



# SAS Communicator

SAS Transitions  
Dental Practice Brokers

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## “Finding the Right Associate/Partner” “The Method!”

**as-so-ci-ate** 1. A partner; colleague. 2. A companion; comrade. Webster’s definition gives us food for thought. Often when I talk with dentists that are considering bringing in an “associate,” I hear them describe the associate as another employee or someone who will just help manage the patient load so that their responsibility can decrease and give them an opportunity to someday retire.

These dentists haven’t given much thought about what type of person they are looking for, what type of background this person should have, how they expect this person to interface with their staff, what their value system is based on, etc. Instead they settle for a live body who says he or she is interested in the practice.

Likewise, many dentists looking for a new practice,

base their decision on the size of the practice, its revenue base, facility, and most of all compensation potential.

In the article *Associateship bliss* by Dennis Spaeth, editor of Dental Practice Report, he develops a common theme among some transition consultants that finding the “right” associate/partner is about finding someone you are willing to spend a lifetime with, similar to a marriage.

It’s no wonder that so many dentists enter into associateship relationships that turn out to be less than perfect for their practices, patients, and staff? Lack of knowledge about their new employer and future partner, could explain why so many associates pull up stakes and leave before their second year.

The reasons for failed associateships are multidimensional, but one of the main reasons can often be associated with the absence



of a “courting “ period prior to association. I recommend that potential partners or their representatives complete comprehensive interviews with each other that include substantial resume information, review profile instruments designed to help determine the compatibility of both doctors, meet together in a variety of environments, explore personal information about family and backgrounds, and get to know what makes each other tick!

The success or failure of an associateship can depend on how two dentists come together in determining if they can be partners, colleagues, companions and comrades.



“We are better together than we are alone.”

...Walter Payton

## TRANSITION CORNER

### “How do I prepare my staff for a practice transition?”

First, you need to define your own personal transition plan. By knowing where you are going, you can bring others along.

Next, you need to share your plan with your staff. If you are bringing in an associate who will buy you out or become a partner, the most important aspect of helping to ensure

success, is having everyone involved in finding the “right” person. If you are a dentist who plans on selling your practice and moving on, the best approach is to tell your team members upfront to help prevent feelings of distrust and betrayal.

Many dentists believe if they tell staff members of their eventual transition,

some of them will leave the practice. However, the true reality is that most team members would like to stay and work with the patients they have come to know and care about. If the transition experience is handled correctly, your chance for loss is actually minimized.

In all scenarios, the *Golden Rule* still applies!

### Next Issues:

- Professional Coaching... What Should I Look For?
- Yearly Planning, The Law of the Universe!
- How Can We Customize Our Patient Education Programs Using Power-Point® Software?



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## “Transition Consulting for Dental Professionals”



**Susan A. Spear**  
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### What is SAS Transitions and who is Susan Spear?

*SAS Transitions Dental Practice Brokers* is a national transition service company and brokerage firm dedicated to providing comprehensive transition consulting for all dental professionals. I bring over 35 years experience in dentistry to helping dental professionals analyze, assess, and plan to improve the way they currently deliver their services.

My background and experience includes working with private and commercial practice and business transitions and acquisitions, developing and implementing marketing strategies for dental businesses, managing both the clinical and business aspects of quality dental practices, teaching and training dental professionals at all levels including having an associate faculty position at the University of Colorado School of Dentistry for over 18 years, and providing business consulting and personal coaching services for a variety of dental professionals throughout the United States.

I believe there are three aspects to every business, the Business Operations, the Financial Management, and most importantly, the Relationship Component that is the fundamental glue of every business. As a change management specialist, I address all three aspects of your business in an effort to support the business as a whole. I also value my ability to network with other dental support companies and professionals when necessary to assure my clients receive the best care and services dentistry has to offer!

## Service Area Highlights

- Transition Assessment and Planning for Dental Professionals
- Practice Sales / Buyer Representation
- Transition Consulting Associate Search and Placement Services
- Quality Practice Prospectus Profiles and Valuations
- Development of Professional Agreements and Contracts
- Partnership - Development and Communication Support

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