Five foolproof ways to get a ‘yes’ to more treatment plans

By Dee Dee Reid, Principal at D2 Coaching and Consulting.

L et’s face it, no one likes to hear the word “No.” But the reality is, despite the economic upturn, patients are still reluctant to say “yes” to larger treatment plans. A 2014 American Dental Association (ADA) study found that patients are more likely to forgo dental care due to cost.1 Clearly, a healthy mouth shouldn’t be an “either/or” proposition for patients, but what one wants to be a pushy salesperson either.

So what can you do?

For more than 20 years, I’ve helped dental practices from Texas to California realize profitable growth. The key to getting higher acceptance rates lies in how your office approaches the treatment plan presentation. Try using these five proven techniques, and you’ll have more patients saying “Yes.”

1. Listen and learn

Did your last case presentation seem a little one-sided? The patient was nodding as you talked, but then at the end of the exam or he/she just left without committing to the procedure. The problem starts with the communication technique. Often, patients don’t fully comprehend what you’re proposing and how they can afford to pay for it. Remember, it’s hard to focus on anything when your mouth is full of equipment.

I recommend to my clients that they modify their consultation process. Start by conducting the usual exam but pause before delivering the prognosis. Ask the patient what’s important to them. Ask about their goals, their overall health and not just their oral health. Ask if they are happy with their appearance and their confidence level when they smile. Then, just listen. Let the patient tell you what they’re feeling.

Performing this simple step will provide valuable tips on how to position your treatment plan in a way that directly aligns with the patients’ personal goals. Discuss “why” and “how” your treatment plan addresses their concerns. That’s because they can use layman’s terms to review procedures, insurance coverage and the ease of third-party financing options. For many patients, how to pay is just as important as understanding what they’re paying for. Patients also like that coordinators understand the need for affordability and financing options. Clearly, creating a patient coordinator can make all the difference in closing the case.

But what about the cost of this new position? The good news is that adding a skilled treatment coordinator can pay for itself. Here’s the math: A skilled coordinator will cost between $3,500-$5,000 per month (depending on where your practice is located). But that same coordinator can schedule and close an average of $2,000-$5,000 per day. Plus, the increase in practice collections is often between $25,000-$57,000 per month. All this while freeing up the clinical team and the doctor to do what they do best—procedures.

Good coordinator training can help patient-friendly financing like plans offered by Lending Club Patient Solutions. I started this story with news of an ADA study. The fact is that more than 40 percent of adults are still concerned about paying for dental care. Clearly, ease of obtaining affordable financing is an important factor for getting patients to say “yes.”

2. Educate everyone—not just the patient

Clearly, creating a patient coordinator position is important. But I reinforce with my clients the need to educate the entire support staff on frequently performed procedures, treatment schedules, common medical terms, financing option details and practice protocols. That way, no matter who interacts with the patient, the conversation is seamless and everyone is kept up-to-date on important practice developments.

5. Make it easy to say “Yes”

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Many doctors don’t feel comfortable talking about money—but I always discuss third-party financing with patients. I also recommend my D2 Coaching and Consulting clients do the same. You see, as concierge, it’s my job to make it as easy as possible for the patient to say “Yes” to the doctor’s treatment plan. That’s why I love working with Lending Club Patient Solutions (formerlySpringstone Patient Financing).

Honestly, it’s a great partner. I’ve worked with them for 7 years. From their initial funding options for more than eight years now because the company does an amazing job empowering patients with more responsible and convenient financing options. Patients get what they want: fast approvals, true no-interest plans which avoid unwelcome surprises, and extend payments over a period of time. Your practice gets convenient selling tools, helpful email updates with the patient’s funding status, five-star customer service and some of the lowest patient’s payments in the industry.

Some dental practices do still use self-funded patient financing. But the half now/half later business can be a recipe for disaster. No one wants to have the tough “your payment is late” conversation—after all, you’re not in the debt collection business. With a good financing partner, you can avoid all of that. Its no-defaultrisk means the office receives payment upfront so collections never cross your mind. Plus, working with an exceptional vendor like Lending Club Patient Solutions says a lot for your practice’s reputation and helps you build lasting patient relationships to grow your business.

You can find out more about Lending Club Patient Solutions at lendingclub.com/providers.

Time to put the steps into practice

Naturally, there are lots of ways to help patients get the dental care they need and the services they want. But I hope you’ve found the tips I’ve covered here helpful, including honing your listening skills, using visuals, adding the role of patient coordinator and recommending third-party financing like plans offered through Lending Club Patient Solutions. Imagine how successful your practice could be if just 50 percent more of your patients actually scheduled a procedure after their consultation? This type of conversion rate is possible when you follow these five easy steps.

About the author

Dee Dee Reid has focused her 20-plus year career in dentistry, and her experience spans the spectrum of care. Reid began her career in the back office where she gained a deep understanding of clinical details and practice dynamics. She consults with patients as a top-producing patient care coordinator. Reid helps doctors explain and schedule large cases and works alongside general dentists, dental specialists and their teams to advance the practice goals and get results. Most recently, Reid was a guest lecturer and workshop coordinator for the Functional Aesthetics Series with Dr. Mark Montgemery and Dr. Gary Takacs (“The Relationship Driven Practice”) and from Dental Up with Dr. David Hornbrook (“Increasing Your Practice Exponentially”). Reid currently works with Dr. Lincoln Parker in Orange County, Calif. as a patient concierge. Dee Dee is also principal at D2 Coaching and Consulting. You can email her at D2SuccessCoaching@gmail.com.

References


2. No Interests for 6, 12, 18 or 24 months, after that 22.98 percent variable APR. Interest will be charged to your account at the standard variable APR of 22.98 percent (based on the Prime Rate) from the end of the promotional period on the remaining balance of the purchase balance is not paid in full within the promotional period. Minimum monthly payments for this plan during the promotional period will be the greater of the amount of the purchase divided by the number of months in the promotional period (rounded up to the nearest 5%) or $5. Required minimum purchase of $499 for the 6-month plan, $999 for the 12-month plan, $1,499 for the 18-month plan, $2,499 for the 24-month plan. Lending Club Patient Solutions credit accounts are offered by Comenity Bank, which determines qualifications for credit and promotion eligibility. Minimum interest charge is $1 per credit plan. Standard variable APR of 24.98 percent.

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