Making first contact

From the very first call that a patient makes to your practice, the team at reception should be word perfect in their greeting and continue with open questioning, to glean information about the person’s needs and requirements. This will allow the correct appointment slot to be booked, and will ensure that the patient feels they are already receiving first-class treatment. All calls should be logged onto a basic form which should not only include the patient’s name, but also where they heard about the practice, who answered their call and whether or not they went ahead and booked an appointment.

By knowing whether the person in an appointment, you can begin to understand if your team enjoys a high success rate of converting new callers into booked appointments. Ideally you should be looking to achieve at least an 80 per cent conversion rate.

You will also be able to see which members of the team require additional training and support. Should a team member’s conversion rates differ greatly from other receptionists, you will be able to focus on improving their skills.

By knowing how patients heard about your practice, you will also be able to refine your marketing strategies and measure your return on investment. This will ensure that money is not spent in areas that generate little or no patient interest. Communication skills are necessary to develop strategies and measure your return on investment. This will allow you to make the necessary changes to reflect how you would like things to happen in the future, and create a standard of service.

Many times we have heard dental surgeons tell us that their teams are exceptionally good on the phone with patients, yet there are no systems to support or disprove these claims. In fact, most surgeons have never called their own practice to experience first-hand how their practice is portrayed to potential new customers.

Your reception team are not only the face of your business, representing you to the outside world, but they also provide you with key information that will assist you in making important business decisions in order to move the practice forward.

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