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## Six More Curious ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

**Y**ou've probably heard about the World's Largest Ball of Twine, a roadside attraction every seasoned road tripper has probably thought about visiting. The American highway system is littered with these kinds of obscure and fascinating attractions. All you have to do is find them!

### Eartha

Yarmouth, Maine, directly north of Portland on the I-295, is home to Eartha, the World's Largest . . . world (well, globe). The globe, which has a diameter of about 41 feet, is built to 1:1,000,000 scale, with one inch equaling 16 miles. The replica Earth is housed in the DeLorme corporate headquarters, which is open to visitors.

### Iowa 80

Another "world's largest." This time, it's a truck stop on I-80, in Walcott, Iowa. This mega truck stop has everything truckers and road trippers need to continue on their long

haul, from the typical fuel and food, to the less expected dentists and chiropractors. There's even a showroom displaying the road's fanciest show trucks.

### Starship Enterprise

North of the border, a little south of Calgary, is the town of Vulcan, Alberta. The town is not shy about their pop-culture significance, having built a scaled replica of the iconic U.S.S. Enterprise, as well as the Vulcan Tourism & Trek Station.

### Trees of Mystery

In Northern California, along the Redwood Highway (U.S. Highway 101), you'll find a 49-foot-tall statue of the legendary Paul Bunyan, along with his companion, Babe the Blue Ox. These two loom over the entrance to the Trees of Mystery and the surrounding redwood wilderness.

### Wall Drug

If you're ever on I-90, near Badlands National Park (maybe on your way to Mount Rushmore), be sure to



check out Wall Drug, situated in the quaint, remote town of Wall, South Dakota. Wall Drug isn't your typical drug store — it's defined by dated kitsch and Great Plains eccentricity.

### World's Largest Dinosaur

Yet another attraction in Alberta, this time a little north of Calgary, in Drumheller, is an 86-foot-tall T-rex. You can even climb right up into his jaws for an impressive view of the area! The town is also home to the Royal Tyrrell Museum, which contains Canada's largest collection of dinosaur fossils.

**R**elationships are at the heart of everything we do in the field of pediatric dentistry. And whether you are interacting with patients, parents, or team members, developing positive and effective communication will have a significant impact on office culture and the quality of care you are providing patients.

Think of a successful dental practice as a professional orchestra: The doctor is the director, and the team members are the musicians, with their own unique instruments that have their own unique pitches. To produce a beautiful melody, everyone must know their part and play cohesively. Otherwise, the "music" would really just be cacophonous noise with no direction.

## A uniform voice will require each and every team member to stay up to date and educated.

A dentist has the responsibility of deciding how he or she wants the office to run and must ensure the

team members can execute their individual duties. Like musicians, everyone in the practice must be on the same page, following the lead and keeping time. This is why having a very clear communication script for the office is so important to office culture. A uniform voice will require each and every team member to stay up to date and educated.

To stay up to date, everyone will be required to take a little extra time to recite the common phrasings and critical expressions. Whether a team member has 20 years of experience or is brand new to pediatric dentistry should not matter if the office vernacular is constantly evolving with time, technology, and concerns. Training has to reflect changes in parenting styles and new products as well, which should require steady revision. This grand-scheme approach will mean a push for education, and the Pediatric Dental Assistants Association is a great place for assistants to start the conversation.

Of course, every musician must have a good ear, meaning every individual player must listen to the orchestra around them. Similarly, after dedicating time to updating and memorizing the "score" of the practice, the next step is to learn and practice listening. In "The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People," Stephen Covey states the fifth of the seven habits is to "Seek

first to understand and then to be understood," which I take to mean "practice listening with empathy and attention before trying to be heard." There is a reason we have two ears and one mouth, after all.

Another important skill every team should cultivate is the ability to communicate with people from all walks of life, no matter their age, gender, or cultural background. Having a set script for the practice is great, but you must also have the ability to adapt the language in order to reach everyone as effectively as possible. The more people assistants have experience talking with, the better. Learning different approaches and techniques from one another at our annual conference can help build this skillset.

The possibilities for dental assistants are endless when empowered with the tools they need for great communication. An accomplished communicator will be proactive and will be more valuable to the office as whole. The association is designed to build a greater variety of communication skills among assistants so that they may be more proactive, and consequently greater assets to any team.

*Rhea*  
Rhea M. Haugseth, D.M.D



# 3 WAYS TO BE MORE MEMORABLE

**T**hink back to the last time you introduced yourself to a new friend or co-worker. During the course of that conversation, you probably answered three simple questions: “What’s your name?,” “What do you do?,” and “Where are you from?”

These standard get-to-know-you questions are a half-hearted attempt to find common ground between two new acquaintances. But it’s the resulting awkward and unfortunate small talk that causes most of us to avoid meeting new people.

Fortunately, there are a few ways to get around it. With these tips, your answers will be so memorable and engaging, you might actually look forward to introductions.

