



A treatment coordinator will raise your practice's level of customer service

10 REASONS TO EMPLOY A TREATMENT COORDINATOR

A treatment coordinator will pay for him or herself over and over – as well as providing great customer service, argues Laura Horton



Laura Horton is the UK's leading treatment coordinator trainer. Laura worked in practice for 13 years and now helps dental practices to develop into customer focused businesses which outperform their competition. www.laurahortonconsulting.co.uk

1. YOUR LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SERVICE WILL BE EXCELLENT AND CONSISTENT

Customer service is an area that everyone strives to deliver in and it is an area that everyone also believes they are 'good' at. But good is not good enough! In private practice the level of good needs to be raised to consistently excellent. Consistency is the key. I am sure that your team all try hard to impress your patients especially when they are on their first visit - so why not hand the responsibility over to one person? You can set an amazing experience for your patients and everyone will receive it in the same way.

2. GREAT WAY TO ATTRACT NEW PATIENTS, ESPECIALLY NERVOUS PATIENTS

New patients are very important to your practice. One way to attract them into your practice is with a free consultation; and by consultation I mean a discussion, not an assessment. People are now more than ever

fearful of spending money without knowing if something they desire is something that is even suitable - who wants to pay £40 to find out if they can have their teeth whitened? No-one! How many dentally anxious patients are there in your town? 25%? Imagine if 10% of those came to your practice because you targeted them and they could come in for a 'chat' with a team member - not a dentist!

3. YOUR PRACTICE CAN OFFER FREE CONSULTATIONS AT NO COST TO THE DENTISTS

Free consultations need to be offered. Free consultations, as I have said, are not about an assessment. This is where most practices go wrong, and you also devalue the assessment. When you see a patient for a free appointment it is costing you money. Let them see a member of your team who can build a relationship and value, and this will increase your hourly rate.

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Dentists will be free to concentrate on dentistry, as a treatment coordinator can prepare their paperwork for them

4. MAKE THE FRONT DESK TEAM'S DAY AT WORK LESS STRESSFUL

The team do not have to deal with patients on the phone telling them they will call back, or they are ringing around after they have spent time explaining how you operate. The enquiry could be successful if the team had a free appointment to offer the new patient instead. If there is a patient with lots of appointments to schedule, and a large fee to take, or credit agreement to organise, it can all be done away from the desk with another team member - a treatment coordinator or TCO.



A treatment coordinator will ease the strain placed on your reception team

5. INCREASES TREATMENT UPTAKE

Because the patient will have an idea of all the options available to them and the fees associated, when they come to see the dentist on another day for a paid assessment they already know in their mind what they could have and what they may be spending - they can make an informed decision once the assessment has been completed and they are told what treatment would be suitable for them.

6. REFERRALS FROM PATIENTS INCREASE

Patients that like your practice and have had a good experience will tell their friends. Everybody likes to go by recommendation and your consistent customer service will ensure that this happens. This is a compliment to you and your team when this happens, and the best thing is that you have not had to spend any money on marketing to get this patient!

7. YOU RECEIVE A HIGHER RETURN ON YOUR INVESTMENT FOR MARKETING

I am a firm believer in tracking your marketing expenditure and measuring its success and rate of return. Treatment coordinators can find out exactly how a patient heard of your practice and the journey that they then went on to make the first contact. Although a patient may say they have been on your website, when asked you

more than often find that there have been at least two if not three factors influencing their journey to becoming your patient.

8. AMOUNT OF NON-CLINICAL DENTISTRY FROM THE DENTISTS DECREASES

Treatment coordinators help dentists in many ways. They can help them by preparing consents and estimates, reports, information sheets, treatment plans and letters.

9. EMPOWERS YOUR TEAM

A team that have a TCO are a happy team that enjoy their job. The reason for this is that they know they are special. As a principal, or manager, you have made them feel special and they will have a positive and energetic attitude.

10. TREATMENT COORDINATORS PAY FOR THEMSELVES OVER AND OVER

This role can increase your turnover by 20-60% in the first month and every month thereafter – but their role needs to be consistent every month too!

TABLE 1: MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TREATMENT COORDINATOR

Changing a new patient's perception of dentistry to excellent
Building relationships with patients
Building value into the treatment in relation to the fee
Providing outstanding customer service
Providing new patient consultations
Increasing communication about patients' real needs and desires from the practice
Helping dentists with treatment plans, consents and estimates
Spending time with patients explaining the options for treatment further to a clinical discussion with the dentist
Booking appointments and arranging finances in private away from the front desk

To ask a question or comment on this article please send an email to: comments@ppdentistry.com