing for anybody. And you and you like your patients, you love your patients; you really do want the best for them after your retirement.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Absolutely, and in some cases the selling doctor will come in and putz around, as we say, a few days a week and it would really be heartbreaking to see the owner taking the practice in a direction that you don't care for. So, there should be a philosophical simpatico between the seller and the buyer.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** But here's a philosophical question, suppose you get clearly a great, great offer from somebody who in your heart you just feel yeah, I just I just don't feel great about this guy, but then the next person who maybe feel great about it offering you a hundred thousand dollars making that number up a hundred thousand dollars less for the practice,

**Dr. Rich Madow:** What serious cash over.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** It is, it is I mean who is not gonna sell to the highest bidder, the highest buyer, who's not going to?

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Well I think so many of us count on the practice sales part of our retirement. And it becomes a business decision, right?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Yeah and is it really, I may hate to say like this, it sounds kind of cold, is it really your responsibility to like vet the person for all, you know clinical personality, business skill, is it, is it fair just look you're selling your practice and somebody comes in with a green offer. Are you gonna turn it down as you say, I just don't think you're right for my patients? Well I don't know; I think you know personality and business skills are one thing. If you have reason to suspect they're an incompetent dentist, I'm just not so sure I'd feel good about taking that check. I mean really incompetent.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Yeah but it's a tough one because again making numbers up the person comes in and offers you two million dollars in cash.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** And the next best person is offering 1.1

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Examine, what do you do?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** You sell.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** You know but I hope that's not gonna come up with any I'm yeah, I'm assuming with this doctor that wrote to us, it's you know selling to it to a good buyer, somebody that's gonna be, he's very comfortable with, I'm at worst scene is not the case here.

**Dr. Dave Madow: I hope so.** Let's go back to the letter for a second because we've seen good, we've seen bad, we've seen practices where the buyer, the new dentist is responsible for sending out a letter to the patients introducing themselves, big, big, big mistake yeah. It's really great if the selling dentist who the patients know and love sends out a really sincere letter saying you know after 23 years of servicing the community, meeting so many fantastic patients, I've decided it's time for me to move on and I've selected the best dentist. Now here's the thing, what did you say that and you know the dentist is a shit dentist, what do you do?

**Dr. Rich Madow:** I still think you know, is it up to you to really evaluate? I don't know but I think you have to say, yeah you have to say that you've selected a great dentist, I think you have to. And not only that, does the dentist that's buying the practice get editing rights, does he get to look at the letter and say I think you need to change this a little bit or I guess it has to all come up in the deal, but should they get editing rights?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I'm not sure that would actually be included in the contract of the sale that the buying dentist gets editing rights to the intro letter.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Because we looked, you and I know how to write letters but let's say you, let's say you were buying a dental practice right now from a dentist and that dentist was about to send a letter to his or her patient base, and you looked at the letter, just sucked, it was horrible, it was gonna hurt your practice, wouldn't you feel like you have the right to say, look this letter just isn't right, don't you feel that's a courtesy that should be extended to anyone?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I would think so too.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** It kind of has to be negotiated because suppose that selling dentist, just know this is a letter I'm sending out, it is from, it's from me is what I'm saying but that could, that could like hurt the practice by you know 20 percent, 30 percent way...

**Dr. Dave Madow:** It could be horrible and we've seen some really bad ones pretty much saying you know I'm retiring I've sold to this dentist, it's all the wrong words. So, if you are a dentist who's in the position that you'll be buying a practice soon, keep that in mind.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Got it because you know they see that letter they talk about like you know I just I just wrote a letter that um I made I made fifty thousand dollars from writing one letter. I mean well this could be that letter I mean it's it could be serious money because if you're turning off your patient base and they all go elsewhere, guess what the doctor that just bought the practice got ripped off or got you know it's short ended or something, it's just, it's not cool. Yeah, we've seen that happen before to where a dentist purchases a good healthy practice and within the next six months to a year so many patients have left, so many bad things have happened and you just feel sorry for that dentist that spent top dollar and then didn't really know the proper way to do the transition. And you're right it could be the fault of these selling dentists as well maybe they didn't...

