

Expanding Your Capacity for Production with Scheduling Techniques

By Roger P. Levin, DDS

There are only so many hours in a day, but that doesn't have to limit your practice's production capacity as much as you may think. Using a combination of proven scheduling techniques, you can increase daily production without working longer hours. It's all a matter of timing and team coordination.

To comfortably fit more dentistry into your daily schedule, implement these improvements:

- **Schedule in 10-minute increments for greater efficiency.** Compared with 15-minute units, 10-minute increments give your scheduling coordinator the ability to more accurately allocate time for clinical procedures (based on up-to-date time studies). This accuracy trims the unproductive downtime out of the schedule, making it possible to fit more dentistry into the same time frame.
- **Rotate between chairs.** Stagger appointments in such a way that you can move smoothly from one treatment room or area to another at a steady pace. Your assistants should be trained to prepare for upcoming cases before you arrive, so that productive time is not squandered. Obviously, you need at least two treatment chairs in order to use this technique. Once both are up to full capacity, a third chair can be added to handle overflow and emergencies.
- **Predetermine ideal times of day for different procedures.** Rather than merely filling openings in the schedule, establish an "ideal day" to guide your scheduling coordinator as she appoints patients. For most dentists, this means blocking out morning slots for high-production cases and clustering similar cases as much as possible for greater efficiency.
- **Improve patient compliance.** The best-laid plans regarding scheduling can be undermined by patients who show up late or not at all. To make sure you can get the most out of your expanded capacity, (a) use scripts to build value for appointments in the minds of patients, (b) upgrade your confirmation techniques, and (c) reduce the number of no-shows and late arrivals by "retraining" patients to be more compliant.

By taking a scientific approach to scheduling... including the strategies discussed here... you can increase your practice's capacity for production without increasing stress or fatigue.

Author



This resource was provided by the Levin Group, a leading dental consulting firm that provides dentists innovative management and marketing systems that result in increased patient referrals, production and profitability, while lowering stress. Since 1985, dentists have relied on Levin Group dental consulting to increase production.