USING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE CASE ACCEPTANCE IN YOUR DENTAL PRACTICE

by Darby TechForce

Ask any dental professional about the biggest obstacles to growing his or her practice and case acceptance is probably at the top of the list. You may be the most skilled dentist in your market, but it takes more than clinical excellence to convince patients to follow through with treatment. Patients today are slower to make decisions and more hesitant than ever to pull out their checkbooks, making it critical for dentists to refresh their approach to case presentation.

If it's been a while since you've touched your template for recommending treatment plans to your patients, consider how integrating technology into your process could improve your case acceptance rate and boost profitability for your practice.

The new case presentation

Remember the good old days when you could recommend a treatment plan and your patient would readily make an appointment for the following week? If current data on case acceptance is any indication, times are changing. According to the 2016 Dental Economics/Levin Group Practice Survey, dentists successfully get their patients to follow through with recommended treatment just 61 percent of the time. Ouch.

Today, patients require more time and more information to consider proposed treatment. The new case presentation is about knowing how to present your ideal solution to your patients in a way that they'll grasp it. Patients need to see their conditions, understand the benefits of treatment, and visualize the results before they will agree to sign on the dotted line. This is where technology can make all the difference.

How technology can increase case acceptance

When presenting a treatment plan to a patient, it's easy to get caught up in the details of the procedure. Hearing a bunch of clinical terms can be scary for a patient and make him or her hesitant to proceed. Technology allows for the use of visual aids, which can make complex topics easier to understand. Through the use of digital photography and your practice management software, you can demonstrate the step-by-step details, benefits, and results of your proposed solution to help patients play an active role in their treatment.

Invest in digital photography

An intraoral camera is one of the most effective tools in a dental practice. Unfortunately, it's also one of the most underused. Digital photography allows patients to be involved in their diagnoses. When patients see their own teeth on the computer monitor, they generally say something like, "Oh my gosh. How do we fix this?" Just like that, the patient has taken ownership of the problem and will be ready to hear your ideal solution. If you don't have an intraoral camera in your practice, squeeze one into your budget.

Update your practice management software

Dentists looking to improve case acceptance should make sure they're taking full advantage of their practice management software. More than likely, there are features you're not using because you don't even know they exist. If you don't already have it, add the clinical charting module to your dashboard. Or, if you're a dentist who has clinical charting and doesn't know how to use it, seek training on how to implement this handy feature and get in the practice of using it for every patient.

Clinical charting comes with some really great educational features, like animations that demonstrate dental procedures using a patient's own images. Visual tools are highly effective for walking patients through the clinical process, showing them possible end results, and motivating them to seek treatment. Better yet, using clinical charting within your practice management software offers patients digital access to their images, treatment options, and payment history.

Clinical charting features will vary depending on the software you use. If your software doesn't allow you to present treatment options to your patients using digital imaging, animations, and other visual tools, now might be a good time to upgrade.

Embrace technology to improve case acceptance

Improving case acceptance starts with building a strong, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic team where everyone does his or her part to explain the benefits of treatment. Offering payment plans and outside financing options can also improve production and case acceptance. But, the most critical element in getting patients to schedule treatment is the case presentation. Integrating technology into your process can help patients see the benefits of treatment, build trust with your practice, and have an overall exceptional experience.

You know you should invest in technology to spiff up your case presentation and keep more patients in your chair. What now? That's where we come in. At TechForce, we're fluent in dental IT. From consultation to installation, our experts can take all of the technology tasks off your plate to help you boost productivity while reducing your costs. The best part: we're brand agnostic, so we'll never try to sell you on a product or service that isn't right for your practice.

Give us a call at (800) 886-2093 to speak with one of our tech specialists. We'll happily answer any questions you have and help you make a frustration-free transition to a high-tech dental office.

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