

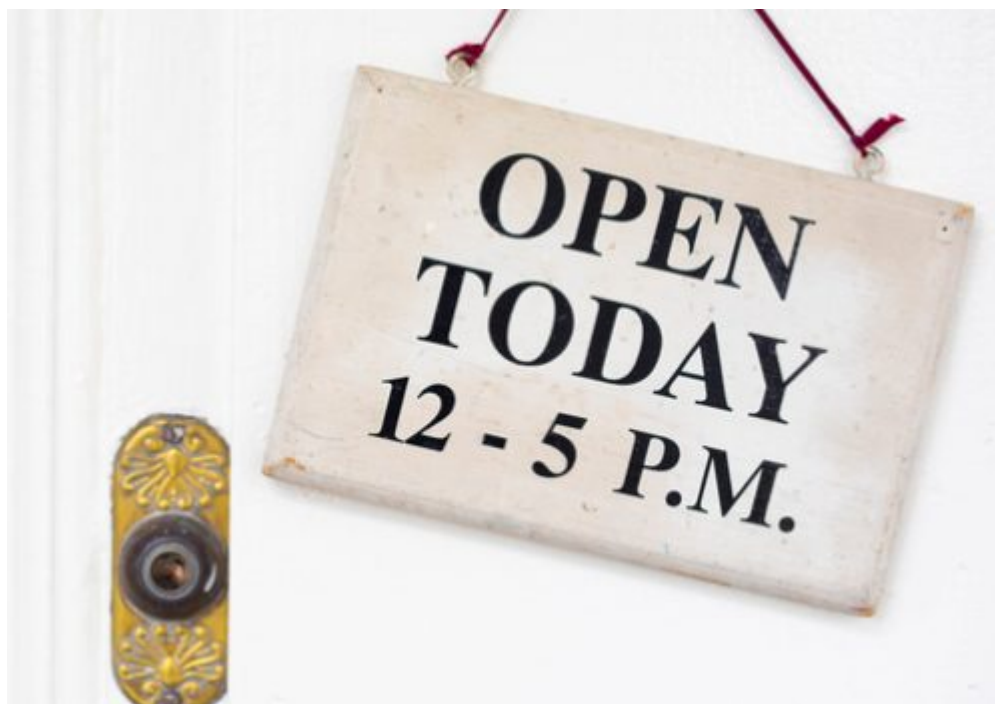
## Top 3 strategies for increasing dental patient retention

April 30, 2018

By Naren Arulrajah

*The more new patients that your practice acquires, the faster your dental practice will grow. At least, this is what many dentists expect. Unfortunately, it doesn't always work that way. An effective marketing strategy might bring patients through the door, but the practice will see little benefit [these people leave just as quickly](#).*

If your practice is struggling with [patient retention](#), here are some strategies that have worked for other practices.



### Make your practice convenient

[Seven in 10](#) Americans believe that they do not have enough time for everything they need to do. This means that many of your patients are putting something else important aside

make time for your office. If they walk away feeling like you wasted their time, they're not likely to return.

## **How can you make your practice more convenient?**

- When choosing a location, make sure there's ample parking and easy access from a major roadway.
- Give patients 24/7 access to important information. Include a contact form on your website, and make forms available online. Better yet, add a full patient portal.
- Reduce the time people spend in your waiting room. If there's an unexpected delay, apologize and let patients know that this isn't the standard for your practice.
- Implement and enforce policies that require phones to be answered promptly and professionally.
- Make sure your staff is well educated on your policies, payment options, services, and other basic information. When patients call with questions, they want instant and accurate answers.
- Extend your office hours. Many practices offer evening appointments one day a week or Saturday appointments one day a month.
- More people access the internet on mobile devices than ever before. Your practice should have a responsive website that is fully functional on any device, and that displays correctly on any screen.
- Provide free Wi-Fi, which allows patients to multi-task and check their email or watch a video while waiting.

## **Show patients you care**

By the time you see patients, they've already been in your office for a few minutes and had contact with your employees. They've already formed opinions about your practice and their experience.

One of the most common complaints about modern medical care is being treated like a number. People often complain about doctors and dentists rushing through exams, diagnosing, and recommended treatments without actually listening to patients' concerns. When a patient is telling you something, give the person your undivided attention. Even if the person's concerns are baseless, respond and discuss. Let patients know they're heard.

A few extra minutes spent with a patient can make a big difference. However, making that person the center of your attention during the appointment can make an even bigger difference. Avoid side conversations during treatment. If you're discussing a supply order with your assistant, the patient may feel like you're not paying attention to the treatment you're providing.

## Stay in touch

Communication is the foundation of any good relationship, including the doctor-patient relationship. This starts in your office, but should not end there. If you're trying to build a loyal friendship or business relationship, you probably don't wait for the other person to contact you every time. The same applies to your patients.

### ***A few of the best ways to stay in contact and keep your practice in patients' minds between appointments include:***

- Making your website useful—Pay attention to the most commonly asked questions and most misunderstood oral health issues. Provide educational articles, videos, and images that make your website a trusted reference.
- Get social—Your practice should be active on popular social media networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Encourage patients to follow you, and post sharable content on your social sites to grow your audience.
- Start a newsletter—Email marketing is more relevant and effective than you may think. The health-care industry has an average open rate of [20%](#), meaning that one in five subscribers will see your message. Use the opportunity to deliver promotional material, office updates, educational information, and special offers right to their inboxes.
- Follow up after treatment—A simple phone call to ask how a patient is feeling the day after a major procedure can go a long way toward earning the person's loyalty. If the person is not happy, you have the opportunity to correct the problem before you lose a patient and gain a bad review.
- Send seasonal greetings—Birthdays and holidays provide a great opportunity to contact patients, demonstrate that you care, and add a bit of promotion. Send a birthday "gift" of a limited-time discount coupon for teeth whitening, or remind patients about expiring insurance while wishing them a happy New Year.

When you think of growing your practice, you may think of patient acquisition. But according to the American Dental Association, retention of new patients averages [41%](#). An increased focus on building patient loyalty will boost your bottom line and maximize the benefit of your marketing efforts.

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*Naren Arulrajah is president and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, an internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education, and the online reputations of dentists. With a team of more than 180 full time marketers, [ekwa.com](http://ekwa.com) helps dentists know where they want to go, get there by dominating their markets, and grow their businesses significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call (855) 598-3320 to speak with Naren.*