Have your patients changed?

People have more disposable income than ever before, and as a result, are choosing to spend it improving their smiles. Dr Bhavna Doshi explains how to recognise this new consumer market to make sure you don’t lose them as potential customers.

Most patients will get used to the way you do things, and eventually see you in that fashion. So, when they notice or read about something new in dentistry e.g. cosmetic smile makeovers or whitening treatments, they will assume you are not providing this treatment and go elsewhere. Or they will assume that you are not dedicated to that area of dentistry. Patient assumptions can be very costly to you.

If you know and understand how your patients are approaching the subject of dentistry and are ‘in touch’ with the ever changing biases to various treatments, then you will be able to respond to these changes faster and be quick to enjoy the opportunities they present.

True patient awareness will enable you to position yourself in the market so you are more noticed. It will allow you to tell your patients of treatments you can provide them, which they are seeking out information on.

One way of developing this message to market match would be to simply ask your existing patients via a questionnaire of what information they require. You can at the same time take the opportunity to ask your patients what their inherent concerns are about their mouths. For example, what they like and dislike about their mouths. This will provide invaluable information on what your current patient base is looking for in their dentist. And give you conversation stimulators to talk about your patients’ inherent concerns.

Questions to ask before designing a plan to attract the ‘new age’ patient:

- What do patients typically want and expect from their dentist?
- What do your patients like and dislike about their mouths?
- What are the demographics of this type of patient?
- What was their dental treatment experience?

Understanding the market

There are several ways you can do this so that you have a clear understanding of how consumer thinking is adapting and adopting viewpoints. The media is a subtle representation of how the general public understand dentistry.