Have your patients changed?

People have more disposable income than ever before, and as a result, are choosing to spend it improving their smiles. Dr Bhavna Doshi explains how to recognise this new consumer market to make sure you don’t lose them as potential customers.

Most patents will get used to the way you do things, and eventually you see them in that fashion. So, when they notice or read about something new in dentistry e.g. cosmetic smile makeovers or whitening treatments, they assume you are not providing this treatment and go elsewhere. Or they will assume that you are not dedicated to that area of dentistry. Patient assumptions can be very costly to you.

If you know and understand how your patients are approaching the subject of dentistry and are ‘in touch’ with the ever changing bias to various treatments, then you will be able to respond to these changes faster and be quick to enjoy the opportunities they present.

True patient awareness will enable you to position yourself in the market so you are more noticed. It will allow you to tell your patients of treatments you can provide them, which they are seeking out information on.

Message to market match

The closer you make your message to market match, the greater the response your marketing campaigns will get. You can only create a great message if you know your market!

One way of developing this ‘message to market’ match would be to simply ask your existing patients via a questionnaire of what information they require. You can at the same time take the opportunity to ask your patients what their concerns are about their mouths. For example, what they like and dislike about their mouths. This will provide invaluable information on what your current patient base is looking for in their dentist. And give you conversation stimulators to talk to your patients about their inherent concerns.

Questions to ask before designing a plan to attract the ‘new age’ patient:

- An important consideration is what does our potential patient market look like?
- Who are the people we are attempting to attract to our practice?
- Where do these people like to go?
- What do their lifestyles involve and look like?
- What are the demographics of this type of patient?
- What does this patient like and dislike?

Understanding the market

There are several ways you can do this so that you have a clear understanding of how consumer thinking is adapting and adopting viewpoints. The media is a subtle representation of how the general public understand dentistry.