

Increasing Production to Succeed in the New Economy

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Introduction

The recession has changed the way patients think about dental care. In a tight economy, many patients consider dental treatment, especially hygiene visits, as something that could be put off until their personal situation improves. Facing unemployment, potential layoffs or loss of dental insurance, patients nationwide are canceling appointments and postponing dental care.

With the economy expected to improve in 2010, now is the time for practices to improve the customer service experience and build stronger relationships with patients. Dentists often assume that patients will remain with the practice for the long-term unless they relocate. The downturn put that assumption to rest. Levin Group has always emphasized that most successful practices provide patients an outstanding experience throughout the entire appointment, from the minute they walk into the office until checkout.

The following strategies can help practices re-envision the patient experience, making it a win-win for patients and the practice.

1) Enhance Patient Education

Dentists should view every appointment as an excellent opportunity to increase patients' understanding of oral health and its relationship to overall wellness. This correlates directly to total practice production. As researchers continue to find more linkages between periodontal health and other systemic conditions, practices should provide patients updated information about the importance of maintaining good oral health care. Enhancing patient education builds values for hygiene appointments and regular dental care, strengthens the patient-practice relationship and increases patients' ownership of their own oral health. Patients educated on oral health visit the practice more frequently.

2) Emphasize Proper Home Care

Regular dental care begins at home. Promoting proper brushing and home care is key for patients to maintain healthy teeth and gums. While most dentists promote flossing, many patients do not follow through on these recommendations. Compliant patients result in more efficient hygiene appointments for the practice. An extremely effective alternative to flossing is the use of a Waterpik® dental water jet. In fact, recent studies have found that use of a Waterpik® device was just as effective as flossing in removing biofilm from interproximal areas.

Levin Group recommends that practices offer patients a Waterpik® dental water jet at a reduced rate as part of an annual comprehensive exam. The following script will help practices highlight the benefits:

Dentist: *“Mrs. Jones, many patients find flossing difficult or inconvenient. That’s why we recommend patients use a Waterpik® dental water jet.”*

Patient: *“Does it work?”*

Dentist: *“Absolutely. This device has been proven as effective as flossing and helps maintain good periodontal health, which is key to preserving your oral health. And as more and more studies indicate, good periodontal and oral health contribute to good overall health.”*

3) Upgrade Customer Service

Patients tend to judge their dental appointments by the customer service they experience throughout the appointment. Train the team to go out of their way to make patients feel welcome and comfortable during every stage of the appointment. No matter how busy your day, always ask patients about themselves. Many dentists focus on the treatment and not the patient. Building long-term relationships is crucial to achieving greater success in the new economy.

Conclusion

Now is the best time to get ready for the New Year! By making the necessary adjustments, practices can take full advantage of the expected economic turnaround, increasing production and patient satisfaction. Follow the strategies above and experience greater success in 2010!

To learn more, visit www.waterpik.com where you’ll find clinically proven results about Waterpik® dental water jets, plus information about how to offer them in your practice.

Levin Group has shown thousands of General Dentists how to achieve total practice success. In today’s economy, more and more dentists are turning to Levin Group experts to transform their practices. To learn more about Levin Group seminars and consulting programs, visit www.levingroupp.com.