By Eniko Simon

During any work advising dental practices, many practice owners complain about not having enough patients, or that patients do not return for treatment. It is a common problem in any dental business.

In this article I wish to share some tips to try to reduce these problems and explain how could a patient centered clinic management approach and enhanced patient journey aid the success of a dental business.

Treatment Acceptance
Whenever we decide to buy a product or a service we do it for one simple reason; we decide to buy a product or a service we do it for that closest need we have had. The same is true for our patients. It is really the first step to build the patient journey to your practice and what these features can help make your dental practice a place where the patient feels important as the patient feels we do care about them – a little extra effort that makes a difference.

I believe the treatment coordinator greatly helps to reduce the dentists’ non clinical time with the patient, helps to provide an outstanding patient care in your practice – this translates to increased treatment acceptance and increased profit.

If you wish to implement the role of a treatment coordinator or would like to get to know more about how a TCO could help your clinic, please contact me – I am happy to answer any questions.

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Preparing for the worst

Risk Management

By Fiona Stuart-Wilson

Each year some practices have to deal with an emergency – not a medical emergency but a business emergency. Although most of us would think of UMD Professional, a leading

For instance how many people have access to the buglar alarm code or keys? How often is the code changed? Are valuable documents such as patient charts and or left in a desk drawer? If you haven’t already, consider photographing all of your valuables and equipment for insurance purposes and copies of key documents such as insurance policies. Make sure these are in a safe place that more than one trusted person knows about.

3. Where else could we work from?
If disaster strikes your patients will need to continue to be supported. You should have arrangements in place now for an alternative location to treat patients or at least send them to in the event that you cannot see them in your own practice.

It’s not just the clinical side of things either. You also need to think about where you will carry on with your non-clinical business of your practice, such as contacting patients, arranging or cancellation appointments, administration, and paying bills and staff. This might of course be your home but if your information and data are not on the Cloud, make sure your backup operations site-

As a “treatment coordinator” you are the first point of contact for the patient, helps to provide an enhanced patient journey / patient experience in the dental clinic.

New patient consultation
The first consultation with the treatment coordinator is an informal chat between the patient and your treatment coordinator (TCO) when the TCO asks questions to find out the concerns of the patient and introduces the clinic to the patient. It is really the first step to build rapport and make the patient feel comfortable in your clinic.

This consultation should be a free consultation to your new patient that you can schedule before the clinical consultation.

Build rapport
The treatment coordinator assistance in preparing the treatment plan and in present- ing the treatment plan to the patient. The TCO has also spent some more time with the patient after the treatment plan has been presented to answer any further questions the patient may have and discuss payment options.

This discussion can also help to overcome any objections or doubts the patient may still have. The treatment coordinator should be a trusted contact who is there to support the patient all the way through the journey within the clinic.

Keeping in touch
The treatment coordinator should be the person who fol- lows up with the patients – after treatment planning, making the to make sure the patient goes ahead with the recommended dental treatment plan. If this does not happen we might lose the patient and all the effort was wasted.

The TCO also follows up the patient after treatment to make sure they are ok and satisfied with the outcome. This is very important as the patient feels we do care about them – a little extra effort that makes a difference.

Just as we buy insurance hoping we will never need to make a claim, so we have to be prepared that there may not be time to arrange an alternative place to work. You will need to let patients know quickly in the event of an emergency.

4. Do our staff know what to do?
Make sure that your team knows what your disaster plan is and where and when they should relocate to work in the event of an emergency.

5. How will we pay the bills and keep going?
If you have to leave your prac- tice premises you won’t know how long it will be before you can return. If you have to leave them in a hurry, take the practice cheque book and the patient’s cards and keep enough cash on hand to meet emergency cash- flow needs.

6. How will we tell the patients?
You will need to let patients know quickly in the event of an emergency or disaster, as they need to be reassured, told what to do and where to go. Make sure for example you have a arrangement in place with your website provider so that they can put this information on the home page of the website as quickly as possible. Save time later by writing that information copy now! It should include your emergency contact information, details of your backup surgery premises, and what to do about appointments. You can also use social media to get the word out about your emergency arrangements.

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In the centre of attention – How to run a patient centered dental clinic

By Eniko Simon

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In this article I wish to share some tips to try to reduce these problems and explain how could a patient centered clinic management approach and enhanced patient journey aid the success of a dental business.

Treatment Acceptance
Whenever we decide to buy a product or a service we do it for one simple reason; we decide to buy it as it offers a solution for our problems - we buy a laptop as we want to work on the go, we buy a mobile phone so people can reach us anywhere.

Dentistry is no different – your problem – we buy a laptop for the same simple reason; we decide to buy a product or a service we do it for that closest need we have had. The same is true for our patients. It is really the first step to build the patient journey to your practice and what these features can help make your dental practice a place where the patient feels important as the patient feels we do care about them – a little extra effort that makes a difference.

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Preparing for the worst

1. What could go wrong?
Disasters by their very nature are usually unexpected but that does not mean we should not try to forecast some of the greater risks that we face.

Think through some of the risks to your practice and what these might mean for the practice. This could include accidents such as fire, natural disaster, loss of key members of staff or crime.

2. How safe is practice property?
Make sure your practice is as prepared as it can be to survive a disaster. Carry out a regular check on how secure your build- ing, equipment, computer systems, records and website are.

For instance how many people have access to the buglar alarm code or keys? How often is the code changed? Are valuable documents such as patient charts and or left in a desk drawer? If you haven’t already, consider photographing all of your valuables and equipment for insurance purposes and copies of key documents such as insurance policies. Make sure these are in a safe place that more than one trusted person knows about.

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