

Kristi Smith: Welcome everyone to the Beyond Bitewings: Business Side of Dentistry podcast. I am Kristi Smith. I am the new client relations director and also marketing director at Edwards & Associates. And with me, I have Robert Edwards, a founder and president of Edwards & Associates. Hi, Robert.

Robert Edwards: Good morning.

Kristi Smith: I have Lynn Ledbetter, The director of operations at Edwards & Associates.

Lynn Ledbetter: Hello.

Kristi Smith: And I have Ash Faizullah, who is one of our senior team leaders at the firm.

Ash Faizullah: Hello.

Kristi Smith: Hey. So we want to talk about the reason we started this podcast and what information we want to pass along to our listeners. And I think that we had decided that this was just a really good format to get our words out there for people. So, Robert, what is your thought on why you wanted to start the podcast?

Robert Edwards: Well, I think so many of our clients need help in business matters, not technical matters. They're good clinicians, but most of them will admit they don't have much experience, if any, at running a business. And most dentists are entrepreneurs. They have their own business, so our job is to help educate them as to business matters, how they can run their business, and specifically the business of dentistry.

Kristi Smith: Right. I think you've said many times that they don't teach business in dental school.

Robert Edwards: They don't teach business in dental school. I think they teach them maybe to write a business plan.

Kristi Smith: Right, which we found is-

Lynn Ledbetter: not very not very useful at all.

Robert Edwards: Not very useful at all.

Kristi Smith: Right. Okay. And Lynn, what do you think about the podcast? And what do you hope that we can get out there and...

Lynn Ledbetter: It's a great question, Kristi.

Kristi Smith: I put you on the spot, sorry.

Lynn Ledbetter: Oh, it's okay. No, I think the goal is just to inform and educate about the things that they need to be aware of that are maybe current events or just general dental business information that all dental owners, business owners, need to know, so that their practice functions in the most efficient way possible behind

the scenes. Because, I think, that's where we can take some of the stress off of them. That's where we can offer our help. I mean, we can't help them extract teeth, but we can help them behind the scenes in running their practice.

Kristi Smith: I would say too, I mean, they know how to be entrepreneurs, I think. But there's dental specific things that they need to know as entrepreneurs that we want to teach them.

Robert Edwards: Absolutely. Any number of things that some don't know, and some just don't focus on it, because they're too busy doing the work.

Kristi Smith: They get wrapped up in that. And what we hope to do is maybe even take some of that from them, that they don't need to be doing also. I mean, there's the little bitty stuff that they don't really even need to do. Ash, do you have anything to add to that?

Ash Faizullah: Yes, and honestly, I think the podcast is a great outlet to inform people. A lot of times we have clients that will reach out to us with similar questions, honestly, over the phone. But having a downloadable content available on their phone. You can basically download our episodes, take notes where you need to. And, hopefully, we'll be able to help you run your practice better, smoother, more efficient. And one thing I do want to tell you guys is that we're not really here to sell. We're here to inform. We want you guys to grow. We do try our best to keep up to date with all the information that's out there, stay current with the information. We're affiliated with multiple members out there, companies, that try to keep us in the loop. And we do our best to forward that information to you guys.

Lynn Ledbetter: That's right, good point.

Kristi Smith: Okay. So what makes us qualified to give this information? Right?

Lynn Ledbetter: Right. I mean, we need to know that. Ash, I think you have something to say? Something to add? You have a lot to add.

Ash Faizullah: Right, well, the first thing is that we're not your typical CPA firm. We like to think of ourselves as dental advisors. With over two decades of experience and partnering with various dental specific vendors, we were able to amass our niche knowledge. We're different and are constantly honing our skills to better serve our dental clients.

Robert Edwards: Very good, Ash.

Ash Faizullah: Thank you.

Kristi Smith: Oh, so we've been, this firm... I think Robert, we talked about this a little bit earlier. Edwards & Associates has been working in the dental department, dental field, since 1993 you said. That's 27 years.

Robert Edwards: That's correct, yes.

Kristi Smith: And you started out doing seminars, I believe?

Robert Edwards: We started out with seminars approved by the Academy of General Dentistry for continuing educational credits for the dentists that attended. And one of our early things was to ask them to bring a guest, and it was free to them if they would bring a guest. So that's the way we tried to share our knowledge with non-clients and grow from that.

Kristi Smith: Right. And now we have grown to 400 plus dentists that we work with on a regular basis.

Robert Edwards: And they're not all here in Texas. They're in California, Arizona, all across the southern United States.

Kristi Smith: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So Robert, why don't you tell us a little bit about what our listeners can expect in our podcast.

Robert Edwards: Well, we have a lot of relationships with different vendors in the dental industry, not just here locally in Dallas and Fort worth or Texas, but all over the country, through our association with the Academy of Dental CPAs. What we want to do is bring some of those people in to share their knowledge of their specific areas of expertise with our clients and with others. You don't have to be our client to call us and get a reference to somebody that you might use for maybe negotiating higher reimbursement rates from the PPOs, or maybe renegotiating your lease terms. We'll have vendors talking about both of those subjects in upcoming episodes.

Kristi Smith: Right, okay. And let's talk a little bit about the Edwards & Associates team. We know it's not just Robert working behind the scenes there. He has a great team of very qualified people.

