



Should you have a TCO?

Many dental practices now have a Treatment Coordinator (TCO). Laura Horton explains the benefits



In a nutshell the responsibilities of a TCO are:

- To build relationships with patients
- To build value into treatment in relation to the fee
- To wow the patient with excellent customer service
- To decrease the non-clinical workload on dentists
- To ensure a new patient's perception of a practice as 'excellent'.

There are several reasons why practices are implementing the TCO role.

Customer service

Customer service is something everyone strives to deliver and one that everyone claims to be good at. But 'good' is not good enough! The level of customer service needs to be raised to consistently excellent. Consistency is the key. Why not entrust the responsibility to one person – the TCO? You can offer an amazing experience for your patients and be sure that everyone will experience it.

Attract new patients, especially nervous patients

New patients are very important to your practice. One way to attract them is with a free consultation. By consultation I mean a discussion, not an assessment. People are wary of spending money without knowing if what they desire is even suitable. Who wants to pay £40 just to find out if they can have their teeth whitened? No one!

How many potential patients anxious about visiting a dentist are there in your town? Twenty-five per cent of the population maybe? Imagine if just one tenth of them came to your practice because you targeted them and offered them a chat with a TCO rather than an appointment with a dentist.

Offer free consultations

You need to offer free consultations. Free consultations, as I have said, are not an assessment. This is where most practices go wrong and by doing so devalue the subsequent assessment. When you see a patient for a free appointment it is costing you money. Let them see a TCO – who can build a relationship and add value without costing so much.

Reduce front desk stress

The reception team should not have to explain to new patients on the phone how the practice operates. This can be done by the TCO at the free consultation.

Also, if a patient in the practice has many appointments to be scheduled, a large payment to make or a credit agreement to arrange, this can be done by the TCO away from the front desk.

Increase treatment uptake

Because patients will have a clear idea from the TCO of all the options available and the associated fees, when they see the dentist for a (paid) assessment they will make informed decisions about the treatments they choose.

Alternatively, after the assessment the TCO can help patients make informed decisions about the treatments they want.

Monitoring marketing

I am a firm believer in tracking your marketing expenditure and measuring its success and the rate of return. Treatment Coordinators can find out exactly how a patient heard of your practice and subsequently made contact.

Laura Horton Consulting is a bespoke consulting company specialising in the training of Treatment Coordinators.
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