

# Master the Art of Upselling

As a doctor, it may feel unnatural to look at your patients as sales opportunities. But marketing is necessary, and if you're not updating your patients on the services you offer, you could be keeping them from the smile they desire. Continue below for some strategies on upselling your services.

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*Educating your patients on the options you offer is mutually beneficial.*

Every patient you see in your dental practice presents an opportunity. What if you could turn that appointment into a series of appointments, or turn a minor procedure into a major one? Upselling is a great strategy for boosting your bottom line, but it is one that most dentists probably avoid.

After all, dentistry is a medical field. Selling patients treatments that they do not need may seem unethical, but there are exceptions. Have you ever seen a patient who needed teeth whitening for medical reasons? No. It is an elective service, and you sell it to patients because they want it. The art of effective, ethical upselling has nothing to do with misrepresenting a patient's needs. It has everything to do with presenting the services the patient wants.

Try these five winning strategies to benefit your profits.

## **Get to know your patients**

You may offer services that your patients want, but they won't know unless you inform them. Effective upselling starts with offering the right service to the right patient at the right time. Take time to talk and get to know them, ask leading questions, and — most importantly — listen. Learn about their concerns, preferences, lifestyles, and

habits.

The Instagram-obsessed patient may want to upgrade from teeth whitening to porcelain veneers. The health-food fanatic might be more receptive to implants if you offer zirconia. The on-the-go, busy patient could benefit from one-day crowns.

### **Educate patients about options**

Many patients come to you with a problem and ask for the least expensive solution. Just fill the gap, make the toothache go away, fix the cavity. In their minds, all solutions are equal, so there is no reason to pay more. Some dentists simply answer the question, tell the patient what is least expensive, and proceed with treatment. They might attempt to offer alternatives, but the person's mind is already set.

Instead of offering a simple answer, help patients understand that it is not a simple question. Explain the full range of treatment options, not in technical dental language, but in terms the patient can relate to. Describe the pros and cons of each treatment, presenting cost as just one factor. Make sure the patient understands the value, not just the price tag, of each treatment offered.

### **Advertise your full range of services**

In today's world of specialists and boutique practices, patients no longer assume that one dentist can treat everything. In fact, chances are there are some procedures you don't offer. However, patients will never know what you do offer unless you tell them. Just imagine your patients saying, "I have a good general dentist, but I need someone who can do veneers," or "My dentist is great, but now that the baby is teething, I need to find a pediatric dentist."

Use your website, social media accounts, email list, and paid advertisements to showcase your full range of services. If you offer uncommon treatments such as holistic ozone therapy or apnea night guards, promote them. If you have experience treating diabetic patients, talk about it. If you add Invisalign to your practice, make an announcement.

### **Don't just tell them, show them**

Don't just tell a skeptical patient that your tooth-colored fillings really do look natural. Show the person an "after" photo and challenge him or her to find the filling. Then reveal the "before" picture showing the exact location of a cavity. Similarly, instead of simply announcing that you see decay on a molar, use your intra-oral camera and let the patient see what you are seeing.

The same principle applies to your newsletter, website, and other marketing materials. Include photos, diagrams, infographics, and videos. People are visual learners, and images are always more powerful than words.

### **Educate, educate, educate**

The common theme among these and other effective upselling strategies is patient education. If you use high-pressure tactics, the person will feel like you are selling a used car rather than medical care. At the other extreme, if you don't bother to explain the benefits of a procedure, the person will think it's not worth the price. A good rule of thumb to follow is to never try to sell a treatment. Instead, help the patient understand it enough that the treatment sells itself.

***About the Author:***

*Naren 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 140+ full time marketers, [www.ekwa.com](http://www.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 to speak one-on-one with Naren.*

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