Jumpstart your production with ‘Stage III Customer Service’

By Roger P. Levin, DDS

What do patients remember most after visiting your practice? Mostly how you made them feel. If they walked away with a very positive attitude, patients perceive excellent customer service and they will return.

Any practice not exhibiting superior customer service puts itself at high risk for declining production. In a tight economy, great customer service matters more than ever. Through the following Stage III Customer Service™ strategies, you can build better relationships with patients and increase production as a result.

No. 1: Schedule patients promptly
If a practice fails to schedule new patients quickly, runs late when the patient arrives or isn't prepared for the appointment, patient confidence and trust decreases.

No. 2: Get to know patients
Learn their hobbies and occupations. Establish rapport with them. Patients are more likely to accept treatment from a dentist and a team they trust.

No. 3: Always have the answers
Often times, patients will seek a second opinion regarding recommended treatment, usually from a front desk staff member. Ensure that all team members understand the top three benefits of each treatment and are able to provide responses that reinforce your recommendation.

No. 4: Give patients options
Three of the most powerful ways to “WOW!” patients is by providing them options when it comes to treatment, scheduling and payment.

Treatment options. A strong service mix boosts production. Practices should offer a mix of need-based and elective services. In addition, offering at-home products is an excellent strategy for exceeding patient expectations and increasing production.

Scheduling options. Allow patients the freedom to choose between two different times rather than allowing them to determine the date and time themselves. This way, patients have choices while the practice maintains a productive schedule.

Payment options. Patients have different financial situations, especially today. Provide patients with as many financial options as possible. Levin Group recommends the following four financial options:

- payment by credit card; half the payment upfront, half before treatment is completed; 5 percent off when paid upfront; outside financing.

No. 5: Be the educational resource for patients

Be a resource, not just an office that provides a service. Educate patients on proper oral hygiene. Show them how to use certain appliances, such as power toothbrushes or water jets. Provide them with fact sheets and brochures addressing dental health concerns.

Take the time to show your patients how much you care. This kind of above-and-beyond service shows patients you care and helps to instill trust in your team.

Conclusion
Increased production depends on effective customer service more than ever before. New patients, patient retention, recare appointments — they all tie in with strong customer service.

Through the steps outlined above, your practice can exceed expectations and reach Stage III Customer Service.

About the author

Dr. Roger P. Levin is founder and chief executive officer of Levin Group, a leading dental practice management consulting firm that provides a comprehensive suite of lifetime services to its clients and partners. Since 1985, Levin Group has embraced one single mission — to improve the lives of dentists.

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