



To Grow More, Present More: Increasing Your Dental Practice Revenue

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Dentists with high case acceptance rates yet weak revenue growth need to look more closely at what treatment is being accepted... or, more to the point, what treatment they're presenting to increase their dental practice revenue.

Many dentists are more reactive than proactive in their approach to case presentation. When patients present with a dental problem, these doctors propose treatment to fix the problem—usually single-tooth, need-based non-elective procedures. Patients will tend to accept such treatment (pushing the practice's acceptance rate up) because they know they really *need* it. Also, because insurance often covers such dentistry, the compensation received for the work is relatively low.

This unrewarding situation can change dramatically when doctors begin focusing on *what* they present as much as on *how* they present. To increase revenue as well as case acceptance, implement these strategies:

- **Perform annual comprehensive exams for *all* patients.** You may already do this with new patients, but it's just as important to develop a complete oral health picture for patients who've been with your practice for years. Include five areas: periodontal, tooth-by-tooth, cosmetic, implant and occlusal.
- **Create comprehensive treatment plans.** Identify all dental care patients need or would benefit from, establish priorities and map out a years-long plan of proposed action. This will determine what treatment you recommend, both immediately and long-term. Include large, multi-tooth, complex, cosmetic and other elective procedures.
- **Present large as well as small cases.** Rather than merely reacting to patient requests or addressing dental problems, acquaint your patients with all the ways you can help them. Explain your exam findings, possible solutions and benefits. You may recommend some

procedures strongly, while simply mentioning others... planting seeds for future acceptance.

- **Maintain patient awareness of your financing options.** Whenever discussing treatment that will entail significant out-of-pocket expense for patients, point out that your range of payment options can make such treatment affordable.
- **For larger cases, plan on presenting more than once.** Even for simple, less expensive treatment, you may need to follow up to gain acceptance. For larger cases, this follow-up could actually span years. Bring up the subject (without pressure) whenever patients come in for recare and, if they express interest, re-present the case. This persistence will often result in acceptance of major treatment.

In the days when there was greater demand for care and profitability was higher, practice growth came automatically. However, in today's market, you must present more—including more large cases—in order to succeed.