CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IMPACT ON DENTAL OFFICE SUCCESS
HOW DOES CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IMPACT DENTAL OFFICE SUCCESS?

Consumer Behavior is the study of how consumers make decisions and there are literally thousands of books on this topic. What I find extremely interesting while reading tons of books on these topics is how polar opposite the dental industry is compared to most consumer products companies. At AccelerateMyPractice, we teach consumer behavior to dental offices.

What I mean by this is many people within the dental industry present treatment very clinically and logically. For example, you have caries on the distal cusp of 28 and need a DO. The problem with this is that consumers, or what are called patients, don’t make logical decisions. If they did, no one would have tattoos. I think tattoos are very nice but you can’t tell me they are a logical decision. Clearly, they are an example of an emotional decision. Therefore, we need to speak their language, which is emotional purchase decisions. Many examples such as breast augmentations, liposuction, fast cars, and iPhone 5 are all emotional purchases. Do you really think patients only want what is covered by insurance? Do you realize that many patients want the best dental treatment? What we teach are the secrets that all Consumer Products companies understand, people definitely don’t make logical decisions.

We teach the secrets that all Consumer Products companies understand. Believe it or not people definitely don’t make logical decisions.
What is normally said to your patients during a hygiene appointment. Do you even know what is being discussed? If not, you should!! How does this conversation compare to what is being discussed, either when trying to get patients into your hygiene schedule or during an appointment?

**EXAMPLE:**
Many patients who struggle with Perio tell us that they struggle with bad breath. We find in most cases that this significantly improves by taking care of the perio. We also find those who struggle with Perio also struggle with decreased energy. If you have ever wondered why this might be for you, it is because your body is fighting a constant infection in your mouth. This takes energy to fight and thus many who solve this problem see an increase in energy. Lastly, many who struggle with Perio also get sick more often with colds and such. This is also because of the energy it takes to fight the infection in your mouth, as I previously mentioned. In addition, your swollen gums are a pathway for illness to get into your body. By decreasing that swelling, it makes it tougher for the bugs to get into your body.

If any of these 3 benefits would interest you (eliminating bad breath, more energy, and decreased sickness) we need to do something different to improve your oral health.

The idea is that it is concise and all about the benefits that they would enjoy. A patient doesn’t really care if their pockets go from 5mm to 2mm; they can’t relate to that benefit. They can, by contrast, understand the benefits of getting rid of bad breath. Think about what the subconscious will be thinking as you talk to them about bad breath. I would guess some who have poor health will be thinking, “My significant other hasn’t been kissing me lately.” How powerful of a motivator is intimacy? Extremely powerful. The beauty is we don’t have to come right out and criticize someone, their subconscious will do it for us.
DENTAL CASE ACCEPTANCE
MOVING PATIENTS FROM THE HYGIENE CHAIR TO THE DOCTOR’S CHAIR

EXAMPLE:

Mary, you have some decay right here on these teeth. Here is what will happen to these if left untreated. The cavities will grow larger and at some point probably infect the very center of the tooth resulting in a root canal. It is possible, when that happens that you will also end up with an abscess. If you aren’t familiar with those, it is when your face swells up very large, hurts quite a bit and fills with pus. It is safe to say, it is no fun. At that point we will have to do a root canal and a crown. The total bill on that process will be somewhere around $2000 per tooth.

Right now if we treat these teeth for about $200 per tooth, we can save you all that discomfort. That being said, we can either do all of these at once for you or we can do them individually. If we do all 3 individually, it will take 3 visits and 3 shots. Do you prefer we do them all at once or in 3 visits?

The outcome of this process for you, is that the tooth will last quite a long time; it will look beautiful and it won’t hurt. The only thing I can promise you is that right now, it will be the least expensive and most comfortable process it will be. Over time, it will only cost more and potentially hurt more.
Here is the bottom line, we need to focus on the results for the patient, not the process. Most people don’t want to know the process, they want to understand 4 things:

1. **HOW WILL IT LOOK?**
2. **HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**
3. **WILL IT HURT?**
4. **HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?**

If we handle those items in our discussions and keep it simple, I fully expect to see great growth for every dental office.

So the question becomes, how well do you know your existing patients? Or how well do you know the thoughts of the type of patients you want to attract? Do you assume what their values are? I had a rather interesting discussion once with a receptionist in an office who insisted their patients would only get the dentistry that was covered by insurance. I was blown away. Do you want to bet she was right, because she probably put those thoughts into their heads? However, I know lots of practices all over the country that have a practice full of patients who are cash patients. Can you imagine the discussion if you were to sit the two receptionists down from these two offices? My guess is that the one that says patients only accept was is covered by insurance, would insist that it isn’t that way in her town. Wouldn’t it be funny to tell her later, they are 6 blocks apart!!

We can’t pre-judge our patients. Until we ask them and educate them on what their health could be, they won’t know. If you have never driven a luxury car, how would you know if it is worth it? I had a doctor tell me a story once about a new patient who was due in as the last patient of the day the last day of the week. The patient pulled up in an old beat up car with the cloth material from the ceiling hanging down and almost blocking her view. As she got out of the car, she flicked her cigarette into his parking lot. Then she walked in and told the doc she wanted her teeth fixed. At this point, he got impatient and just wanted to leave to start his weekend. She insisted she wanted her teeth fixed. So he quickly looked in her mouth (she needed a lot of work) and said it was going to cost a bunch.
She said it was fine. Again, he was just dying to leave for many reasons, the biggest being he didn’t think she was serious. So she pressed him for a price. He just shook his head and said $20,000 thinking he would be able to get out of there. She said, “Done”. Flabbergasted, he is now thinking, sure but how are you going to pay for it, so he asks. She shrugs and says she doesn’t have that much.

He actually got up and started to walk out of the operatory and she stopped him. She asked if she could put half down today and the balance upon completion. He stopped in his tracks and asked how she would like to put the half down. She pulled out a brown bag of cash!!

Never in a million years could he have predicted that. He was so quick to judge and be impatient that he almost let a $20,000 case walk out of the door. Now obviously this doesn’t happen all the time, but that might also be because you don’t allow it. I have so many stories like this it blows me away.

It is very dangerous for any business to pre-judge your clients’ interests and economics. Now there might be times we think we know them, but it is still wise to simply ask before we suggest treatment.

THE ANSWER IS ALWAYS NO UNTIL YOU ASK

Want to evaluate how well you and your team communicate with your patients? Call us to schedule a consultation. As a benefit to Four Quadrants clients we will do a complimentary consultation on this matter. If you would like to see some of our video training content, watch AMP TV.

GET YOUR IN OFFICE COACH TODAY: INFO@ACCELERATEMYPRACTICE.COM

“We cannot expect different results while continuing with the same actions.”

- Darren Kaberna President and Founder of AMP