

Why treatment coordinators are a necessity in aesthetic practices

Laura Horton emphasises the importance of having a treatment coordinator and how it can ultimately help to 'sell' the treatments and services you offer

One of the main responsibilities of a treatment coordinator is to provide outstanding customer service to your patients. When the team have been trained to do this, not only can they provide outstanding customer service, but they can make sure that it is really consistent.

It is very hard to talk about ourselves and tell our patients why we are individually so fantastic – having a treatment coordinator means that they can 'sell you', the clinician, and talk about you in an honest way that really makes the patient further excited about coming to the practice. They can build value in the treatment in relation to the fee as well. This is extremely important and often where we fall down. In a high-end practice, this is in particular where practices lose out. If you are not building enough value in relation to the fee, the systems will fall down and the patient will not go ahead with treatment.

Having a treatment coordinator that operates efficiently within your practice can increase your turnover by as little as 20% up to 80% every month and each month that they are working in the practice. It is essential that you have systems in place in your practice so that you are capturing all of the new patients that contact you. Offering free consultations is one way to do this.

Free consultations do not have to take up the dentist's time and they are absolutely a fantastic thing to offer. If you are a high-end prac-



tice that has higher fees than your competition, you know why, but the patients really do not. Instead of losing them on the phone because we assume they are shoppers and they want the cheapest, it is much better to offer them a free consultation to come and see a team member, for a coffee and a chat and then let your TCO do the hard work for you. Let them sell you, let them build the value and let them wow the patient with customer service. This is a sure far way to make sure that you get the patients that you want in your practice.

From experience, when you are working on a front desk, if a patient comes with a large treatment plan, they always arrive at the desk at the wrong time. The phones are ringing non-stop, you have a queue of patients and that is where mistakes can be made. It is much nicer to have one person dealing with these extensive treatment plans to make sure that everything is organised and booked effectively.

In a customer-focused practice, there is also nothing worse than having a busy reception area. The front desk needs to appear

calm and hassle free, especially when we are on the phone to new patients. If you have a treatment coordinator, they can actually take a lot of the work away from the front desk and deal with patients in a one-to-one basis in a separate area, normally a consultation room. It is much nicer to talk about money, large fees or to prepare credit agreements away from the front desk -for the patient as well as the team.

There are many different ways to use a treatment coordinator. However, the treatment coordinator's main responsibilities are to provide outstanding customer service, to build solid relationships with patients and to build value into the treatment in relation to the fee.

Option of one two to use a TCO for your new patients'

If you have a patient that contacts the practice and they are already committed to booking an appointment with you, they know what they want, you can still use the treatment coordinator to provide some well factor to the appointment.



Laura Horton is a leading treatment co-ordinator in the UK. The training Laura Horton Consulting provides is bespoke to suit the goals and vision of the practices. All training is in-house and CPD verifiable. For further information visit the website at www.laurahortonconsulting.co.uk or call 01279 755266.

The idea would be that the treatment coordinator sees the patient first of all, spends 10 to 15 minutes with them and then hands over to yourself, the clinician. Once they have done that, you can then begin your clinical assessment of your patient. At the end of that appointment, as you normally do in terms of treatment planning and presenting the options, you can do that but you can have a helping hand - you can use your treatment coordinator here. When the patient has decided on their next step, you can continue to see patients in your treatment room but let your TCO take over and wrap everything up in the consultation room, away from the front desk.

When it comes to treatment planning, I always recommend that if you have a large case, bring the patient back to go over the options. It is extremely important as information overload can often occur and you never want to be rushed or seem to be in a rushed manner.

Everything needs to be prepared and ready, from the treatment plans, photographs, treatment report letter, information sheets, consent forms and estimates. Your treatment coordinator can help to do all of this for you. Let them know what treatment plan you want on the computer, they can do so (with effective systems) and then bring everything back to you for you to double check and make sure everything is 100% correct, including the treatment plan, the fees, the length of time of the appointments etc.

When you present a large case to a patient, you also need to make sure your presentation is sleek. And what sleek I mean, a structured conversation and present it in a professional manner using the aid of PowerPoint. PowerPoint is a simple thing that your treatment coordinator can prepare for you prior to the patient's appointment.

Option of two of two to use a TCO for your new patients'

The other option is the free consultations. It is really great to give your front desk team a helping hand. When you work in a high-end practice or where your fees are higher than else-

Treatment coordinators always feel empowered. They end up working as part of a happy team and it is a win-win-win situation. It is a win for the practice, it is a win for the team including the dentist, and it is also a win for the patients.

where, it is harder to convert new patients on the telephone. Simply having a treatment coordinator available for the patients is a fantastic way for you then to convert your enquiries.

In the last practice that I worked in, this was the most effective way to begin a new patient process. I worked in a high-end implant and cosmetic practice. Many practices local to us charged half the fee in comparison. However, to convert the patient on the telephone, the team would offer a complementary appointment with me, Laura, the treatment coordinator, 'a fantastic team member, come along for coffee and a chat, have a conversation, see how we can help, show you the solutions and results we have achieved for other patients, it is a no obligation appointment'.

Patients used to bite our hand off. They have never been offered this before. They used to come in and see me and it was my job to convert them into the new patient comprehensive assessment with the clinician.

Once the assessment appointment was scheduled, 9 times out of 10, there would already have been an appointment arranged for the patient to come back to have their treatment presented to them within five working days later. The system worked extremely well in the practice. Because of the systems we had in place, everything was sleek and extremely professional and the patients were continually building value in us, the practice and the team, and the treatment in relation to the fee.

The only time I do not recommend bringing the patient back to go over the treatment plan is one of two situations:

One, if there is a simple case where you can explain there and then to the patient, or two, if you have a dominant personality, a businessman, a leader, a busy working parent, they will not have the opportunity to come back and see you at a later date.

Right from the start and thereafter, the treatment coordinator is the one point of contact for the patient. This is something I like to call concierge dentistry. The patient knows at all times that if there is anything they need, they can directly contact the treatment coordinator by text message through the direct mobile phone provided by the practice or an email address as well as the practice number. It really helps to make the patient feel special and that is what treatment coordination is all about.

Treatment coordinators always feel empowered. They end up working as part of a happy team and it is a win-win-win situation. It is a win for the practice, it is a win for the team including the dentist, and it also a win for the patients. Everybody is happier and it is a job that has a great amount of fulfilment. When treatment coordinators complete delegated tasks from yourselves and they help to reduce your non-clinical time, it really helps to make them feel worthwhile.

Treatment coordinators that have been trained are also fantastic on the front desk. Due to their exceptional verbal skills that they hold through the new patient consultations, they are also great on the telephone with patients as well so they should definitely be cross-trained and be used in a multi-role. **A**