

Independent Practice Success Story: A Brush Above

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Dr. Marcella Guzman, her long-term office manager Lili, and her CareCredit Practice Development Manager Heather sat down to discuss the practice's **27+ year growth journey** that shows no signs of slowing. One thing Dr. Guzman found is that growth must be intentional; it doesn't just happen on its own.

Dr. Guzman has been in practice for 31 years, 27 of them in private practice. Her practice provides general and aesthetic dentistry and has three specialists working at her office several days a week for the convenience of her patients, putting her total practice team at 20.



Dr. Marcella Guzman

Owner
A Brush Above



Lili Barraza

Office Manager
A Brush Above



Heather B.

CareCredit
Practice
Development
Manager (PDM)

"We are intentional about almost every aspect of the practice – what we look like, how we treat patients, the dentistry we provide – everything. Each December we determine goals including total production, production per provider and hygienist, daily goals and more. We've grown so much recently, I was actually hesitant to increase goals for 2025, but realized if you're not intentionally growing, you are stagnating. So we added another associate and all of my doctors are taking more courses so they can do more comprehensive treatments that are not necessarily covered by insurance."

Dr. Marcella Guzman

During Dr. Guzman's first decade in practice, her growth was slow and steady and she built her patient base and realized the vision of the patient journey she wanted to deliver. In 2019 she made the bold decision to further expand her office and add additional chairs. Even during COVID the practice grew.

DR Dr. Guzman:

"In the beginning we grew slowly. I knew I was going to go in debt because it's part of the process so I didn't let fear hold me back. You have to spend money to make money. So we invested in a larger space, in a lot of technology, and in training our team.

I feel like everything happened for a reason throughout my journey. Honestly, the hardest part was trying to find the balance between being a parent and business owner – which I think both men and women struggle with. Focusing on the patient experience has facilitated our growth more than any other single thing. The majority of our new patients are from word of mouth."

OM Lili:

"Yes, because at the end of the day, the dentistry itself is what sells our practice. When patients show off their beautiful veneers, straight teeth and talk about how we treat them, their friends and family end up in our chairs. New patients are one of the KPIs we track and on average we have between 58 and 65 new patients per month."

As the owner of an independent practice, wife, and mother of three boys, Dr. Guzman found one key to success was to create a support network and surround herself with quality people.

DR Dr. Guzman:

"To find balance I created a community. I work better when I have a good support system. I couldn't do this without my husband's support and my team. Or Lili's; she's been with me for 23 years. When we say we are a family, we mean it. We are all busy, but we treat each other and our patients right. So there's no tension between team members that can affect the patient experience. If we have a new hire that doesn't fit our culture, we don't wait to 'see if it works out.' It's best to let them go to find another opportunity.

"To find balance I created a community. I work better when I have a good support system."

~ Dr. Guzman

Another person who is part of our practice support system is our CareCredit rep, Heather. We have a live, invested human, not just a 1-800-number to call and have a random person answer our questions. She happily invests both time and energy and she's focused on helping us, not selling us. That's unique. And I trust her."

PDM Heather:

"I started working with Dr. Guzman and her team nine years ago. When you walk into the office you get a sense for the dynamic of the team. They all want to succeed. They all want to do well together. A smile is so much more than just a filling or a crown. Dr. Guzman wants to provide the very best dentistry for her patients. The entire team was open and honest with me and told me patients weren't scheduling and that they had a lot of unscheduled treatment. So that's where we started to dig in.



They wanted to provide an option that was going to help their patients say yes to care. We had an open dialogue and collaborated as a team. They trusted in me and it's been an incredible journey. Not only do I get to help patients get care, but I also get to help practices grow."

OM Lili:

"We know that Heather's there to help us. I've had reps who constantly just want to sell me something. But it's different with Heather. She's genuine. When she comes in, she shows us our progress, drops off marketing materials – which are always great – helps any way she can. We recently added ADIT for patient communications and we were struggling to get the software working for us. She came in, called her contact at ADIT, got a CareCredit person on the line and was able to make it all work."

PDM Heather:

"That's the important part about having a relationship and being in the office. ADIT was

a new integration for us and we have a great support team. I was immediately able to reach out to our team and the ADIT team to troubleshoot what was going on. It's just what we do when we partner with practices."

DR Dr. Guzman:

"Quite a few years ago we told Heather that we wanted to do bigger cases. We were hesitant to offer CareCredit's longer-term financing options because it costs us a bit more."

PDM Heather:

"I get it. With rising costs everything's become more expensive. Practices want to help patients, but also want to keep costs down. Dr. Guzman told me she wanted to do veneers, ortho, and even full mouth reconstruction, but patients weren't moving forward with care even though they wanted to. We talked about the 18 and 24-month promotional financing options for these types of cases. I used the Impact Calculator to show her the numbers – the cost in terms of fee and the anticipated increased revenue if patients were able accept treatment. Opening more financing options was a game changer for them and their patients. It changed how they were able to practice dentistry and gave them another option to help them grow their practice."

"I used the Impact Calculator to show her the numbers – the cost in terms of fee and the anticipated increased revenue if patients were able accept treatment." ~ Heather

OM Lili:

"The 18 and 24-month options opened the door for patients to accept \$10,000 and even \$20,000 cases. It's been beneficial to a lot of our patients regardless of the case size. We offer CareCredit to everyone with no hesitation. Why?

Because we are focused on making patients happy through quality dentistry. In the 20 years we've had CareCredit we've not had one single patient complain. Not one."

Dr. Guzman and her team are not done growing – despite any external economic forces. They continue to rely on the community of support they have built, including their relationship with their CareCredit PDM Heather.

DR Dr. Guzman:

"I still think we have room for growth when it comes to bigger ticket treatments. My goal is eventually just doing cosmetic dentistry. And I'm sure Heather will be with us as we shift to even more larger cases."

PDM Heather:

"I work with practices like Dr. Guzman's to help with the things that are important to them. As I look back at my partnership with A Brush Above, we've grown a lot, from marriages and growing families to expanding the practice itself. I feel lucky to have been part of their journey, supporting them professionally and sharing their milestones personally. It's not just a business relationship; it's a real partnership built on mutual trust and respect. We're still exploring more ways Dr. Guzman and her team can do even bigger cases. That's where CareCredit is truly different. We invest in our practices and their patients."



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