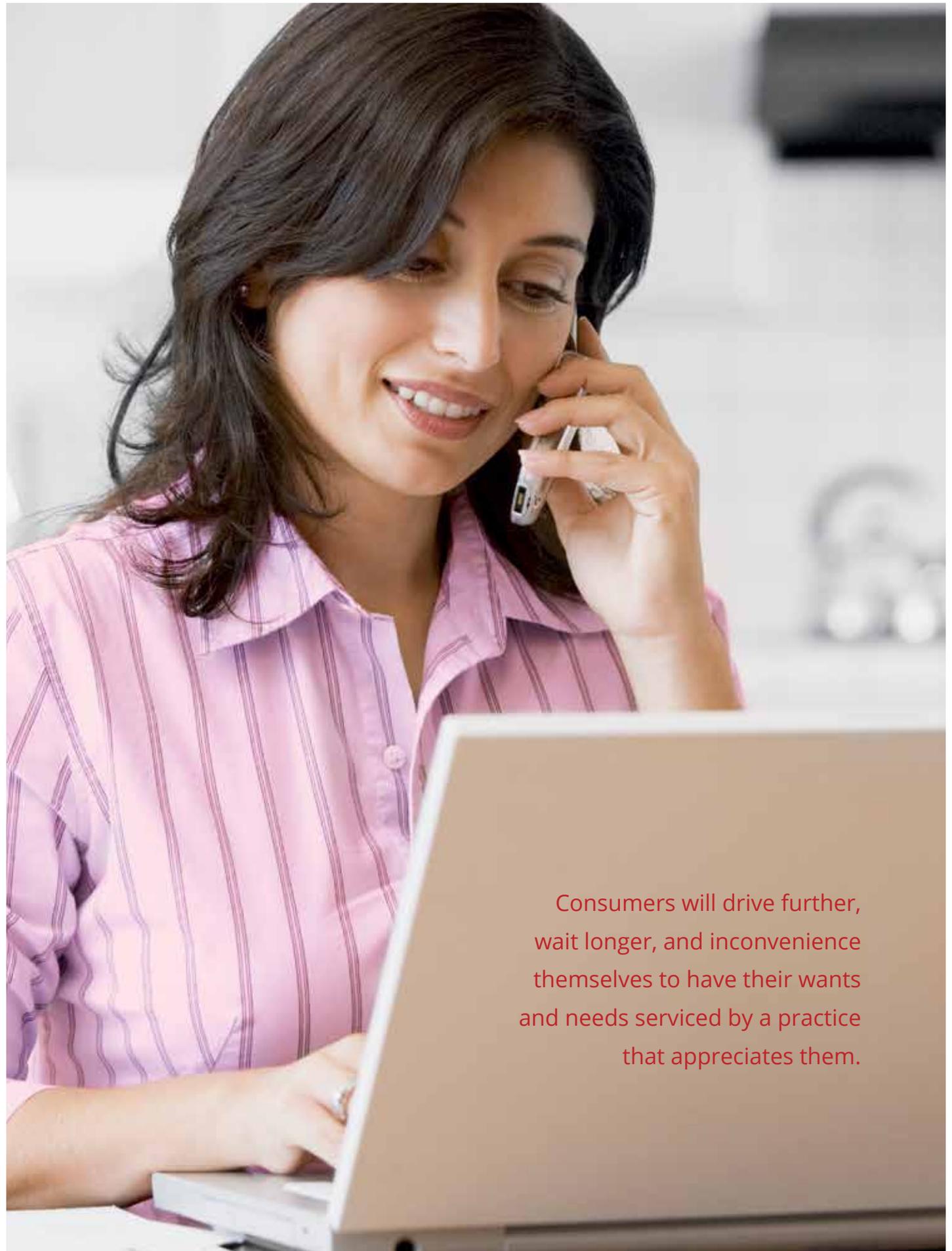


Reinforcement Of Competitive Advantages



PHONE POWER



Consumers will drive further, wait longer, and inconvenience themselves to have their wants and needs serviced by a practice that appreciates them.

SECTION 2:

Reinforcement Of Competitive Advantages

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Watch the corresponding Video Series.

Find videos in the left hand navigation of your Practice ZEBRA dashboard.

Perfect for energy-boosting huddles with your entire team!

REINFORCEMENT OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

- Part 1a (4 mins)
- Part 1b (5 mins)
- Part 2a (5 mins)
- Part 2b (8 mins)



VALUABLE SKILLS FOR HELPING YOUR NEW PATIENT

Between hello and goodbye, you have the opportunity to interact with your new patient in a manner that leaves them feeling good about calling your practice. You are the practice's voice. How you handle your new patient's request by telephone is how the patient is going to remember your practice. Be sure you represent the practice well.

