



Be an all-star like Tony Gwynn: Hit a lot of singles and doubles

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MAJOR LEAGUE HALL OF FAME baseball player **Tony Gwynn** played for the San Diego Padres for 20 seasons. Tony came to the plate 9,288 times and had 3,141 hits. Just 125 of them were home runs, but he only struck out 434 times. In contrast, all-time leader Barry Bonds hit 762 home runs, but struck out 1,757 times.

The home run kings of baseball seem to get the most attention. Fans love the dramatic moment when the ball flies over the fence and the batter takes center stage as he trots around the bases.

The same is true in dentistry. Clinicians who consistently do the biggest cases dominate the lecture circuit and the pages of magazines and journals. There's nothing wrong with this.

Hey, I'm all for docs doing comprehensive, home run dentistry. But we also need to feature the people who are profitably doing high quality singles and doubles dentistry.

In the good old days, it was easy for dentists to metaphorically hit the ball out of the park. The booming economy threw a lot of easy-to-hit pitches right over the center of the plate. Things are different today. The economy is serving up consistent 100 mph fastballs and wicked curveballs. Some dentists who were all-stars five years ago are struggling with too many strikeouts today.

I recently got to know two dentists — Drs. Ken Wilson and Bob Martino — who oversee seven offices in West Virginia. The state is the second poorest in the U.S. with a per capita income of \$16,477, so they knew from the beginning they weren't going to hit many high fee, home run cases.

As Bob says, "We had to adapt to our environment and create a system where we could be profitable and productive doing smaller cases and preventive services."



Here are three actions taken by Ken and Bob:

1. They made hygiene profitable. "Too many practices look at hygiene as a loss leader. Not us," Bob says.

☞ All of their hygienists have assistants and work out of two rooms. Assistants do the fluoride, X-rays, and complete the paperwork. This allows the hygienists to see more patients as they only clean teeth and discuss dentistry.

☞ Their hygienists' days are "scheduled to goal" so they consistently hit their marks.

☞ They make the hygiene departments very profitable by allowing time for sealants, perio treatment, soft tissue management, oral cancer screenings, and Arestin placement.

☞ A major part of their hygiene program is enrolling patients into treatment. Their hygienists are knowledgeable enough that they can educate patients and help set a foundation for treatment needed.

2. They created a unique system to make care affordable. They devised an in-house payment system where payments are taken directly out of their checking accounts. They have information on their credit scores and insurance coverage. Plus, they know the patients very well. The collection rate is always at least 98%.

3. They are rigid and flexible. As Bob says, "We are rigid on the quality of care we provide and flexible with how quickly we complete it. Most of the time, when we start a case, we finish it. It may take years, but we get it done."

Tony Gwynn was inducted into the baseball Hall of Fame in 2007. He is a member of that exclusive club not because of his home run power, but because he consistently hit singles and doubles. The people at Wilson Martino Dental have followed his lead and created all-star results. It will do the same for you. **DE**

Dr. Nate Booth is a speaker, consultant, and author who provides dentists with the information and systems they need to thrive in their dental practices. He is the creator of the in-office, DVD based program, The "Yes" System. For more information, go to www.theyssystem.com, or call (702) 444-1362.