Benefits of Cloud-Based Software for the Dental Practice

by Darby TechForce

The 1980s were a fascinating decade. And no, we're not talking about the big hair, colorful spandex, and rock n' roll. It's when personal computers were introduced to the masses. Suddenly, technology was accessible not just to major corporations, but also to consumers and businesses, including dental offices. This was when practice management software first became part of the dental environment. It transformed office operations by allowing teams to simplify accounting and streamline patient scheduling. These very basic software programs were revolutionary.

Now, of course, they're ancient history. Just as computers have evolved from slow, clunky PCs to lightening-fast laptops, software has undergone a revolution of its own. Today, a dentist can run a completely paperless practice with the wide variety of software on the market. From scheduling, to digital imaging, to presenting treatment plans, to billing, there's a program available for every aspect of patient care.

As we look towards the future, practice management software is more accessible, safer, and easier to navigate than ever before – and it's all in the cloud. Perhaps you've heard of cloud-based software but are unsure of what it means and how it can translate to a more efficient dental practice. Here's a quick guide.

What is the "cloud?"

To realize the benefits of cloud-based software for a dental practice, it's first important to understand what the "cloud" is. There's a lot of confusion and mystery surrounding the cloud, but really, it's just a metaphor for the Internet. Therefore, cloud-based software is software that runs on the Internet instead of locally on a server in your office.

Benefits of cloud-based software for the dental practice

More and more dental practices are moving from server-based software to the cloud for their practice management software. Here are a few reasons why cloud-based software is advantageous in a dental environment.

It's more accessible

With server-based software, a dentist needs to be in the office at a workstation to access patient files and data. Cloud-based software allows you to be connected to your practice no matter where you are in the world. All you need is a computer and an Internet connection to sign into your practice management software. So, if you're on vacation and receive an emergency call, your patients' files are at your fingertips.

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Make sure everyone is trained individually and take the abilities of each person into consideration. It's also smart to purchase support for each of the new products in your dental office. If your staff has questions about how to perform a certain function, they'll feel at ease knowing they can pick up the phone and talk to someone who can easily help them.

It protects your patient records

With cloud-based software, you no longer have to worry about whether your patient records are safe and whether or not you remembered to back them up manually. These programs are written to be HIPAA compliant and backups are performed automatically several times a day. If your office experiences a fire or flood, or if your network crashes, your patient files are stored in a secure, off-site location and are quickly retrievable. With the cloud, your patient files are also safe from cyberattacks since they're stored outside of your office network.

It's lightweight and easy to navigate

Server-based software requires, well, a server to function. These clunky and robust computers take up physical space in a dental practice and can be expensive to maintain. Cloud-based practice management software eliminates the need for such big machines. These programs are also more streamlined and intuitive, which means your team won't need as much training as it would with legacy programs.

It's integrated with other services

Cloud-based software is integrated with services that didn't exist back when server-based software was written. These Internet-based programs have social media, text messaging, email communication, appointment reminder, and online scheduling features built in. While you can add these services onto server-based software, you have to sign up with third party providers and pay for each service individually. With cloud-based software, all of these services are lumped into one monthly fee, making them more convenient and affordable.

Switching to the cloud-based software? We can help ease the transition

After seeing the benefits, deciding to move to cloud-based practice management software is the easy part. The not so simple part: figuring out what to do next.

At Darby TechForce, we can help. Our dental technology experts can offer guidance as to what equipment you still need, and what you don't need, to optimize your investment in the cloud. With 20 years of experience in installation, dental integration, security, and managed services, we can also help integrate your cloud-based software with other technologies in your office for a seamless workflow.

Of course, amidst the changes in hardware and software, you'll want to make sure your patient records are safe and HIPAA compliant. We've got you covered. At TechForce, we're experts in the most up-to-date requirements of HIPAA, the HITECH Act, and the Omnibus Rule and will quickly identify and correct vulnerabilities so your practice and your patients remain protected.

To learn more about how we can ease the transition to the cloud and make your technology work for you, give us a call at 800-886-2093.