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Nobody ever thinks of that but yeah think about this dentist is possibly buying this practice with his or her life savings or taken out a tremendous loan or whatever it might be and this is everything. That letter means a lot, you know it's sad to say we've seen situations where we've been working with her, talking to the selling dentist and they have a purchaser for

the practice and we meet the purchaser, and we just know that they are not going to succeed in that practice. We just know it then what do you do? You still have to take the, you have to let them purchase it right?

**Dr. Rich Madow:** You have to let them purchase it and not only that, I think you have to write the letter that you think is gonna be the absolute best and do everything you can in the transition to help this person who's paying you a lot of money.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Like for example I'm thinking of a dentist that we were friends with, working with, he just had one of those big lovable personalities, and he was selling his practice and the buyer just had no personality well how are these patients gonna feel after all those years, it's not easy.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Yeah, I think the selling dentist has to do the best that he or she can but after if that from that point on it's, I hate to say, it's not really their responsibility

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Not my problem.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** It's really not of me; you sold, it's not my problem the incoming dentist is devoid of personality or void or devoid, I don't know.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I think void and devoid mean kind of the same thing, kind of flammable and inflammable, why do they mean the same thing was always very confusing. I don't know.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** You don't see the word flammable too much anyway.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Oh, I see it a lot, all over the place, oh it's coming back, it's making a big comeback that word.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Flammable and inflammable same thing.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Gruntled disgruntled.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Those are total opposites.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Are you ever gruntled?

**Dr. Rich Madow:** I am gruntled right now, I am entirely gruntled.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I feel good then.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Good, you and James Brown. Hold on, now we're talking about something before we got off topic here.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I will tell you where we are, I think we want to get into the call because whether we've we think we said everything has to be said about this dead horse, I think we have, but I mean do you have anything else to say about, I mean I think we've given this doctor great information.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** I was just gonna bring up not memory as a closing point but in case you are the seller we talked about you know how do you feel about the buyer blah blah blah blah, like how much due diligence do you have to do if they're licensed, if they you know, they graduated an accredited dental school, they're a licensed dentist in your state, they are by law proficient and technically allowed the practice of dentistry by law.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Right, yeah what would you do like you check their lab cases; what do you think, you're not responsible for that?

**Dr. Rich Madow:** I think you're not.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Now if they were like an associate in your practice, and you knew they sucked

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Well that never happens.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Every associate sucks once they leave right, that's not the truth everything goes bad is blamed on the associate after they leave.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** That's right.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Yeah so, it's a tough question but yeah make sure that you can't tell the team members until the contract is signed, the really nice well-written letter goes out on behalf of the selling dentist, explaining what happened, intro on the purchasing dentist.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Yeah do it the right way, great question Dr. Anonymous.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Let's do a call.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Excellent. Hey just a quick second before Rich and I do the call, real quick little announcement here about some friends of ours and group that we're very close with them, they can really help you out quite a bit, [dentistadvisors.com](http://dentistadvisors.com), you know for many years, probably several decades now, Rich and I have been very serious about our future and we've worked with financial planners for quite some time. We wouldn't really do this ourselves because we're dentists and we don't really know the ins and outs of financial planning. So, when we recommend financial planners, we generally recommend a group that, number 1, works exclusively with dentists here, they know the ins and the outs of your dental practice and what dentists are going through in their lives, they only work with dentists, they only do financial planning; they're not there to sell you all kinds of different products and talk about other weird things. They are financial planners and not only that they are fiduciaries which means legally they always have to do what's in your best interest.

