

SPEAR

STUDY CLUB PROFILES IN SUCCESS

“IT’S NOT WHAT I THOUGHT
IT WAS GOING TO BE.
IT’S SO MUCH MORE.”

THE QUESTION THAT SPARKED IT ALL...

It began with a suggestion from a colleague and mentor of mine, Dr. Rich Green. I was at a point where I was

growing frustrated, both with how my practice was developing and my relationships with my referring doctors; there wasn’t the quality communication you need to have in a high-end practice, especially one that focuses on

comprehensive care. Rich asked me a simple question: “If communication is a problem, why don’t you educate the dentists you work with?” So my reason for starting a study club was really to help elevate the knowledge of the GPs I work with.



Dr. Peter Domagala
PERIODONTIST
Gurnee, IL

During his 18 years in practice, Dr. Peter Domagala has participated in a number of study groups, but four years ago he launched his own Spear Study Club. Here he explains what made him start, and why he is so happy with his decision.

ON WHAT IT TAKES TO GET STARTED...

It was much easier than I ever thought it would have been. Spear really has everything covered from A to Z, and they provide as much support as you need. In the beginning, I had quite a few questions about the process—How do I select members? What do I look for? How do we run our meetings, etc.—and they were always there to answer them, and were incredibly supportive all the way. They provide a binder with plenty of information, including detailed explanations on how to select members and how to run a successful meeting, with sample cases for additional perspective. It’s very comprehensive and easy to follow, and you get great coaching from your study club advisor.

A CURRICULUM THAT REACHES EVERYONE...

I deliberately chose people for my club who had a shared vision to be the best dentists they could be, whether they were far along in their education or just beginning their journey—and Spear is great at being able to reach dentists across that spectrum of experience and bring them to a common understanding. Also, because Spear provided the cases

to review—rather than having us start with our own cases—there was no pressure at the beginning. It allowed the group members to communicate in a comfortable learning environment, and for them to become acquainted with and trust one another without having to put themselves on the line.

THE EFFECT ON THE MEMBERS...

I remember one of the dentists presenting a case at one of our meetings. Afterward, he told me that, had he not been in the group, he not only would have never had the confidence to present the case, he never would have even treatment-planned it. He was really excited about how the club was helping him develop his skills. I'm seeing that in everyone. We are learning not only the technical aspects, but also the skills and confidence to present what we believe is the best treatment.

A NEW LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION...

They are sending me photos now—that's a big change right there. For instance, I had a member call me over the weekend to ask, "I have this important case coming in. Can I send you these photos, and can I come early so we can discuss this case?" We never would have done that before; in fact, very few of these members would have even taken pictures, prior to joining the group. While I haven't tracked the number of referrals I'm getting from the group—that wasn't my reason for starting the club; it was a quality of practice decision—I have definitely seen significant improvement in that regard.

THE SCOTTSDALE EXPERIENCE...

When we started, two or three members of the group were concerned about the

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cost of attending a seminar. Yet, when we attended the first one together, one of those members registered for another workshop – before the first half-day was even over! Also, as a group, we signed up for our second seminar before we had even completed the first.

There's something special about that experience, and it motivates people in a profound way. The education is great, but it's also about being together, and not being distracted by all the other things that occupy your attention back home. It's such a different environment, and as a result, we come home more connected as a group. We are developing friendships and learning from each other. From my perspective as the leader, it's just awesome to see.

I can honestly say the study club experience is not what I thought it was going to be; it's so much more than I thought it was going to be.

"We're like a family now. It's so enlightening to get each other's opinions on these cases. What I have learned about photography alone has been worth every penny of the whole experience—the difference it has made in how I communicate is just like night and day. I'll die before I quit Spear."

— DR. JAMES ORTICELLI, STUDY CLUB MEMBER

THE GROWTH CONTINUES...

We are now in our fourth year and loving it. The club is getting stronger and more united. We have almost finished the Spear continuum as a group, we are starting to present our own cases, and we're even bringing in staff members now to help make them stronger as well. I believe in the Spear system so much that this year I decided to give back and became a Visiting Faculty member.

WORDS OF ADVICE....

This is one of the simplest and most powerful things you can do to transform your relationships with your colleagues and do more high-value cases. It will change your practice. It will change your life. And after you do it, you will look back and ask yourself: "Why was I even hesitating?"

SPEAR

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