

# Five Steps to a Successful Candy Buyback Program

28 Aug 2017  Naren Arulrajah

2324 times



Summer is fading, and the holiday season is right around the corner. All too soon, it will kick off with the sugar-fest that dentists and parents across the country dread. [Seven in 10 parents](#) wish their children received less candy and more sugar-free alternatives when trick-or-treating. That doesn't seem likely to happen, as Americans spend billions of dollars on Halloween annually.

This year, you can help get excess candy out of kids' hands and your dental practice into the news with a buyback program. Children sell their excess candy to your practice for a set price per pound. The kids have less sugar to consume, and the candy gets donated to a good cause.

## Buyback Basics

**First**, name your event. There may be several dentists in the area conducting similar programs. Avoid confusion and make sure that yours is memorable with a distinctive, catchy name. Include your practice name to ensure that you get maximum brand exposure.

**Second**, set a date. Candy buybacks are normally held within the first week of November. Most practices choose the day after Halloween. Choose the date and time as soon as possible, so you can instruct your staff to schedule accordingly. You will want few, if any, appointments during that time, and you may need to schedule extra staff that day.

**Third**, set a price. The most common price offered is \$1.00 per pound of candy. Some dentists choose to offer small gifts in addition to, or instead of, cash, such as gift certificates, toys, holiday-themed toothbrushes, or other appropriate rewards.

**Fourth**, choose a recipient. So, what will you do with all of that candy? The most common answer is to donate it to [Operation Gratitude](#), an organization that sends care packages to active members of the armed forces. You can simply box up the collected candy, include a donation form, and mail it. The group takes care of the rest. Some dentists choose to work with other worthy organizations, or distribute the candy themselves. For example, one practice chose to send its donations to children's hospitals for kids who were not able to trick or treat.

**Fifth**, preparation is key to a successful event. If you are offering gifts or prizes, procure them well in advance to avoid last-minute glitches. You will also need to have some basic supplies, including a postal scale or something similar for weighing candy, large bins for collecting donations, and some decorations to set a festive atmosphere. Don't forget to have plenty of business cards or promotional materials, and hand them out as you collect candy.

Estimate the number of participants, and make sure that your office is adequately staffed. Also, assign someone to take pictures for posting on social media, adding to your website gallery, and including with press releases.

### Promoting the Program

Charitable and community events present unique marketing opportunities, because you can reach an audience that normal advertising cannot. Create a buzz, get people talking about your practice, and establish yourself as a community leader.

The best ways to get the word out include:

- Send a press release announcing the event, date, time, place, and beneficiary. When the buy-back is over, send another release including the number of kids who participated, the amount of candy collected, and other relevant information.
- Contact local radio and television stations, as well as social media influencers. Ask them to announce the event, and encourage them to attend. Be sure to reach out to any broadcasters who host special interest segments.
- Notify schools, local children's organizations, and parenting groups.
- Newspapers, business associations, and community-oriented websites often have event calendars. Ask them to add your buyback program.
- Include the event in your newsletter, put up posters about it in your office, and talk to your patients about it.
- Promote your event heavily on social media. It is challenging to get people to share simple practice advertisements, but they are eager to talk about fun and beneficial community events.

### Take Your Event to the Next Level

Halloween candy programs are among the simplest to organize, and they can easily be expanded. Some practices offer prizes to increase the turnout. For example, you could award a gift certificate to the child or family who brings the most candy. You can also encourage schools, teams, or clubs to participate with a prize for the largest group donation.

If you want to grow the event without reaching deeper into your pocket, team up with fellow dentists, nutritionists, and pediatricians in your town for a combined buyback program. You can also ask other businesses and organizations in the area to sponsor your event by making contributions. As an added bonus, sponsors are usually eager to help advertise the program, because they also want maximum brand exposure.

Don't spend another Halloween having nightmares about kids and cavities. Instead, make this holiday a public relations dream come true for your dental practice.

**Mr. Arulrajah** is president and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete Internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education, and the online reputations of dentists. With a team of more than 140 full-time marketers, [ekwa.com](#) helps dentists who know where they want to go get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call (855) 598-3320 or email [naren@ekwa.com](mailto:naren@ekwa.com).