The power of internal marketing

By Roger P. Levin, DDS

Internal marketing is the most predictable and least expensive form of marketing for dental practices. While there are many types of marketing, ranging from Yellow Pages ads to print advertising to direct mail, these all come with considerable expense and a relatively low return on investment.

The most consistent marketing effort with the greatest predictability for a dental practice is internal marketing, which generates word-of-mouth referrals.

Understanding internal marketing

For internal marketing to be effective, practices need to consistently implement a variety of strategies throughout the year. There are two major factors that affect the predictability of an internal marketing program: quality and quantity.

Quality

Quality refers to establishing quality relationships with patients. This occurs by creating a positive environment with a high-energy team that enjoys working with patients. Quality can be seriously undermined if a practice has not implemented highly effective management systems. However, once the systems are in place, the right staff training and attitudes need to be incorporated into the day-to-day operation for all patients to feel that they enjoy a quality relationship with the practice.

Quantity

Quantity requires that at least 15 different strategies be developed and implemented into the day-to-day operation and marketing of the practice. Having a multitude of successful strategies ensures that you reach every patient at every point of contact, which is the foundation necessary to create word-of-mouth referrals from existing patients, potential patients and your community.

Examples of strategies

Research shows that consistent, high-quality, repeatable internal marketing strategies will ensure a successful program that grows practice production. Below are four quick strategies you can easily implement to kick off your internal marketing program:

• Upgrade your office appearance. If you haven’t updated your décor in the last three to five years, then it’s probably time for an office makeover.
• Stay in contact with patients with an e-newsletter, e-mail blasts, Facebook and Twitter updates.
• Build value for confirmation calls by adding key messages about practice services, continuing education updates and new technology.
• Position patient financing differently than simply to close cases. Present it as a customer service opportunity for current patients and new patients referred to the practice.

While there are literally hundreds of strategies, they have to be combined properly to get the desired results. Remember, a high-quality practice environment and a high-performance team are critical to implementing a revitalized internal marketing program.

Together, they will grow your practice’s image and brand within your community, which ultimately leads to more referrals and greater profitability.

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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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