

## 5 STEPS TO CASE ACCEPTANCE



Case acceptance begins with a strong team.

A strong team will have a strong leader.

What are the different types of leaders and what type of leader will lead their team to achieve and exceed their goals?

**There are three basic types of leadership.**

1. laissez-fair
2. autocratic, and
3. collaborative

Laissez-fair is a French term that essentially means “hands-off” in terms of management styles. It implies that the leader, in this case, the practice owner/manager, feels their team is capable of completing all duties with minimal or no direction.

Autonomy can be good, but too much can cause a lack of procedural protocol, which leads to an inefficient practice.

Autocratic leadership is the opposite. This leader assumes the team is incapable of completing their duties without detailed instructions, and the leader’s way is the only right way of doing things.

This approach causes team members to feel devalued.

This type of leadership does not motivate and empower the team to be their best.

This type of leadership results in less cooperation and no commitment to the practice. This leadership style does not allow for the viability of the team members opinions or ideas.

This will put a halt to growth and innovation which can lead to optimal care and increased revenue.

Collaborative leadership is the best type of leadership.

This leadership style is patient centered and with happy patients you will experience more new patients'. More new patients mean more profits.

With the collaborative style you will also experience a much happier team which also relates to happier people on your team. Happy team members result's in happier patients.

Dental Practice owners who understand this transformative leadership style, when they allow those who surround them to grow, will thrive during times of change. Changes in our world, consistent changes in our dental industry and change in your dental practice are going to occur.

The most successful dental practices will have a leader who empowers their team. Collaborative Leaders will be open to change. These are the leaders who will be open to learning; constantly learning from other experts and even the people that surround them. Status-quo is not a word that helps the collaborative leader sleep well at night.

When team members know that their thoughts, ideas and opinions, are being heard; that they are able to use their talent and their God-given skills, the dental practice owner will experience greater satisfaction in their business. They are most likely to feel more satisfaction because their goals are achieved. These are the people who exceed their goals.

When team members know they are utilizing their best skills and talent, they feel empowered. These are the people who have a renewed passion for growth of the dental practice. These are the dental practice owners best ally.

Human psychology dictates that emotions or moods are proximal, and that we unintentionally affect those around us.<sup>1</sup> Since most waking hours are spent at the workplace, team members are the most notably affected by the mood of the (lead or owner) dentist.

The dentist (lead or practice owner) needs to be aware of their attitudes and actions and they must consider how their actions will influence their team members.

The dentist (lead or practice owner) needs to build a strong relationship with their team based on trust and credibility. The dentist-practice owner needs to demonstrate integrity in all situations in the dental practice; morally, ethically, and honestly.

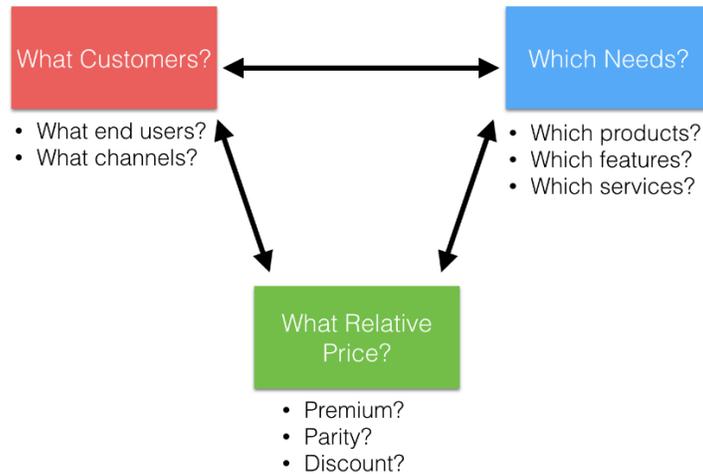


## 1. Relationship

Establish great rapport and establish a relationship with your patients. A dental practice can do this by hiring a friendly and enthusiastic new patient coordinator or patient concierge. Appoint one or two top team members to be that person who will greet your patients, especially all new patients.

The new patient coordinator and/or your concierge, should be able to prepare patients for an extraordinary experience with a comfortable, open atmosphere. The concierge's thorough pre-appointment atmosphere with patients will provide useful information for the team, but also build relationship equity with your dental practice.

## Defining the Value Proposition



© Michael E. Porter

### 2. Your Value Proposition – AKA Unique Service Participation (USP)

What is a value proposition?

I am also rephrasing this to be your “Unique Services Participation.”

How can you best serve your patients?

What is unique or different about what you offer to your patients?

What is different about the way your dental practice “serves” your patients?

Please notice, I have taken out the word “sell.”

Sell seems to be a negative connotation. It’s a four-letter word.

Dental professionals don’t like to “sell”, and most people don’t want to be “sold” to.

Let’s change this word to “sell.”

**Definition.** Value proposition is a promise of value to be delivered, communicated, and acknowledged. It is also a belief from the customer about how value will be delivered, experienced and acquired. <sup>2</sup>

What sets you apart from that dental practice down the street for your practice?

