

REFERRALS - Are you rewarding the behavior you want repeated?

How much do your patients like you?

How pleased are they with the delivery of your services?

How loyal are patients to you and your practice?

Are your patients getting a 'WOW' experience?

What % of your patients know that you want them to refer?

Does your team refer new patients?

Are there incentives in place for referring patients?

The answers to the above questions are fundamental to the success of any dental practice and can be best answered by the number of referrals you receive. If you don't have at least 10-15 new patients per cycle, per doctor with at least 80% of them being referred by other patients, it's time to re-evaluate the marketing message your patients are receiving.

Here are some essentials that will help to generate referrals from your existing patients –

1. **Give them something to talk about.** Just simply meeting expectations is mediocre. Staying on time, making them comfortable, etc. isn't overwhelmingly positive. It's expected. What about your patient experience is unexpected or unusual (in a good way, of course. Need some ideas? Read 'The Power of Moments' by Dan Heath
2. **Put together a referral program and be consistent.** Don't just work the program when new patients are down. Identify patients during your morning huddle that you would like to ask to invite their friends and family into the practice. Who will ask?

3. **Reward your referrals!!** Don't be lame by giving them a \$50 credit on their account. How boring! Make it personal. Find out what the referring patient likes to do in their spare time, favorite restaurants, gift from their favorite store... be creative and memorable! Take it a step further... what if you were to show up at their place of business to deliver the gift? Include a handwritten note with **gift cards** for them to share with more of their friends/co-workers/family! Set a budget and block time on your calendar to reward referrals!
4. **Create opportunities for referrals–** rather than waiting, ask your patients, 'Why do you come here for your dental care?' Hopefully they offer a compliment, rather than 'Oh, you're on my plan'. At that point, let them know how much you appreciate them – identify folks in their circle of influence and ask them to invite them to the practice. Don't wait until after treatment to ask for referrals!! Did you know that new patients are much more likely to tell their people about you?
5. **Collect testimonials** – keep a video camera or your phone handy and ask great patients to share their story – these are fantastic resources for your website, facebook page, for your new patient welcome packet, or to include in marketing material. The SEO experts continue to tell us that videos will help your ranking!!

Successful Referral Programs are easy to assemble and carry out – the trick is budgeting time in your week to be consistent. All it takes is a small amount of creativity to follow through on an incentive/competition program that can get your patients involved in growing your practice.

Check out our **Comprehensive Marketing Packet** for more ideas!