- **ASSURE THE PATIENT YOU CAN HELP** – Respond to your new patient's opening statement with an assurance that you can help. Say something such as, "Absolutely. I can help you with that."
- **SUMMARIZE THE PATIENT'S OPENING STATEMENT** – Before you attempt to handle a patient's request, make sure you understand what the patient wants. Repeat what the patient said in your own words to confirm that you understand.
- **VERBALIZE WHAT YOU ARE DOING** – Tell your patient what you are doing throughout the contact. If you need to ask a series of questions to provide help, explain what you will be doing so they don't think you are suddenly interrogating them.



- **WHEN PUTTING PATIENTS ON HOLD, EXPLAIN WHY** – This is a common courtesy your patients will appreciate. In addition, tell your patient approximately how long it will take. “It may take me a few minutes to get the information I need to help you.”
- **LONG WAIT TIMES** – If the wait time will be extremely long, offer to call back. Always make a specific commitment. Say, “I’ll get back to you by five today with the information,” rather than, “I’ll call you back as soon as possible.” As soon as possible may mean one time frame to you and an entirely different time frame to your new patient.
- **SPEED** – Provide a response to the patients inquiry as quickly as possible. If you can immediately answer their question or call back within minutes, you will make a lasting positive impression.



IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

Have you ever heard the saying, “two ears one mouth”? That’s because listening is so very critical in all relationships – particularly in your healthcare environment – and many of us are lousy at being good listeners.

Dale Carnegie tells a famous story about an evening out after which he received an overwhelming compliment for being the most wonderful conversationalist. He hadn’t said more than a few words, just asking a brief question here and there and paying attention to the speaker by adding “ah yes” and “do go on” to encourage the talker. The speaker was actually responding to someone who was *listening completely*.

To be a better listener, always remember to stay focused, have pen and paper at the ready, be motivated to listen, show understanding, and ask questions.

1. Prevent yourself from being distracted. Concentrate 100% on what your caller is saying.
2. Make short quick notes. Don’t think of your answers while someone is talking or you’re not listening.
3. Keep in mind that there is no such thing as an uninteresting speaker – only uninterested listeners.
4. Demonstrate understanding by restating an idea or asking a question.
5. Open-ended questions allow your patients to express their feelings and thoughts.

Start by listening closely to the patient’s opening statement so that you can respond accordingly. **The opening statement usually contains the reason for the call.**



Consumers dislike having to repeat their information multiple times – to the same person ... and to additional people. Never make a patient repeat information because YOU failed to listen or because you were not prepared to make note of his or her request.

That's why we recommend to always keep a pen and paper close for note taking.

It's easier to make notes on any important details the doctor or team needs to know rather than try to remember them after the fact. This can also help you show you're actively listening by re-phrasing and repeating back patient concerns or questions to show you understand.

FOR EXAMPLE: Mrs. Brown calls in, tells you her story – then you note on your pad: Mrs. Brown. Interested in Conscious Sedation. Dental phobic. Need to be aware – take precautions.

We know that there are many challenges at your front desk that may attempt to prevent you from giving the new-patient caller your complete attention and focus ... but it is imperative.

- Listen without interrupting – try to give them your full attention.
- Practice active listening, listen for meaning, and regularly check with the patient to be sure you heard them properly and understood what they said. This goes a long way to promoting “mutual understanding.”
- Be sure you really do say it with a smile. Your smile will be heard and felt right over the phone, reassuring patients of your true desire to help.



To confirm you're listening, refer to your notes and politely summarize their opening statement. Repeat what they said in your own words to confirm that you understand. Practice this important technique – try to repeat the caller's initial phrase back by re-phrasing in a different way. FOR EXAMPLE:

“I want to be sure I understand you correctly Ms. Mooney. You want to make a new-patient appointment for your 13-year-old daughter Tanya – that's spelled T-A-N-Y-A – and you currently have Delta-Dental insurance. Is that correct?”



THREE CATEGORIES OF LISTENING

Active listening is a structured way of listening and responding to others.



All of us actively engage in these three forms of listening when someone is speaking with us, but we need to dissect them during our training in order to effectively take advantage of the total process.

1 PASSIVE LISTENING – Just as the phrase implies, we sit there like a sponge and absorb the message from the patient without any form of active participation. We do not acknowledge what is being said to us, nor do we provide any feedback.

