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Newsletter Article Reprint

Increasing Case Starts: Five Keys to Success

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While the slumping economy has affected virtually every practice, doctors offering high-end elective procedures have been particularly hard hit. While potential new patients have continued at acceptable levels, treatment acceptance rates have declined significantly. While the current economic downturn has affected almost everyone, the stakes are especially high for doctors providing elective procedures.

Having given over 2,000 presentations to clients in over 60 different types of businesses, Landy Chase says that unlike dentists, most of these clients do not have prospective customers who show up at their place of business. Furthermore, most of these clients must routinely persuade decision makers to talk to them. Fortunately, most doctors do not have these problems. Prospective patients routinely show up at your door. Moreover, when they arrive at your practice, sign in, and take a seat, they are making it clear that they want to do business with you.

Conversely, when a financially qualified patient leaves your practice without making a commitment, they are also making it clear that they have reversed the decision that brought them to you. During the course of that initial visit, something has made them change their mind.

Because the pool of potential patients actively seeking your services may be stagnant, or even declining, doctors and their staff must ensure that they establish an initial consultation process that maximizes patient starts. Furthermore, doctors must also identify any breakdowns in the process. In that regard, they must determine the reason(s) why prospective patients visiting their practice changed their mind, and take immediate action to correct these deficiencies.

The impact of "getting this right" is huge. Consider a recent study of large orthodontic practices, where average treatment acceptance rates declined from 77% in 2000 to 66% currently. Based on an average of 550 new patient exams per year, the decline in treatment acceptance rates means that practices were losing an average of 60 new cases annually. Based upon a \$5,000 average case fee, this translated into \$300,000 in gross collections per year, and lost profits estimated at \$240,000 (80%) annually. With this much money "on the table", doctors must dramatically increase their emphasis on key selling skills.

How Do You Fix the Problem? We'll cover that in our June E-Newsletter. Sign-up for free at enews.adsflorida.com.

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Landy Chase, MBA, CSP is a sales and marketing expert who specializes in helping orthodontists and other elective procedure doctors improve their treatment acceptance rates. He is the creator of Closing Skills for the Orthodontic Practice, an onsite staff workshop.

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