

DOES YOUR PRACTICE DESERVE A GENEROUS TIP?

Think about a time when you had a great dining experience. Chances are it's not just the food that made it a memorable experience. From the minute you walked in the door and was greeted by the smiling hostess, to when you paid your bill, you were treated as a valued guest. Picture the same scenario where the food was still great but the service from start to finish left you feeling unwelcomed. That being said, it's safe to assume you would not return based on your previous experience.

Now think about your practice. Apart from working on a procedure, the time you spend with patients is somewhat minimal during their experience at your practice. The waiting room, receptionists and hygienists fill the majority of a patient's appointment. That being said, it is important to make sure that your staff is providing the best service possible.

The best staff will provide excellent customer and patient care. The best staff will also help you boost your practice's bottom line. By focusing on the patient, you can build trust and a good reputation, while still maintaining your successful clinical skills.

Consider higher earning practices. To run a successful practice, the ones making more than \$500,000/year rank 'competent administrative staff' and 'good patient follow-ups' highest on the scale. This means they are prioritizing patient experience over updated equipment, offered services and advancements in technology.

Practices earning less than \$500,000/year ranked 'offering an array of specialized services' number one in running a successful practice, but is that the right approach? We are not the experts - but is it possible that your time is better spent becoming an expert in what you're already doing and leaving the speciality services to the specialists? 97.9 per cent of Canadian dentists already

refer patients who require services they don't provide. It's important to not lessen the value of your practice experience in a risky effort to provide it all.

Your patients already trust your abilities as a dentist, but it's the rest of their time spent in your practice that will dictate whether they happily return, recommend and review positively. When you have capable and reliable staff, you can focus on what you do best and hone your skills as a practitioner, which benefits your patients. It is essential to hire competent staff who strive to serve and offer the patients visiting your practice the utmost attention and care. Though we are not experts, we are simply trying to stress the importance of viewing your practice as a successful business that provides a valuable service.

Take a moment to consider the flow and experience of being in your practice. Is your staff friendly and confident in their work? Does your office décor feel welcoming while your patients are waiting and scheduling appointments? Are your hygienists not only comfortable with their skills but at answering questions and providing support? These are all things that will not only provide a better patient experience, but also provide you with a more financially successful business. If you take a look at all of the above points, you'll notice a common theme - the patient always comes first. By providing great patient services, you'll continue to build a strong practice.

Let's wrap this up by referring back to your dining experience. If your meal was average but your overall experience was outstanding, the likelihood of you returning or recommending is high. The same applies to your practice. It's not that your clinical skills aren't essential but your patients are relying on the overall experience and not just the services they are paying for. Just some food for thought. ■■

datadriven DENTISTRY

LEGEND



Competent administrative staff



Good patient follow-up/appointment scheduling procedures



Location of the office



Competent hygienist staff



Offering an array of dental/specialized services

RANKING



RANKING

	1	2	3	4	5
LESS THAN \$500,000 REVENUE	E	B	C	A	D
\$500,000 – \$1.5 MILLION REVENUE	A	B	D	C	E
\$1.5 MILLION + REVENUE	B	A	C	D	E

Between February and March 2018, RQI, a third party independent research house, conducted a 10-minute online survey of active, practicing non-hospital affiliated dentists and dental specialists on behalf of Oral Health. Using Oral Health's subscription list, a total of 398 dentists participated in the study (with 219 completing the survey to the end). Assuming a total of 20,000 dentists in Canada (ad 398 total completions) the margin of error for the survey is +/- 4.86, 95% CI.