Introduction
When you have an important task that needs to be done well, you typically ask an expert for help.

That’s also the strategy behind the management, organization and success of our organization. Working to provide access to affordable dental care could not be done effectively without the input of people who know the most about oral health: dentists and other dental professionals.

While we’re known for offering the largest networks of dentists in the nation, it’s a lesser-known fact that we employ more dentists as in-house consultants than any other dental-benefits carrier. In our offices and boardrooms, they contribute their knowledge of oral health and other issues related to dentistry. It’s our legacy as an organization founded by dentists more than 50 years ago.

From senior management to day-to-day operations, these dental professionals enrich our position as dental benefits experts as we provide access to oral health care to an ever-increasing number of your clients and their enrollees.

From the Top
Starting at the top, dentists lead several of our member companies as CEOs or board members. By having dentists engaged at the highest levels of our management, we ensure that the dental industry’s needs and concerns are represented. Our benefits plans and support systems, as well as policies and procedures, have been developed with the input of professionals that have been on the front lines serving as practicing dentists.

Their involvement in our operations helps us maintain strong, robust dentist networks. With a strong understanding of what it takes to run a dental practice, we believe our approach to the market supports the business, professional and personal goals of dentists. Dentists have responded by joining our networks, attracted by the advantages gained by becoming participating providers.

The involvement of dentists in our management and operations also helps us maintain and build credibility within our dentist networks. We continually refine our dental healthcare product offerings to provide the best, most cost-effective plans for enrollees that also offer easy administration and other advantages to dental offices. When we offer programs and policies at national, regional and local levels, dentists know the plans are designed with their professional and competitive environments as well. This promotes a greater acceptance of the programs by dentists and in turn increases the satisfaction of enrollees and employers with their dental benefits programs and associated dentist networks.

A recent nationwide study points to the effectiveness of our approach to building networks of satisfied dentists. The study, conducted by an independent research firm for Delta Dental Plans Association, concluded that Delta Dental was the market leader and that it outperformed other dental benefits carriers in areas identified by dentists as the most important.

Seventy-seven percent of the dentists surveyed gave us an overall rating of excellent or very good. In the area of customer service, 71 percent of dentists rated us excellent or very good. Some 43 percent of the dentists surveyed gave us excellent customer service marks, while only 26 percent gave our competitors an excellent rating. The survey also found that seven in 10 dentists would definitely recommend Delta Dental to patients, as compared to one in two that would recommend a competitor.

Here, There & Everywhere
Beyond the boardrooms and executive suites, dentists can be found contributing to many other aspects of our business.

At the operations level, dentists are an integral part of our relationships with dental offices and our professional claims review process. Day-to-day claim benefit decisions are made by licensed dentists who serve as Delta Dental consultants. Many claims supervisors and inquiry representatives answering dental questions also have dental-assistant training or chairside dental-assistant work experience.

Our member company Delta Dental of Michigan, Indiana and Ohio is a good example of how dentists are involved throughout our management and operations for the benefit of our stakeholders. The company’s CEO, chief science officer and associate dental director are all dentists. At an operations level, the Professional Review Committee includes three general practitioners, an oral surgeon and one periodontist that provide professional review of selected claims.

Dentists also help guide our local and national policies and positions on issues related to dentistry and dental benefits coverage. Our national Dental Policy Committee is comprised of licensed dentists from across the nation who serve as dental directors at their respective Delta Dental member companies. This committee meets regularly to...
discuss scientific advances and other oral health issues to determine how they can be used to advance solutions for better oral health.

Industry Service & Outreach Efforts
The contributions of our dentists reach far beyond the inner workings of Delta Dental. Our dentists understand that they serve the interests of our stakeholders more effectively if they are in the vanguard of the oral health industry, contributing to professional development, public policy, technology, and educational institutions that promote access to affordable oral health care.

Our dentists are active in the American Dental Association and state dental associations. Many of them serve on government task forces coordinating public-private responses to national health needs. National and state leaders often look to our dentists for expert insights and formal testimony on oral health matters.

Many of our dentists have been involved in high-profile research, with their work published in esteemed dental and medical journals. They help increase the knowledge of their peers and the profession's abilities to promote the oral health of the nation. Many of our in-house dentist consultants also serve as faculty members of dental schools, helping develop the dentists who will meet the expanding oral health needs of our population.

In addition to seeing our dentists involved in industry service and outreach efforts, we’re also proud of the hygienists, dental assistants, and other professionals who have chosen to work with us and who simultaneously engage in efforts to advance their professions and to promote improvements in oral health.

Conclusions
We believe this level of professional involvement is an important part of our heritage and our continuing success. With a host of in-house experts to call upon, we are better positioned to offer our benefits plan partners the products and services that will earn the business of employers and enrollees, and to keep them as satisfied customers.