



Patients – practices lifeblood (Part 2 of 3)

As you know, there are only three ways in which a patient comes into the practice: Reappointed Patients, New Patients and Reactivated Patients. In the last issue we spoke about the goal of reappointing at least 96% of your patients. In this issue we will discuss some key ways in which to generate new patients (email Janet@theManageDentPros.com for a copy).

Before I launch into some internal marketing basics, let me say that there are three things that every practice MUST have in order to succeed.

1. First you need a sound *Management System*. This is the glue that holds everything together. While we always customize policies and procedures for our individual clients, one thing that makes our clients consistently successful is the implementation of things like: ORG chart, job descriptions, employee manual, huddles, staff meetings, performance appraisals, monthly training and monitoring of data. It is hard to grow your practice if you don't have the fundamentals in place.
2. Second, you need to have the *Likeability* factor. What's that? Simply put, it means that you need to be able to relate to people in a way that they feel comfortable with you and they *Like* you. Not only you but also your assistants, hygienists and administrators. You can't train people to be nice so a clever shortcut is to hire nice people.
3. Third, realize that in this day and age you have to be a *cut above your competition*. This doesn't usually mean a metamorphosis in most practices but to simply be 5%, 10%, 15% better in many areas. Exceed your patients' expectations. Always.

How do you stand out from the competition? By making your patients feel like you really care about them as individuals. Obviously there are a vast number of things that you can do but, for our clients, we always recommend some basics. Here a couple of them are:

1. *Postop Calls*: This is absolutely-positively-without-a-doubt the number one most important thing you can do to make your patients feel cared for. If you are having an assistant or administrator make the calls, they will be about 10% as effective. Not that they won't do a good job but, in your patients' minds if you take the time to make the calls yourself, they will love you for it. If you're already making calls then increase the types of procedures that you call on so that you are calling about 1/3 of your patients. That's probably only 4-6 calls each evening. It will only take 5-10 minutes but you will reap the benefits forever. The hygienist should call all their SRP patients and any others they saw that need some extra TLC.
2. *In-Office Comforts*: Offer things to your patients such as: bottled water, blankets, heated neck pillows, headphones, juice and Ibuprofen post-tx, moist heated towelettes, cushion behind the knees, etc. You have no idea how many practices that I go into have these to offer but routinely forget to do it because they get busy. I recommend a *Patient Profile Sheet* (email Steward & Associates for a free copy at Janet@StewardAssociates.Biz) that documents what the patient likes and also has a section for personal notations so that you can follow up the next time you see the patient.
3. *Gift Basket*: Pick one special patient each week to reward with a gift basket of cookies or a box of Krispy Kreme donuts. These can be given for any reason even simply to thank them for being a great patient in your practice. Send the gift basket to the patient's place of work along with a



Janet and Lawrence Steward ♦ 2768 Canby Way, Fort Collins, CO 80525 ♦ (970) 207-0776 ♦ www.themanagedentpros.com

note signed by the whole team and decorated with balloons. Add a p.s. to the note letting them know that you would value their referrals and include a small stack of business cards.

4. *Dinner for Four*: This drawing for dinner for four helps the team in asking for referrals as well as letting your patients know just how much you appreciate their referrals.
 - a. Decorate a basket and put a tasteful sign on saying “Have Dinner for Four on Us.”
 - b. Place the basket in a prominent place at the front desk
 - c. Every time a patient comes in that was referred by another patient, place a card with the name of the referred patient and one with the name of the referral source into the basket
 - d. At the end of the month, hold a drawing for the prize
-

As the philosopher Jim Rohn says: Success is simply a few disciplines carried out every day whereas failure is simply the lack of applying these disciplines. It is the accumulated wealth of either applying or not applying these disciplines that leads to success or failure. Here’s to your success!!

Next time we will be discussing how to reactivate once and for all and never again. Send us an email and we’ll send you many more marketing ideas and tips: Janet@theManagdDentPros.com.