So, if you're looking to make sure your future is what it should be, where you want to go with your goals then you need a really good financial planner and we highly, highly recommend checking out Dentists Advisors, is really easy go to [dentistadvisors.com](http://dentistadvisors.com), all one-word [dentistadvisors.com](http://dentistadvisors.com) check them out. By the way when you speak to them let them know that you listen to the Dental Practice Fixers podcast and that you are friends of the Madow brothers, I don't know what that'll get you exactly but give it a try and see.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Good stuff.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Actually happen if we do the phone call.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Let's do a phone call today. Okay I'm not sure what to expect here, this is an oral surgeon's office in Indiana that's placed some ads on Facebook and I think some other places as well saying that they do dentures, denture repairs and denture realigns. Which to me sounds a little odd for an oral surgeon in the office so let's give them a call and see what this is all about.

**Nikki:** Oral Surgery this is Nikki how may I help you?

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I have a quick question for you.

**Nikki:** Okay.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** I saw on, I think it was on Facebook or somewhere that you are doing dentures and denture repairs.

**Nikki:** We are in our Seymour office yes.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Yeah, I told it to my dad because he might need a new denture and he told me that he didn't think oral surgeons did dentures so I didn't know so I thought I'd call and find out what is that what's going on.

**Nikki:** Yeah, well we have we actually have someone that comes in specifically on Mondays and he fits our patients for dentures. So, are - they still have to see our doctor because our doctor has to do the initial exam because Mark is the one that does our dentures but he's not a doctor so he just works out of our office. But he is the one that fits our patients for dentures and you know that sends everything to the lab and then they do come to our office.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Right so I don't understand he's not a doctor what is he?

**Nikki:** Mark is just the gentleman that, I mean he is just the one that fits us for dentures and he just fits our patients for the dentures.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** So again, I'm not trying to be flip here he's not a dentist but he comes into your office and he fits your patients for dentures.

**Nikki:** Correct.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** And then what if the denture needs like to be adjusted or it's not right, he also

**Nikki:** That's what he does, he does that as well yes.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** So, what is it but what kind of training does he have?

**Nikki:** I mean I have no idea. I mean you could ask you could I mean I don't even know what's Mark's last name? Okay I mean if you want to look him up his name is Mark [ / ]

**Dr. Dave Madow:** So, okay so you're suggesting I just like google Mark [ / ] ?

**Nikki:** Yeah, I mean I unfortunately I don't know what Mark's training is before he came to our office, I had no what do you know how much you know how much training Mark had before he came to our office? I told him to Google because I had no idea to be honest.

I don't know. He works in a couple different offices.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** So, just kind of like travels around with a little suitcase and dentures in different offices?

**Nikki:** I mean I don't I mean I guess you could put it like that. I mean I don't really know I couldn't give you any background information on Mark's training or where he went to school or anything like that, I have no idea.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Okay but then one of the oral surgeons also looks at the denture?

**Nikki:** Yes.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Are there oral surgeon?

**Nikki:** There are oral surgeons in our office right.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** And they know about dentures the oral surgeons?

**Nikki:** Yeah, I mean they wouldn't have - Mark wouldn't work in our office if our doctors didn't feel confident that they knew what was going on.

**Dr. Dave Madow:** Okay I think I get the picture thanks so much for your information.

**Nikki:** You're welcome, bye.

**Dr. Rich Madow:** Wow that's a little scary isn't it , they've got this guy Mark coming into the oral surgeons office, he's doing the dentures from start to finish it sounds like and they have no idea who he is, what his training is, what kind of degree he has if any, and it sounds like maybe he's a lab tech I don't know if they have denturist in that state not sure exactly what's going on there. But that was pretty creepy wasn't it? I'm not so sure how much confidence I would have in that and if I were a general dentist in that area would I be too happy about that having some kind of non-dentist coming in to an oral surgeon's office and doing dentures? I'm not sure, but you

know what, anything goes on the Dental Practice Fixers so you decide what you think is going on in this practice and get back to us with your comments [podcast@madow.com](mailto:podcast@madow.com)

And that concludes another episode of the Dental Practice Fixers, I'm Dr. Richard Madow, I'm here with my co-host Dr. David Madow and we will see you soon. Thanks for listening.