

# New Patients, Inc. Newsletter

## Quick, Tested, Effective Ways to Promote Dentistry

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### **Why you MUST watch capacity to foster growth**

There are many, many contributing factors to maximizing the potential of your advertising/marketing initiatives. As many of you know, our team monitors client results on a continual basis. We track total call volume and average time per call. Anyone not hitting an expectation trend line - draws our attention.

More times than not, the promotions are working as initially expected, but, patient volume is not improving. Patient quality is improving, that always happens. But new patient volume is flat or not growing as expected.

The next completely understandable kneejerk reaction is to listen to the phone calls to see if anyone on the team requires phone skills training. But maybe a deeper investigation is warranted. How many of the incoming calls are happening on a weekday with no phone coverage? One week day is 20% of your total opportunity to promote your dental practice. Twenty percent is a terrible thing to waste. If you look at your incoming phone log and see incoming interest in your practice, but the caller getting the answering machine - you just threw away hundreds of dollars. A simple solution is to have a staff person connect to the office from home and cover the phones for you that day.

### **But let's say everything in the numbers look perfect**

Let's say you are getting 15 to 20 inquiries each month (or more). Let's say your average length of call is over 3 minutes (a clear indication of call quality). Let's say your phones are covered during business hours (at least 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday). Let's say you listen to your phone calls and your staff isn't alienating anyone! They are great on the phone. They are converting as high a percentage as possible.

### **What could it be?**

If everything is perfect (which almost never happens by the way J), why aren't the total number of new patients going up?

We introduce the magical number 8.

We gave the number 8 its own sentence in the newsletter so you would remember it. So why is the number 8 so important? Because that is maximum number of workdays a dentist's schedule (not hygiene) should be booked out. Many dentists reading this would say "but what's wrong with being booked out two or three weeks?" Well, here's the problem:

The consumer on the other end of the phone wants you NOW. Not because they need emergent care, but because something got them to call you today. They are in the market for dental services. Imagine you calling to test drive the new BMW (because you are in the market for a new car) and the lady on the phone tells you that you can come into the showroom to take a test drive in three weeks. How would you feel? Would you book the appointment? Probably. You would book the appointment to save your place in line. Then what would you do? You would probably think about it for a moment and go look for another BMW dealership that could get you in sooner. Actually, it is predictable. That is exactly what you would do.

Let's get back to dentistry. There is a direct correlation between the time distance from 1st call to 1st appointment day, and new patient cancellation rates. New patient cancellation rates go UP the longer the new patient has to wait for their first appointment.

Now back to the BMW again. If you found another BMW dealership where you could go and test drive your new beemer in two days - would you call the first BMW dealership back and cancel that appointment you made? C'mon, be honest. You wouldn't call them back. You just wouldn't show up.

Neither will your new patients if they have to wait too long.

### **The number 8 is magic**

If all of the dentists in your practice are not booked out 8 work days, you are trying to get to number 8. Keep going. You will get there.

If all of the dentists in your practice are booked out farther than 8 work days, you need more dentist hours, more operatories, or more operational hours.

ALL practices should BLOCK their most attractive appointment hours for new patients. Those hours are the first two hours you work, lunch time hours if you are in a city/business environment, and the last hour or two of the day. Once you promote those convenient hours, offer them to new patients only, and those appointment hours are booked out more than 8 days - it is a statistical guarantee that you are squeezing life off the maximum potential of your advertising.

Expand your capacity

### **We understand it is difficult to pull the trigger on increasing capacity**

We understand. But that's why we wrote this article. The business of dentistry is far more predictable than you think. Hopefully, the number 8 is now so engrained in your frontal lobe, that you will keep an eye on your capacity with almost zero effort.

The question to ask is: If I were a new patient calling today, not in pain, what is the first available day/time I can get into this dental practice?

If the answer is 4 - you can grow into your existing capacity

If the answer is 12 - you need more capacity

Many of you have hit this magic point and not realized its paralyzing effect on growth. Now you know.

If any of you need us, just call **866.336.8237**. We will be here for you.

Got questions? Want to learn more?

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