

Let's talk about barriers

In the last issue of this newsletter, we discussed call tracking and calculating/projecting forward return on investment. Barriers have an awful lot to do with the number of calls you receive from your advertising, and in turn, your return on investment. Our objective with the next several issues of this newsletter is to enlighten you on how the public views the barriers, and how you might be able to mitigate the barriers to get a better result.

Price as a barrier

Price is the #1 consumer concern when choosing a dentist. We know this from testing. We know this from investing in completely independent consumer research. We doubt this is a surprise to any of you.

Is it price or ignorance?

We contend, and have proven for the past quarter century, that you can effectively promote a dental practice WITHOUT focusing (visually) on price incentives. As a matter of fact, in 99% of our work, you would have to search for or listen really hard to find any price incentive.

Females choose healthcare providers for their family. Half of those females are turned off by price incentives offered by healthcare providers as the primary focus of their advertising. These females make up the top half of the dental market.

If you look at the subject of price, one can flip it around and begin to wonder if the market truly understands the value and benefit of what dental practices offer. If they did realize and understand the value and benefit of what the dental practice offers, wouldn't price be less important? Yes, of course, especially with the top half of the dental market.

With the top half of the dental market, what you have is almost pure ignorance. Price is the only known concern. They don't understand the benefits of today's dentistry. The only thing they do know to ask about is either the price, or if their insurance will cover their visit/treatment. Fill their minds with the value and benefit of today's dentistry (in your advertising and during the first phone call to your practice), and the importance of price fades very quickly.

How to mitigate the importance of price in your advertising

In your advertising, you first mitigate the importance of price by talking about it! But, you don't have to make a big deal about some new patient special. You mitigate price by letting your audience know other things about price. You are affordable for the whole family. You offer payment plans. You offer patient friendly financing. You are their advocates, and will do everything you can to maximize their dental insurance benefits. You invest in technology that allows you to find cavities earlier, to help them save money. You provide same day dentistry to save them time and money. There are literally dozens of ways to talk about price with the consumer, without being perceived as the bargain basement dentist, and in turn, turning off exactly the market segment you are going after - the top half.

Don't avoid talking about price. Just talk about price positively without coming across as the low cost provider in your market.

The next thing you do in your advertising to mitigate the importance of price, is to talk about the benefits of the dentistry you provide! Refocus the consumer. They simply do not know what you do. They really do think the dentistry performed today, is the same as the dentistry done 30 years ago. Fill the value void. If you fill the value void, the importance of price is replaced with the importance of the services, conveniences, and technologies you provide.

Why does everyone ask about price or insurance during their first phone call to your office?

The bottom half of the market is asking about price or insurance because that's all they really care about. Your chances of flipping them into a good quality new patient are slim. Many frogs, and the occasional prince.

The top half is asking you about price or their insurance coverage because that's all they know to ask. They don't know anything about the dentist, services, technology, or conveniences your practice offers - they ask about the only thing they know. A properly trained staff person answering that phone call will immediately begin talking up the dentist, the quality of the services, the technology, and the conveniences your practice offers.

Your advertising primes the pump. If your advertising is filling the value void (talking about reasons to choose you other than price), and your staff is also talking about the value of seeing you - you will attract more than your fair share of the top half of the dental market. When that happens, you begin moving toward your objective.

Let everyone else compete to be the cheapest dentist

There are 75,000,000 females in the US who are not going to choose the overt, lowest cost provider anyway (the top half of the market). It's funny, the more overt and cheaper the advertising appears, the more the top half of the market moves away from those dentists.

Mitigate their initial concern about price and their ignorance about the benefits of today's dentistry by proactively talking about how your practice helps them afford and save money. Then fill the value void with the benefits of choosing you as their dentist.

Watch what happens.

Next month we talk about the barrier of convenience. Too many of you "think" you are a convenient dental practice to choose. The barrier of convenience is typically a fairly easy one to mitigate. So, pay attention next month.

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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Check out our latest dental marketing book