

Marketing Tips for Attracting High-Value Dental Patients

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by Naren Arulrajah, Ekwa Marketing

Most dentists and practice managers know exactly how many new patients they acquired in the past year. However, far too many are unable to answer this simple question: Exactly how much is a patient worth? More importantly, which patients are the *most* valuable to your practice – and how can you attract more of them?

Understanding patient value

According to a Wealthy Dentist survey, only one quarter of dentists have calculated the average monetary value of a new patient. Yet, it is not difficult. There are several methods (see examples here and here). Typically, the process involves some variation of an equation, including average production, collections, number of annual appointments, referrals, and attrition (or churn) rate.

That is vital information for financial projections, budgeting, and estimating the ROI (return on investment) of your marketing endeavours. Yet, it is only part of the story, describing the *average* patient. For example:

- Patient A visits twice a year for hygiene and whitening, pays cash, has multiple restorative and cosmetic procedures, gives your business card to everyone at the family reunion, and stays with your practice for life.
- Patient B visits once a year for hygiene only, pays with insurance, refers no one, and stays three years.

Increasing revenue is not just about booking more new patients. It is about booking a higher percentage of “Patient A” vs “Patient B.”

Strive for above average

The most effective marketing not only brings more patients but also brings more valuable patients. How do you go about that?

- *Focus marketing efforts on your most profitable procedures* – Not all leads are equal. One person simply needs a hygiene appointment. The next is planning extensive cosmetic work.
- *Build relationships and improve the patients’ experience* – Happy, loyal patients become advocates for your dental practice. They are likely to stay with your practice for years, and they are your best source of referrals.
- *Encourage satisfied patients to leave reviews* – Never underestimate the value of a glowing review and five-star rating. Research shows that positive reviews build trust and increase the likelihood of consumers choosing a business. Additionally, the quantity and quality of

reviews impact local SEO (search engine optimization). Patients who leave good reviews provide a critical component in your online marketing.

- *Avoid dependency on insurance patients* – In addition to the reduced fees you collect, these patients often tend to avoid elective procedures. Do not promote the fact that you accept insurance, because those promotions are almost guaranteed to yield low-profit leads.
- *Track the results of marketing campaigns* – Sometimes, it takes the right message, the right platform, or the correct demographic targeting in your advertisements. Variables such as these can make a surprising difference in the quality of leads. Utilize techniques such as tracking pixels, call tracking, or A/B testing to determine the most successful campaigns and use that information to replicate your successes.

Often, the sole (or predominant) focus of dental marketing is increasing new patient numbers. That is an admirable goal and an essential part of practice growth. However, it is only part of the equation. Attracting high-value patients and keeping them happy will improve your marketing ROI – and your overall profit margin.

About the Author:



Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dentists, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren. You may also schedule a session at your convenience with the Senior Director of Marketing – Lila, by clicking

<https://www.ekwa.com/msm/> or simply send a text to 313-777-8494.