

# **Observations on Success**

*By Gary Adams*



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## Observations on Success

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I have served as the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Podiatric Medical Society (MPMS) for the past 10 years, and more recently have also served as executive director for the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management (AAPP). In these capacities I have had the opportunity to observe, interact and work with scores of successful podiatrists. As a professional association and conference manager, for the past twenty years, a large part of my time has been spent helping association clients to develop educational programs and resources to help their members become more successful. I have been fortunate to work with and learn from some of the most successful podiatrists in the country over the past several years.

Volumes have been written about what it takes to be successful in practice and in life, and I've read a lot of those volumes, most of which offer some great strategies on how to be successful. However, after many years of studying the subject I really don't think it's all that complicated and I believe just about any podiatrist can become truly successful by focusing on just two key concepts.

Before sharing my two keys to becoming a truly successful podiatrist, I think it would be helpful to define the word success. To me, you are successful as a podiatrist if you: maintain a positive attitude, enjoy and feel fulfilled by your work, are patient oriented, liked and well respected by your patients, your staff and your peers, are able to make a very comfortable living and maintain a healthy balance between your professional and personal lives. I'm sure that most of you would consider this a reasonable definition of success. So, how is it that some of you can achieve all of these things and others struggle to attain even a few? How are you doing in making your life as successful as you want it to be? If you are not currently as successful as you want to be in some of these areas, why not commit today to making the changes necessary to bring you total success. Here are some proven strategies and traits that successful podiatrists have in common -- some or all could work for you!

First, every truly successful podiatrist I know is committed to the pursuit of excellence. This means having a lifelong interest in continually monitoring and assessing what is working well and what could be improved in your practice and in your life and committing to learn new strategies and make changes where needed. I think we all know a lot of doctors who struggle to pay their APMA and component dues and complain bitterly about declining practice income who rarely attend educational coding and billing, scientific or practice management conferences that could show them how to practice more efficiently and profitably. Then there's the doctor who complains that they just can't get good help and suffer from tremendous staff turnover. Whose fault is that really? Change is hard work for everyone, but successful podiatrists do the hard work necessary to make the changes that they need to make to be truly successful.

The second key is a personality trait I see in almost every successful podiatrist - "likeability." Patients, staff, colleagues and referring physicians all respond more positively to a doctor they like. It's just as simple as that. All doctors can't be highly skilled surgeons or great communicators but all can be positive, friendly, respectful and caring in their relationships with all around them. I believe "likeability" is the most important key to success.

If you will focus on these two keys to success and make changes if needed in these areas, I know you will become happier and more successful - two very good things to be!

*Gary Adams is the president of Exceptional Management Services, a professional association and conference management company he founded in 1980. He currently serves as executive director of the Massachusetts Podiatric Medical Society, conference manager for the APMA Region One Conference, the New England Podiatry Conference and executive director of the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management. He was an advisor to the APMA Public Information and Education Committee,*

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