When patients arrive for treatment, these individuals deserve customer service equal to the dentist’s clinical standards. Every patient interaction represents an opportunity to make a favorable impression.

Customer service is about developing relationships with patients to the point where they cannot imagine going to any other office. Such patients will gladly refer their friends and neighbors to your practice.

To provide an honest look at customer service in your practice, ask the following questions:

• Are front desk personnel merely polite, or also enthusiastic and attentive?
• Are staff members content to provide minimal information, or do they build value for the practice and its services?
• Do new patients receive a practice brochure, directions and forms before their first visit?
• Does the office anticipate patient questions regarding dental insurance, fees and financial options?

Customer service is all about exceeding expectations. Was the basic need of the patient met? Or was the opportunity seized to deliver much more?

Achieving superior customer service: Creating the ideal patient experience cannot happen overnight. The entire practice must be trained to deliver that experience.

One critical technique is scripting that prepares dentists and their staff for every conversation with current and prospective patients.

To deliver outstanding customer service, what we call Stage III Customer Service,™ a clinician must implement as many of the following action steps as possible:

• Design scripts that answer frequent patient questions so that you are creating energy and building trust with patients.
• Employ scripts that can allow staff members to handle the most difficult patient conversations with ease, whether about major treatment decisions or financial concerns.
• Begin each patient conversation with something personal as opposed to jumping in with clinical conversation immediately. Take the time to talk to each patient about something in his or her life.
• Learn one new thing about a patient during every visit.
• Call patients in the evening to see how they are feeling after a procedure.
• Thank patients who refer family and friends with a handwritten note or a phone call.

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Conclusion

Each patient contact is another chance to exceed patient expectations and create a loyal patient base. The right training, motivation and leadership can deliver customer service that keeps patients coming back to the practice.

More satisfied patients should always be the goal of practices seeking to increase production.

Visit Levin Group’s Dental Consulting Resource Center at www.levingroupgp.com for a wide range of educational materials, including tips, newsletters and white papers. You can also connect with Levin Group on Facebook and Twitter (@Levin_Group) for tips, news and sharing ideas. For more information, stop by the booth, No. 819.

About the author

Dr. Roger P. Levin, DDS, is founder and chief executive officer of Levin Group, a leading dental practice management consulting firm. For more than 20 years, Levin Group has helped thousands of general dentists and specialists increase their satisfaction with practicing dentistry.