

Who's your superhero?

Not all heroes wear capes, **Shaz Memon** reminds us

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There has been a lot in the press about superheroes over the summer. If the England team reaching the World Cup semi-finals warranted a collective hailing, then the young Wild Boar football team and their rescuers who escaped the caves in Thailand – all bar the heroic Thai Navy Seal who tragically lost his in the mission – most definitely do.

Bravery and courage, the triumph of good over evil and a fitting fancy outfit are the staples of fantasy superheroes but, as Twitter told us mid-rescue mission, not all heroes wear capes.

They walk among us

Indeed, sometimes they might be in your midst on a day-to-day basis, assisting with suction in rubber clogs and a pink tunic, or handling infection control regulations and challenging patients with good humour and aplomb.

Last month, a story tucked away on a local news website hailed as heroes a dentist and a dental nurse who had worked together for some 30 years delivering dental care to the residents of Suffolk – often having treated three generations of the same family. So impressive was the longevity of this partnership that their local MP sent a letter of thanks in acknowledgment for their service.

Newly retired Elaine Cavey and Robert Bradbury were also inundated with gifts and thank you cards from appreciative patients – testimony perhaps to their 'super hero' value in the community.

Praise within a practice team should always go above and beyond the annual appraisal if a key member goes above and beyond.

Unsung heroes

In any small business, where time is of the essence and

the delivery of its service requires much multi-tasking from those within in, it is easy to forget to acknowledge the unsung heroes who makes everyone's lives so much easier – and this could be a missed opportunity when it comes to raising awareness of your brand. Dental marketing is not all bells and whistles, nor does it always demand banging the drum about good oral health habits or the cosmetic treatments and fast orthodontic systems the practice offers.

People buy from people as well as the great service they offer, and the promotion of an exceptional player in your practice team can sometimes prove to be the 'big sell' you may have been ignoring all this time.

One suspects that the exceptionally warm welcome and professional support offered to patients by Elaine Cavey and co at Bank Buildings Dental Surgery pulled in the punters from all four corners of Sudbury (the small market town it serves) as much as its five-star NHS Choices rating and a reputation as a solid local dental practice.

Celebrate the great

Here are some ways you too can celebrate the great and good in recognition of your superheroes, whilst engaging in some imaginative and fruitful dental marketing:

- 1. Nominate them for an award.** There are many opportunities to recognise a team member's efforts within dentistry. As well as the bank of dental journals with related award ceremonies, there are other professional organisations within and without the profession that celebrate small businesses and their staff. Your healthcare trust, the local chamber of commerce, local news outlets, and the dental corporate of which you may be part often run awards schemes, so do keep an eye out and match the right team member to the criteria. It's not all about winning, but a nomination can raise a profile of both employee and employer!
- 2. Share their story.** Has a team member recently volunteered with a dental charity at a recent dental outreach trip? Do they have an interesting hobby or pastime, or are they a member of a local successful sports team? Often extraordinary stories are hidden

within ordinary lives. The dental nurse in Abu Dhabi whose passion for scuba diving has led to a passion for underwater photography certainly captured the imagination of one news website recently. On your practice website page, make sure you list their interests as well as their professional qualifications and GDC registration number. It adds an extra dimension and a 'human touch' to what can be a pretty flat 'about us' page for any potential patient

- 3. Team member of the week.** Use your social media presence to focus on one member of staff and share what they can offer new and existing patients. Post updates about their day or photos of them in the clinic – make it fun as well as informative and educational. Alternatively, invite key members to take over the reins of your

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digital dental marketing for a week. The NHS does this with great success with a new person curating its NHS account and sharing their NHS story on Twitter

- 4. Say a quiet thank you.** Don't forget to ditch the dental marketing hat for a minute to say thanks to your team. A workplace hero may be your best and most valuable marketable asset – but private acknowledgement is also worth its weight in gold. **D**

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