

WORKING THE PHONE - BEST PRACTICES TO GET NEW PATIENTS



INTRODUCTION

Success is within the reach of every practice.

Even if your practice is doing well and doing well every month, you can always grow and improve?

Where does the success in the business of each practice begin?

It starts with the first contact with your potential new patient.

It starts on the phone!

Remember - bad reception and contact with the patient will turn even the best dentist into a bad or an average one.

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START BY GETTING IN LOVE WITH THE PHONE!

Sales is an important aspect of the phone with regard to patient calls.

But nobody likes when you sell them, but we all like to buy - so we have to look beyond just selling.

We all know about the importance of sales, but there's something even more important. And that is a service - the way we treat our patients.

SALES IS IMPORTANT, BUT...

When you focus solely on getting an appointment at any cost, you only focus on today and don't think about developing the long-term relationship with the patient. You can get a patient for one appointment, but do you keep them as a patient for life?

This is often visible when your receptionist is in a hurry to get that appointment from the patient.

If you focus on providing exceptional customer service to your patient, sales will follow, and you'll likely get a patient for a lifetime. All in all, it is significantly more valuable for you and your practice.

SERVICE AS YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

This is a key strategy of highly successful companies that prioritize customer service and experience. When you call such a company, even if they don't have the product or service you're interested in, they'll help you find it and even help you order it from a competitor.

They will take their time to ask the right set of questions, will actively listen and be genuinely curious about every patient calling their clinic.

with only few small changes in your service to your patients, you will make big changes in your revenue. Plus, you'll have fun and help brighten someone's day.

The key is to treat everyone like a VIP - they'll feel so good that they'll never go to anyone else.

With all the competition in the market, distinguishing your practice by proving the best customer service is a better plan than lowering prices. In addition, a competitor may appear with even lower prices, and then patients will leave.

If you look at the top practices in the market, you will find that they all have a very high level of teamwork, a fun/friendly environment and provide excellent patient service.

Your goal should be to make every call with a patient count.

WHERE DO WE START?

You can start by proving your commitment to service with the first contact with the patient... the way you greet them on the phone.

Think of your phone greeting as if you were hosting a big and important party at home. If someone walked into your house for a fancy dinner, how would you treat them?

The key is to be open and friendly and talk to them with the emotion of genuine interest - if you are genuinely interested in the person on the other side of the phone, they will recognise and feel it.

Many people think that because your interaction is on the phone, you can rush to answer questions and get them to make an appointment.

But the greeting is the first impression you'll give the patient about your clinic, so create one that works every time .

10 STEPS TO MASTER YOUR PHONE SKILLS

1. Speak slowly and clearly

This shows patients that they are important, because you have time for them.

2. Be happy and optimistic - it shows in your voice

It actually helps to smile while you speak! Even if you don't feel well, if you laugh, your body will begin to relax, which will also cause your mind to relax. The patient, on the other hand, will feel the difference, because he is talking to a smiling person.

3. Make sure everyone who answers the phone uses a consistent greeting

"Thank you for calling Smile Academy! It's Marina speaking, how can I help you?" This keeps your practice organized at first contact with a patient and is a great way to properly communicate your brand.

Always create and use the script - this is the best tool to integrate new knowledge and skills into your team!

4. Always tell the patient your name

In this way, he establishes a relationship with the patient or the person on the other line. It is the principle of reciprocity - if you tell the patient your name, you have the moral right to ask him/her their name.

5. Listen carefully as the caller asks a question, makes a request, or states the reason for their call

The patient will feel if you listen to him carefully, which is a prerequisite for the establishment of a relationship of trust. Listening will create the rapport with the caller and this is the first step in creating trust.

The secret is that you talk as little as possible, and the patient talks as much as possible.

6. If the patient does not say his name, politely ask him: "May I ask who I am talking to?"

The most important word you will use when interacting with a patient is their name. The word we all like to hear the most is our own name.

7. If the patient says his name at the beginning, say: "Good morning, [patient's name] How are you doing today?"

This is the best way to take control of the conversation in a friendly way and show that you care about them as a person and not as an anonymous caller. The friendly tone of the conversation is a great rapport builder and will help you fully interact with the patient.

Use the "late night DJ voice" as famous FBI negotiator is recommending in his book "Never split the difference".

8. Instead of asking if they are new or existing patients, ask them "When was the last time we saw you in our office?"

This is a great approach that makes the assumption that they are already a current patient and gives them a warm welcome if they are a new patient.

9. Assess the patient's needs and always “summarize” what they have said, to make sure you understand their request

Be sure to summarize the patient's request and repeat back to them what they asked, using your own words. When we summarize, we show the other person that we understand her.

Event if you made a mistake, the patients will always correct you.

10. In the end, thank them again for the invitation and use their name again

It seems pretty easy, and it is! It is very important that your team is consistent and uniform in their greeting. This makes your practice recognizable to patients.

It may sound unbelievable, but your greeting will set the tone for the rest of the call and future interactions with the patient, so show your enthusiasm, optimism and genuine interest in the patient - all of which reflect the character and identity of your practice.

CONCLUSION

It is enough to make only 4 phone calls according to these instructions, to start creating a new habit!

You can also record your calls so everyone can listen and make suggestions to improve the greeting.

It's also a fun idea to call other offices or businesses and see how they greet you or ask one of your friends to call your clinic and see how will your front desk respond.

You can learn a lot about what you like and don't like, and you can incorporate those ideas into the way your team answers the phone.

By answering the call using this methodology, you open the door to opportunities for your practice and set the tone for how you interact with your patients.

They will love and appreciate your front desk, and you will get patients for life.

Without a scoreboard light with real indicators, we will most often get a "story" from team members who do not contribute to the business in a quality way.

Scoreboard shows us what we need to know, not what we want to believe.

CONCLUSION

These seven disciplines are crucial for the transition from operator to owner, because they require strategic thinking, not the appearance of being busy and tactical and tacti.

But be careful - I can testify from my own experience that this transition is not for the faint of heart. I made mistakes countless times and allowed daily problems to pull me into my "rabbit hole" again.

Learning from your own mistakes is the most expensive version of education. The trial and error method will do more harm than good to your business.

So learn from my mistakes, step into your business journey with a brave heart and bring even more owner skill and forethought to your life as an operator - the operator in you will thank you.