‘They just aren’t interested’

Alun Rees discusses some reasons as to why you may be ‘short of work’

With the words “You only have one chance to make a good impression” ringing in our ears we make sure that every avenue of choice is explored for the new guests in our practice.

But what of the “old” (now there’s a derogatory word if ever I heard one) patients? Familiarity breeds contempt, has to be worked at during every visit; whilst it may be routine for the dental team, it is a very special event for the patient. After all nobody leaps out of bed in the morning and shouts out “Fantastic! Off to the dentist today, I do hope I have a problem that’s a real challenge to them.”

Our traditional attitude of putting the words “just a” before things doesn’t help either. Saying “just a” check-up or “just a” scale and polish for instance, although meant to reassure the patient, can also reduce their importance to the patient. “If it’s ‘just a’ then it’s not important, is it?”

Familiarity breeds contempt and dental practices don’t escape from this; just because you know them clinically through their notes and X-rays, doesn’t mean they know you enough.

People only do business with people they trust, let alone people they like. That means that the relationship and dental practices don’t escape from this; just because you have seen the patient 10 times over a five or six year period and know them clinically through their notes and X-rays, doesn’t mean they know you enough.

People will only do business with people they know, like and trust. That means that the relationship has to be worked at during every visit; whilst it may be routine for the dental team, it is a very special event for the patient. After all nobody leaps out of bed in the morning and shouts out “Fantastic! Off to the dentist today, I do hope I have a problem that’s a real challenge to them.”

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So how do you keep working at the patient relationship?

Every couple of years treat the patient like a new patient. ‘They (the patients) aren’t interested.’ Really? Or do you just presume that? Scratching the surface I find that because a patient wasn’t keen on an elective treatment, means that the relationship and dental practices don’t escape from this; just because you have seen the patient 10 times over a five or six year period and know them clinically through their notes and X-rays, doesn’t mean they know you enough.

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