



Making the Case for Cosmetic Dentistry

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Dentists accustomed to presenting need-based treatment sometimes have difficulty motivating patients to accept cosmetic dentistry services. Even if the conditions of patients' teeth are causing significant aesthetic problems, the corrective procedures remain elective—and excluded from dental insurance coverage.

If you decide to increase practice revenues by presenting more cosmetic dentistry, you'll need to rethink case presentation entirely. The following should put you in the right frame of mind:

- **Provide motivation.** Some facts about the cosmetic procedure you're presenting will certainly be appropriate, but don't make the mistake of thinking that a strictly factual, rational proposal will win approval. If patients aren't motivated (by you) to really *want* the treatment, you won't succeed.
- **Emphasize benefits.** The facts about cosmetic options—materials used, procedural steps, etc.—will not persuade typical patients. For that, you need to communicate the benefits of treatment—not only that they'll look better with a beautiful new smile but also that they will *feel* better. Help patients imagine themselves with greater self-esteem and confidence... and liking what they see in the mirror.
- **Use visual aids.** Nothing you say will be as inspiring as what you show them. Whether photos, video clips, tablet computer presentations or posters, anything that demonstrates the reality of cosmetic improvement—especially before-and-after images—will help tremendously.
- **Offer affordability.** Patients will almost always have to pay the full cost of cosmetic procedures, so be sure to mention your payment options... including outside financing, which can make even the costliest treatment affordable.

- **Plan to follow-up.** Often, your initial presentation will begin a long-term decision-making process for patients. Many of them will need to get used to the idea of cosmetic treatment. In some cases, what seems frivolous now may take on great importance several months from now (e.g., when attending a high-school reunion or setting up an important job interview).

In spite of economic uncertainty, the market for cosmetic dentistry remains healthy and growing. If you can develop cosmetic presentation techniques that enable patients to accept what they really want, you'll enjoy the production increases that *you* want.