

7 Ideas to Improve Your Orthodontic/Dental Practice Long-Term

Efficient, well-managed dental practices have happier patients and higher patient retention rates.

Introduction

When it comes to oral health care, orthodontists and dentists ace it in practice. However, improving your orthodontic/dental practice over the long term requires equal deftness concerning office management.

That's right.

Office management is a pivotal yet heavily undermined aspect of an orthodontic/dental practice.

While dentists are typically known to relish the clinical side of orthodontic practice, they often struggle with the business side. The key to improving orthodontic/dental practice requires pulling off both.

This is particularly important as dental practices have the highest patient attrition rates among all health care sectors. According to the American Dental Association (ADA), an average dentist retains only four out of ten patients after the first visit. More so, patient acquisition in dental practices is approximately [25x costlier](#) than patient retention. Therefore, having sound systems in place, using dental case management technologies, and deliberate effort by the entire team will improve your orthodontic practice over the long term.

Ideas to Improve Dental Practice

Improving orthodontic/dental practice is not a no-brainer. Researchers in dental practice management have devised proven, results-based strategies that have helped orthodontists improve dental practice with time.

Read on to discover ideas that have helped dentists crank it up a notch to win and retain a steady stream of happy patients!

1. The 7/12 Patient Touchpoint Strategy

A [2019 study published in the British Dental Journal](#) assessed the importance of this novel approach in improving dental practice through patient retention and patient acquisition. The 7/12 patient touchpoint strategy is a patient education strategy emphasizing the importance of preventative and self-care for oral health. The approach revolves around promoting awareness by connecting with patients seven times over 12 months.

According to the study, the 7/12 patient touchpoint strategy brought an [87% increase](#) in active patients and [38% new](#) patient gains.

The method promotes preventive care and oral health maintenance.

2. Build an Office Culture in Your Practice

Dentists have long been in a rut in their practice, paying no heed to the physical environment and overall culture. However, patients these days look out for an esthetically pleasing interior in the clinics. Thus, it's good to pay close attention to your practice's physical environment and office decor.

Implementing an office culture within the practice is another way to enhance dental practice. Having regular meetings with the staff to discuss routine operations and big picture goals keeps the team motivated and on the same page.

3. Offer Several Financial Options

While it may sound trivial, all other strategies to boost dental practice can go in vain if your patients have limited financial options. Therefore, offering several financial options can be a bonus as it makes the regular visit convenient for your patients. Some financial options you can provide to your clients include:

- Insurance coverage
- Debit, credit, personal cheque, and cash
- Special financing options

4. Engage with Your Patients

One of the best ways to build trust and create long-lasting relationships with your patients is to stay connected. Leverage the power of digital platforms and cross-channel marketing to check in with your existing patients. Feeding your regular clients with valuable oral health care information will motivate them to take charge of their dental health.

You can stay engaged with your patients by:

- Maintaining a prominent online presence across leading social media channels
- Be accessible to your patients by phone, email, social media platforms, and live chat

5. Don't Undermine Word-of-Mouth Referral

Do you know that [92% of consumers](#) have reported that word-of-mouth reference is the biggest reason they avail a particular service? That's precisely why a single lousy tweet, poor rating, or a Facebook rant can bring your reputation down the drain.

To improve your dental practice, harness the power of word of mouth referral by:

- Proactively requesting patient referrals from existing patients
- Offer referral bonus programs, such as loyalty programs
- Get video testimonials from happy patients

6. Use Updated Software for Case Management, Appointment Scheduling, and Tracking

Gone are the days of manual case management and appointment scheduling. Instead, leveraging technology can save both time and money!

And there's data to back this up:

A 2004 study published in the Journal of the American Dental Association revealed that using integrated office technology can help improve dental practice efficiency and [enhance patient care](#).

7. Train your Staff

Professional training and continuing education programs are imperative in dental practice. Training staff members, including receptionists and front desk team members, with a quality dental front desk training program, is a great way to boost orthodontic practice.

A [2021 study](#) on upskilling front office personnel in dental care practice revealed that training results in high confidence in new skills and dental knowledge.

Conclusion

Dental/orthodontic practice is a highly competitive space where surviving and thriving depends on various factors.

Using the strategies mentioned above, you can level up your dental practice long-term, be more efficient at work, and win entrusting patients eventually.