**“What’s Your Name?”** Make yourself more memorable by repeating your name throughout the conversation. Address yourself by name while you’re talking, or tell the story of how your name came to be yours. These subtle cues will help move your name from their short-term memory to the long-term portion of their brain. Take it one step further and create an association between your name and something that is memorable to the person you’re talking to. The correlation will keep your name stuck in their head.

**“What Do You Do?”** Most of the time, the people who ask this question are looking for a simple answer. Unfortunately, those answers aren’t very

memorable, and they don’t provide a gateway to further conversation. Try answering this question with another question that relates to their life. “You know Post-it Notes? I invented those.”

**“Where Are You From?”** If you want to make this answer memorable, you have to find a way to describe where you come from as a unique and interesting place. Rather than saying, “I’m from Minnesota,” you might say, “I’m from a small town in Minnesota — population 1,000 — home of the world’s largest otter statue.” This not only makes your answer stand out, but it invites others to discuss the quirks or eccentricities of their own hometowns — and communication flourishes.

Try these tips the next time you meet someone new and you’ll soon be known as the king or queen of great first impressions.



## COMMUNICATION Keystones

Effectively Shaping Behavior of Young Patients

Dental assistants in the pediatric field of dentistry are especially concerned with delivering clear, effective, and kind communication to their young patients. Communication management means using appropriate commands, which can be applied universally in this field with every child, whether cooperative or uncooperative. Here are some standard tips for any dental assistant wishing to improve or polish their interactions with pediatric patients.

First, establish a rapport and trust with a young patient by asking questions and listening actively at the beginning of each appointment. The first part of any appointment should include education for the patient to ensure safe treatment.

During the procedure, team members should focus on guiding the behavior of the young patient, meaning the teacher-student role no longer applies, and the dentist and assistant should focus on directing behavior instead of sharing information. To do this, use assertive directives to clearly inform the child what he or she needs to do. For example, “I need you to open your mouth so I can check your teeth.” This communication gives the information concisely, but is still assertive enough to shape a child’s behavior.

It’s very important to pay close attention to the child’s body language as well. Nonverbal cues by the child should help dental teams determine if the child is comfortable or in pain, and this attention will foster better cooperation by the patient.



## SITUATION OF THE MONTH

Dear Pediatric Pro,

I have been a dental assistant for 12 years. As the technology at our practice gets more and more advanced, so does the technology in the hands of our patients and their families! Lately, I have noticed that an increasing number of children and their parents are bringing their cell phones with them to the dentist, sometimes even taking a call or texting during their visit. We have a “no phones” policy in our office, but most people don’t seem to feel comfortable without a mobile device at their fingertips. Cell phones are becoming a problem for assistants, because it feels like the patients aren’t paying attention to instructions about the procedure and aftercare. To make matters worse, we’ve even had a problem with friends or parents of our young patients taking photos in the examination room! How would you suggest dental assistants communicate a strict phone policy without sounding rude or intrusive?

— Marci D., LA

Dear Marci,

Thanks for your question. As someone who has also seen the rise in cell phone use over the past decade, I feel your pain. It’s great that your office has a

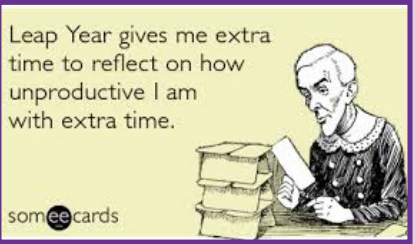
no-phones policy in place, although I understand how difficult it can be to enforce this kind of policy, especially for busy, young families.

I agree, a distraction like a cell phone could make it more difficult to communicate important information to kids and parents. First and foremost, I would advise bringing this issue up with your team, and asking for support. Enforcing rules will not be effective if you are the only one taking the rules seriously, so try to get everyone on the same page. Once you have the team on board, brainstorm the best way to approach the problem. It might be a matter of patient education from their first visit forward, and quick, polite (remembering please and thank you) reminders if the rules aren’t taken seriously.

Do not try to talk over anyone who is on the phone or texting. Although speaking with distracted or rushed parents quickly and halfheartedly is tempting, don’t lose sight of what is really important — getting the information across effectively. Have patience with visitors who are new, or who might not know the guidelines. The worst thing you can do is be short with someone who sincerely doesn’t know any better.

— Pediatric Pro

## ENJOY A LAUGH ON US!



## CHOCOLATE CHIA CHERRY PROTEIN SHAKE

*Going paleo and looking for a yummy and satisfying treat? Try this great smoothie recipe, sure to wake you up for your morning workout!*



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup frozen, pitted cherries
- 1 ½ cups almond milk
- 1 tablespoon ground chia seeds
- 1 teaspoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon honey

### INSTRUCTIONS

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.

\*This recipe courtesy of PaleOMG

*Enjoy!*