



SEATTLE STUDY CLUB®

The following is an excerpt from a recent keynote address given by Dr. Michael Cohen, the founder of Seattle Study Club, to all of the Seattle Study Club directors.

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oday I want to review our job as SSC directors. Over the past few years, we have been focusing on the threats out there that surround us and have been ignoring the world of possibilities that are there for our picking. Our job should be to focus on "connecting the dots of opportunity."

Let's start by asking these questions:

- 1) How many of you have reviewed your job description as a Director of Programming lately?
- 2) Do you go about putting your programs together each year in the same way, using the same formula that you used last year?
- 3) How many of you contract your lecturers before you have developed your goals, objectives and theme for the year?
- 4) How many of you still think your most effective programs are with big name speakers?
- 5) Do you bring new concepts to the table each year which are not anticipated, yet enjoyed by your members? Is there transparency? Does every member clearly understand what you are trying to accomplish and where you are proposing to take them?
- 6) Most important, in operating your club, are you keeping pace with what is happening around you in the marketplace? Or are you on a path towards irrelevancy and becoming outdated?

You need to become an "Agent of Change." Your strength as a leader is dependent on your ability to implement and manage change.

As a Seattle Study Club leader you hold a very powerful weapon in your hand that can change your professional and personal life forever. Your ace in the hole is your study club and if operated with integrity and wisdom, will be life altering for your members and an invaluable long term asset for you. The foundation of your club is your program ... and you only have one chance each year to build it right.

Your program must be a significant improvement over last year and it must be better than everything else out there. To do this, you must focus on the assets that are your separators; your club is a true "University without Walls," the programming has moved from artisanal to bespoke, and it must evoke "The Wow Effect" in your members each year.

A University without Walls: This is not simply about getting together with a small group of dentists to treatment plan. It is not about going to a meeting for 3 days in Arizona or Hawaii. It's not about getting on your computer at 5:30 in the morning or 9:30 at night to watch two-dimensional "how to" videos. It is about being in a place where one can explore the entire world of dentistry, medicine, the basic sciences, behavioral sciences, practice management, business operations and much more! Our University without Walls is about helping to develop the Complete Clinician, because with a broader knowledge base which supersedes the boundaries of conventional dentistry we can be of far greater help to our patients.

Moving the curriculum from artisanal to bespoke: It is no longer enough to provide strong programs each year. We are now building programs that cater to each individual's needs. The programming now addresses multiple demographics within the customized curriculum for your community. Research continues to show that the individualized approach to education is significantly more effective at creating behavior change than a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

The Wow Effect: Your members must love your overall program and what you do with and for them each year to the point where they become ambassadors in the community. Walking advertisements for the club! There can be no fillers, each meeting should be able to stand on its own as excellent.

How can you continue to improve and alter your programs now so you can stay relevant to your members? How can you lead to the results you want to see? We are going to have to provide sessions which meet the needs and wants of all of our members. Recently we have placed significant emphasis on our younger members, the Millennials. However it is important that we continue to provide value to the other two age groups as well. Those 40-60 are in the prime of their careers and the dentists who are in the final phase of practice (60+), are still very productive and can remain important advocates for interdisciplinary dentistry.

Cross generational programming, in order to appeal to all and be as effective as possible should encompass:

- Lectures in all phases of dentistry
- Laboratory programs
- Interactive clinical sessions
- Business forums
- Health and well-being
- Technology programs
- Practice management
- Practice transitions in all phases
- Leadership
- Communications
- And so much more ...

Don't get stuck within the confines of your generation. You must get out of your comfort zone and get to know the needs (both stated and unstated) of all of your members. Understand how you can best serve them. The bottom line is commit to making your club the best that it can be. Understand the marketplace, what your competition is doing and add value where appropriate ... pause and appreciate what you have!