Lynn Ledbetter: See, this is where I would normally say Robert barely works at all. Just kidding.

Kristi Smith: Well, I think that's not very fair.

Robert Edwards: You don't miss a chance to get that in.

Lynn Ledbetter: I know [crosstalk 00:06:21].

Kristi Smith: I don't think that's exactly fair, but-

Lynn Ledbetter: It's not true.

Kristi Smith: So we have an excellent team, many CPAs and other licensed accountants. Licensed, I guess? Or [crosstalk 00:06:36]-

Robert Edwards: Degreed.

Kristi Smith: Degreed accountants. That's probably a better word, excuse me, who work with our clients and get them the information that they need to run a better practice,

grow their practice and achieve their goals. Would you say that's fair? That's good?

Robert Edwards: Absolutely.

Kristi Smith: Yeah. There's a lot of support staff, and we have the knowledge that most dentists need, I think, to do what they need to do, basically, and get their practice going. And this information that we're going to give them is just part of what we do.

Robert Edwards: It's just something we want to share with people to really see them succeed. I know it sounds like a cliché, but, really, their success is our success.

Lynn Ledbetter: It's true though.

Robert Edwards: They grow; we grow.

Lynn Ledbetter: Absolutely.

Kristi Smith: No, I think that's true. And I think that's one thing that I've always taken away from working at the firm is that we care. It's not just about getting the work. It's not just about keeping the doors open, which, I mean, obviously that's a goal, but we care.

Lynn Ledbetter: Right, it's not just earning a living. It's actually taking care of these people and helping them to achieve their goals. And it's really amazing the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes, that the clients aren't even aware of, the amount of discussions that we're having about their individual circumstances. Because oftentimes, a scenario will present itself, and there's lots of communications within the firm about how the best way to tackle it is or what the best response would be. And then, we go back to the client, say, "Okay, here's your solution." And they don't know about all the brainstorming sessions we've had to try to fine tune the right solution for their circumstance. So it's sometimes seems very simple, "Okay, here was your question. And now here's the answer," but they don't understand.

We really do try to accomplish what is best for them looking at all the pitfalls that they might have, depending on which route we take, and present that to them, so that they can make an educated choice. So, we really do care. We're not going to just throw out an answer to give them an answer. We're going to look for the answer that best suits their needs.

Robert Edwards: And that's one advantage of having a team like we have, with as many people, with as much experiences as they have. It's great to bounce ideas off of different people in the team and then get the right answer to the client.

Kristi Smith: Right.

Lynn Ledbetter: I'm sorry. In addition to the CPAs and accountants, who are very knowledgeable in accounting type things, we've got lots of experience with the dental field. I

mean, we've got people on staff who have worked at dental offices, they have worked front desk situations, that we can call on and say, "How do you run this Dentrax report? Or how do you tell them to keep track of their daily receipts and their end-of-day totals and things like that?" So there's lots of different kinds of knowledge, not to mention the vendors that we can reach out to and say, "Help me solve this problem that the client is having," or "Can I refer them to you?" or whatever it be.

Kristi Smith: I think some of those behind the scenes conversations have sort of led to the podcast too, in a way, I mean, not the specific individual things. But I think that things do come up, and this is a great way to get that information out there. And it seems to be the most current format for most people. I think they're really listening to podcasts too.

Lynn Ledbetter: Well, and to Ashley's point, client situations vary, of course, but a lot of them ask the same or similar questions. And this would be an easy format to say, "Hey, here's maybe a more in-depth answer to this question." Or there's a lot of clients or dentists that don't ask that question that, but if they heard it, they would be like, "Oh yeah, that is a great question. I would like that information." So if one person asks it, then other people probably want to know as well.

Kristi Smith: Right. And I think we've even talked about inviting listeners to send us their questions also, because that will give us an idea of what they really need to know, what they really want to know.

Lynn Ledbetter: Right, what they want to know.

Robert Edwards: What they're thinking. Yeah, absolutely.

Kristi Smith: Because we know what we know, but if they don't tell us then yeah. We've always said that too. If they don't tell us, then we don't know. Not always, I mean, we can read, but it's good to have some feedback. Ash, I think you had said that 200 years of experience or something. Is that what you came up with? [crosstalk 00:10:44].

Lynn Ledbetter: That's really scary.

Ash Faizullah: Combined experience.

Kristi Smith: Combined experience, right.

Ash Faizullah: That is true.

Kristi Smith: So that's great to have and pass along. So that is a little bit about Edwards & Associates and this podcast adventure that we are about to embark upon. We hope you will listen in each week as we impart our knowledge, give you ideas and all the information that you need to run a successful practice.

Ash Faizullah: And how often could our listeners be expecting our podcast to be uploaded?

Kristi Smith: Every two weeks. We'll be every two weeks. There'll be a podcast with a different topic, and sometimes a guest, sometimes it will be an internal conversation. That's a little bit about Beyond Bitewings and Edwards & Associates. And we hope you'll listen every two weeks for a new episode. And thank you for listening. And if you've got questions, please email them to [info@eandassociates.com](mailto:info@eandassociates.com). That's [info@eandassociates.com](mailto:info@eandassociates.com).

Lynn Ledbetter: Thanks, guys.

Ash Faizullah: Thank you.

Kristi Smith: Thank you.

Robert Edwards: Thank you, Kristi.