What do you do differently in your dental practice?

How do people who enter the front door of your office feel different than the last dental office they visited?

Create your value proposition opportunity.

Unique service opportunity for your dental practice will allow you to learn more about every patient of record. You learn about their medical history, their values, how they feel (emotions), you learn about them clinically and also you learn their beliefs about money.

You will ask specific questions that allow you to learn more about these areas.

Ask open-ended questions.

You don't need to ask personal questions but there are thought provoking questions a person to ask and when you listen to the words your patient responds with, you will learn the answers to establish rapport and a great, long-lasting relationship with patients.

Encourage your patients to talk about their needs, wants, and life circumstances. Ask what motivated them to call and schedule an appointment at your office.

The new patient approach is discovery driven. Doctor and the team are gathering the "intelligence information."

When you have answers to these above questions about your patient, you are more likely to get a "yes" to your treatment recommendations. This is how you get patients to pay and schedule.

Yes, I say pay as the first word because we teach our clients how to present a treatment plan in a way that allows patients to pay at the time they schedule treatment.

The emergency patient approach is need-driven. These patients need immediate treatment, but after that care, the new patient approach can be implemented. The existing patient approach is maintenance-based. These patients have a comprehensive treatment plans in place, but in the event of a change, they may need updated treatment recommendations. Take them through the new patient approach and anticipate optimum results based on their continued care and updated treatment plan.

All three types require a baseline record and risk-assessment that includes medical and dental history forms, a question and answer session, x-rays, camera/digital/CEREC images, intraoral/extraoral imaging, oral cancer screening, models (face-bow, etc.), and risk assessment documentation.



### 3. RISK ASSESSMENT, YOUR TREATMENT PLAN AND TREATMENT PLAN PRESENTATION

Present detailed treatment recommendation and treatment options to your patient. It's important that team members engage and use all the value-add touch points (there are 5 patient touch points during every dental hygiene appointment) throughout the process from patient assessment, (hygienist/doctor) to financial coordinator/patient communication.

You will need to outline the process necessary to deliver the best results for your dental practice. It is best to consistently under-promise and over-perform your patient services. Your patient's treatment outcome(s) will now become measurable since you will have delivered a higher level of care than your patient expected.

Deliver optimum results to your patients in the four areas of oral health—periodontal, biochemical, functional, and dentofacial. Clearly explain the various treatment options and the benefits that relate to exactly what you know your patient values. Example: Your patient values aesthetics. Your communicated benefit of accepting treatment is a beautiful smile.

Set realistic expectations for a well-delivered patient-centered plan.



#### 4. Commit

Present your patient-centered plans, including the patients' financial investment. A patient-centered plan not only increases your patient's understanding of what's involved in their transformation, but also enhances their understanding of how this transformation is an investment in their health. This is the integral conversion moment and your unique service proposition.

Your patient's decision to proceed or not to proceed with your care will ultimately rest in the hands of their emotions, not their finances. This is the reason why you will communicate the value-added benefits of what your patient values not what you or the dental practice as a whole, values.

Patients will find money to schedule treatment they want. Usually when a patient declines your care based on money, it's possible they do not truly understand how much your care and treatment will benefit them.

It's possible you did not speak to what their value is. Your patient found the money to buy the latest mobile device. They probably find the money to buy a latte or other insignificant decadent treat daily, so you must find a way for your patient to "want" what they need.



### 5. Sequence of a Patient Centered Appointment

Each patient “prescribed” appointment will be scheduled according to:

- The caring, kind and thoughtful front office greeter, new patient coordinator, or concierge
  - This occurs during the introduction and patient interview (on the phone and in person)
- Patient-centered risk assessment and treatment plan
- Multi-disciplinary team/specialists
- Future appointments
- Active care completion
- Key Performance Indicators (Measure what matters)
- Patient care completion
- Maintenance and preventive care

The patient centered approach is optimal because patients feel seen, heard, cared for, and valued. The effect on your dental practice is a positive. Your end result is increased attention to follow-up, improved hygiene department productivity. You will have happy patients and happy patients refer their friends and family.

The percentage of case acceptance increases because patients trust and value what your dental practice provides. Patients no longer feel “sold” a service and they no longer feel pressured to pay and schedule appointments.

## **Conclusion.**

To conclude, your patients want and deserve the very best care. They want to feel cared for during and after their dental appointment. When patients choose a patient-centered, multidisciplinary practice, they will understand from the first phone call and when they are first greeted upon entering the door of your office, that they will always experience the very best possible care when they are a patient in your dental practice.

## **Resources:**

1. Jonathan H. Turner and Jan E. Stets. (2006), *Annual Review of Sociology Sociological Theories of Human Emotions* Vol. 32 pp. 25-52.
2. Barnes, C., Blake, H. and Pinder, D. (2009), *Creating and Delivering Your Value Proposition: Managing Customer Experience for Profit*, Kogan Page, London.