



Patients – practices lifeblood (Part 3 of 3)

Reactivation - The job that people love to hate!

Without exception *reactivation* is the most dreaded job for the staff in any dental practice. No kidding. If you want to test the waters, just ask for volunteers and see how many you get. But, you're running a business and sometimes you've got to do what your business needs and not what you want. As the dentist and practice owner, you are in a bind because staff resists the project and yet you cannot afford *not* to reactivate. Patients only come into the practice via one of three avenues: (1) New patients, (2) Reappointed patients and (3) Reactivated patients. That's it. Period. End of story. You have to be strong in each of these three areas to have a successful practice.

Picking up the phone and trying to schedule those patients that have dropped into the "Big Black Hole" is not unlike sitting on an endless see-saw: when things are slow, everyone scrambles to make reactivation calls; when things get busy, the calls come to a grinding halt.

As the practice owner, would you like to know how you can get your staff to create an excellent system that will get the practice off the reactivation roller coaster? To reactivate once and for all and never again? Here's an overview of a strong system:

1. We believe that an active patient is simply defined as one *with* an appointment. We therefore recommend splitting the charts into appointed and unappointed sections. Now, I have to confess that, when I first heard about this method, I thought that nobody would ever buy into it. Over the years, I have become a convert. It simply works! In addition, it is one thing that you, the doctor, can periodically check visually with ease. Here's how it works:
 - Tag the appointed charts with a sticker with the month and another one with the year of their *next* appointment.
 - As you transition from one month into another, the staff scans through the appointed section and removes the charts with a month sticker from the previous month because these patients had an appointment that they did not keep.
 - Call these patients as soon as possible to reschedule. There is much more of a sense of urgency one month after the fact than 2 years later. This is the process that will prevent you having to reactivate year after year.
2. Effective ways to increase success
 - Vary the times of the phone calls to include evenings from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm and, if possible a Saturday morning.
 - The person making the calls should be in a private area so as not to be disturbed.
 - Inactivate patients that chronically do not keep their appointments, do not pay their bills or, in any other manner do not fit the vision of the practice.
 - If there is a pressing need to fill the schedule immediately, the staff should call patients who are six to 12 months past due first, then 12 to 18 months past due, followed by 18 to 24 months, and so forth.
3. Schedule of calls
 - First call – if you are unable to reach the patient:
 - Leave a message asking them to return your call



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- Log the contact in the Reactivation Tracker (*email info@quantumleapdental.com to obtain a copy of this form*)
- Second call – made two weeks later if the patient has not contacted you:
 - Call at a different time of day
 - Leave a message asking them to return your call
 - Log the contact in the Reactivation Tracker
- Third Contact – two weeks later
 - Send the reactivation letter
 - Log the contact in the Reactivation Tracker
- Inactivation – two weeks later
 - Inactivate the patient in the computer
 - Inactivate the chart and file in the inactive section; they can always be reactivated at a later stage

There you have it. The crucial thing is the 2 week intervals between contacts. It is a very simple system that simply works. Visually, you will be able to watch that appointed section grow as the unappointed section gets smaller. You will know that no patients are disappearing into the Big Black Hole without hope of revival unless something breaks or their teeth begin to feel furry after years of neglect. You'll be making the most of your patients – the lifeblood of your practice!

Please email info@themanagedentpros.com or visit our website www.themanagedentpros.com for more information or to complete a practice survey.