

Three Ways to Bring New Patients to Your Practice

While creating visibility for the practice, dentists oftentimes don't require a grand advertising budget to garner new business.

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Most dentists realize that word of mouth is the most potent source of referrals.

Getting new patients for the dental practice is a constant challenge for the dentist. While creating offline and online visibility for the practice is a primary factor to bring in more patients, dentists do not require a massive advertising budget to garner new business.

Three surprisingly easy and simple methods to promote dental practices and bring in new patients are as follows:

1. Implement Patient Referral Programs

It does not require a complicated effort to implement referral programs especially when creating ways for patients to share and refer conveniently across various online platforms. Steps to ensure success for a referral program include:

a. After establishing a referral campaign, make sure to provide the staff with the requisite training and information on why this program is advantageous for the growth of the practice. Ensure that the entire staff thoroughly understands the details of the program so they can address any questions or concerns patients may put across. Bring up the topic of referrals with patients during conversations and encourage administrative staff to engage in creating a culture of referrals.

b. Determine how to keep referral programs top-of-mind for patients. Design and print brochures, referral

cards, or postcards explaining the various aspects of the referral program. It would be useful to place these in areas where patients can see them conveniently such as the front reception desk, next to the dental chair or in the waiting area — display them in the front lobby of the dental practice. Alternatively, utilize these paper materials as stuffers for invoices, attach them to walk-out statements or hygiene bags.

c. If email blasts or newsletters are routinely sent, include a small snippet on the referral program to remind patients. Engage with the website developer to create a visual call-to-action on the site. A visitor can click on it and go directly to a form to fill out for referrals. Develop a post asking patients for referrals and provide information about the new program. Spread the word and let patients help grow the practice.

Ensure patients are acknowledged and rewarded when providing a referral, specifically patients that regularly refer their acquaintances to the practice—it does not have to cost a lot. Use various cost-effective methods to reward patients such as small gift card, handwritten “thank you” notes, a customized mug, or any other products or giveaways created for the brand. The idea is to show patients that their referral is valued.

2. Leverage Social Media

Most dentists realize that word of mouth is the most potent source of referrals. However, they may not realize that most of these conversations are happening digitally today. Creating a robust, appealing presence on social media platforms is critical.

It is essential for dentists to engage social media to bring in new patients. Social media platforms such as Facebook have millions of users communicating daily. They are an excellent source of word-of-mouth referrals. Dentists can tap into this pool if they actively use various social media platforms.

Social media allows for the dissemination of information regarding a practice, sending reminders to patients for seasonal consultation needs such as flu shots, kindergarten physicals, etc., sharing articles and videos on health and wellness, and highlighting a practice as approachable and friendly.

Communication is a vital part of the relationship with patients. Engaging patients on social media platforms is an excellent method to keep the lines of communication open. Other than regular social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook, be aware of dentist review platforms, they strongly influence people looking for a new dentist. Ask present satisfied customers to post reviews about their experiences and check ratings routinely.

3. Add New Services

Understand the changes in demographics within a patient population and community at large, and ensure services align with these changes.

For instance, when treating several adults with small kids, consider employing a dedicated pediatric dentist within the practice. If a large employer in the vicinity has just laid off many people, then consider offering cost-effective direct pay pricing alternatives to the newly uninsured ex-employees. Losing business to a small clinic

at a drugstore? Then hire a dental assistant to conduct routine exams and prescribe antibiotics. Additionally, consider extending the hours of operation.

Furthermore, try to gauge the needs of the community. Win over patients and grow the business significantly by ensuring patients demands are promptly met.

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 180+ full time marketers, 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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