

## Are your clients clairvoyants?

Since forming Integrated Dental Marketing in 2002, I have helped over a hundred practices with their marketing needs and I have visited literally 100's of practices nationwide. The one thing that still astounds me is that most practices still expect their patients to be mind readers. What do I mean by that? Well, a lot of practices will have an impressive array of glossy magazines (many of which advertise competing practices and certainly competing products) but have little if anything to do with dentistry!

Most practices I visit, the patient will be waiting between two and twenty minutes to see the doctor. This time can be either spent reading this week's 'Hello' magazine or reading about the benefits of dental procedures- the choice is completely up to you.

Everyone in every social economic level is becoming more sophisticated. Ten years ago you would have a coffee white with one. Now even the most basic in society wants a flat white, a strong soy latte or a cappuccino. This level of public awareness is as true in dentistry as any other part of society. Shows such as 'Extreme Makeover' educate the masses to such procedures as veneers and implants, when ordinarily these terms would be recommendations by a doctor, not a request by a patient.

So how do we harness this increase in the public's thirst for knowledge? Well, it's quite simple TELL THEM WHAT YOU DO!!!! Don't rely on blandly written toothpaste manufacturer's handouts to inform your patient about your life's work and passion, write (or employ a professional dental marketing company to write) a series of brochures on the procedures that you would like your patient to know about.

When you are looking inside a patient's mouth I am sure that you are advising on the best treatment plan for the patient. What can often be missed however are the procedures the patient wants to have and the treatments that may apply to family and friends. By creating a range of sales (information) brochures about the procedures

you perform, you will educate your patients to what is available and what they may like to see happen to a spouse or other family member.

For example, you are seeing a patient for regular check ups that need little more than a clean and scale every six months, but the spouse drinks black coffee, too much red wine and smokes. Unless you have a brochure explaining the benefits of professional teeth whitening, your patient may just keep trying ineffective whitening toothpaste or whitening gels to try and make their spouse look respectable. A brochure about the benefits of having whitening done at YOUR practice may be all you need to create a new patient for life. A 20c brochure for a client that is worth potentially thousands of dollars over the next ten years has got to be better than letting them read Women's Day and run off to buy the latest non-effective whitening product.

This principle applies to every procedure that you WANT to do. Don't promote endodontics if this is a procedure you don't particularly want to do more of. You will obviously recognise when a patient needs a procedure and provides the necessary health care, but to promote the procedures that you would like to do more of just makes plan sense.

So throw out the magazines and replace them on with collateral that promotes YOUR practice, YOUR philosophies and that will increase YOUR bottom line. Sales brochures, a book about your practice and information posters about YOUR practice will go a long way to keeping your patients informed of what is possible and how a beautiful smile can change their life.

Next month I will talk about controlling you existing patients and future patients through the power of branding.

---

Carl and his colleagues can be contacted on (02) 9211 1477. They offer marketing advice for the dental community - Nationwide.

[www.dentalmarketing.com.au](http://www.dentalmarketing.com.au)