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 that 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 understand keeping a close eye on reports given on TV or radio can help you strategise. It will give you an idea of the latest trends in consumer interests.

Another way to monitor markets is to record the topics of interest new patient are inquiring about. For example, if you get more inquiries about teeth whitening procedures; then step up your whitening marketing campaigns. You will be making presumptions if you have no physical recording of this.

Are you being seen?

If you know how people think of dentistry and what their interests.

For example, what they like and dislike about their mouths. This will provide invaluable information on how you need to change.

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

- Where do these people like to go?
- What do their lifestyles involve and look like?
- What are the demographics of this type of patient?
- What does this patient like and dislike?

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.

However, if you understand the market and know what they are all about, you will not only be attracting their attention but you will be able to position yourself in a place where you will be more likely to be noticed by the right type of people. You will in effect increase your chances of getting a greater response to your marketing.

Three reasons why positioning your marketing is so important:

1. You will be seen.
2. You will get a greater response.
3. You will be making better use of your marketing money.

Tips to get started:

- Develop a patient questionnaire.
- Understand the market.

Getting it right

As you can see if you properly diagnose the market, you will be investing correctly in your efforts to attract new patients to your practice. Also it will allow you to really understand the patients already in your practice and prevent them from leaving you to seek dental care else-where assuming you do not provide what they are looking for.

About the author

Dr Bhavna Doshi is a senior dentist at The Perfect Smile Studios. She focuses on prac- tice productivity, management and growth strategies. If you would like a free information leaflet on how you can maximise your existing pa-tient base and attract more new pa-tients to your practice, email your name and address to bhavna@theperfectsmile.co.uk

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