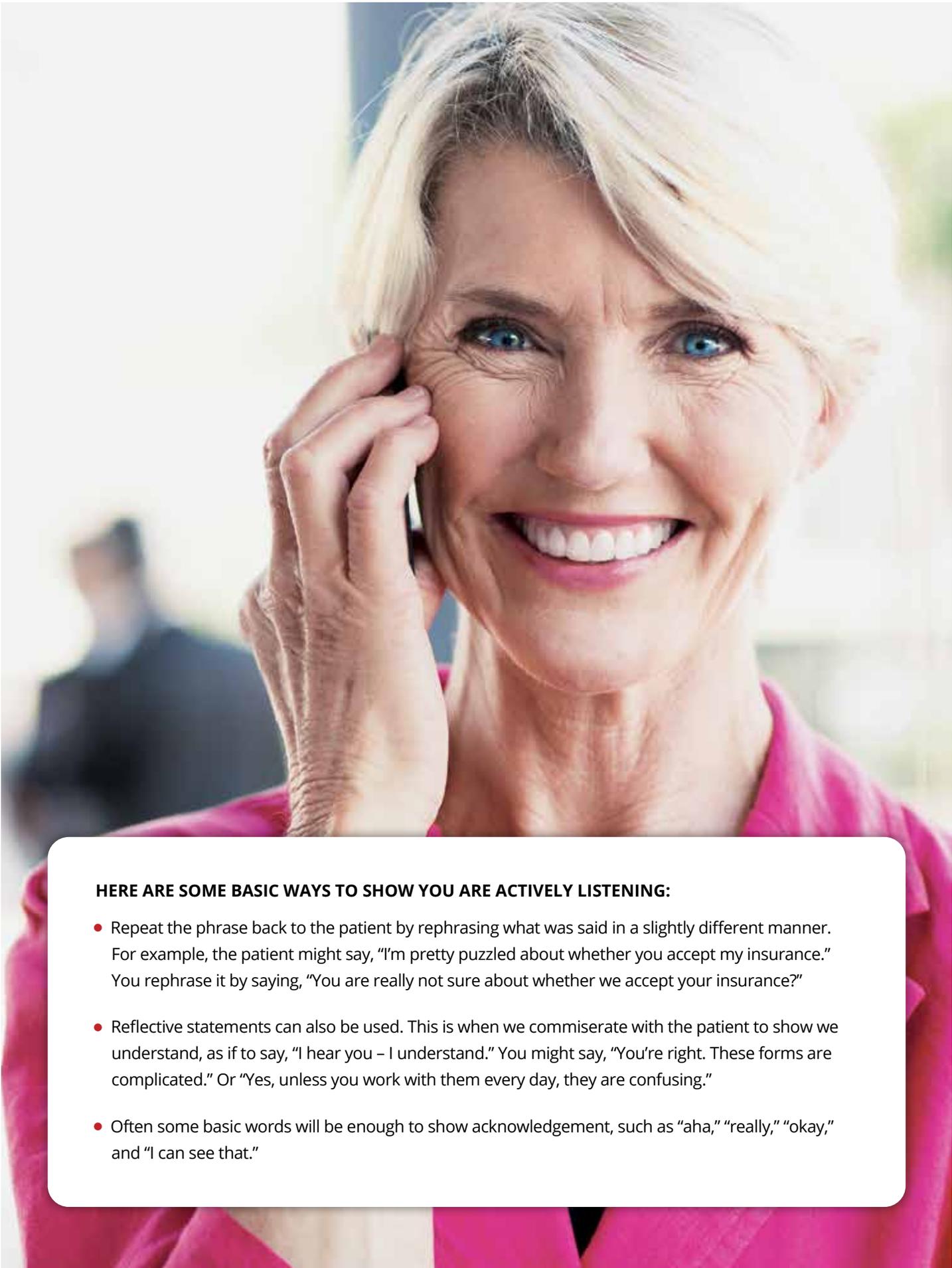
2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LISTENING – This involves a slightly more active role in the listening process. It means that we provide a subtle sign of recognition to the speaker. We accomplish this by making auditory cues to show that we are involved in the listening process and to encourage the person who is speaking to continue.

3 ACTIVE LISTENING – A very important communication tool, it should be your intent to “listen for meaning” in which you check with the patient to see that you correctly heard and understood their statement. The goal of active listening is to improve mutual understanding during the conversation. When interacting, people are often not really listening attentively to one another. They may be distracted, thinking about other things, or thinking about what they are going to say next. Active listening is a structured way of listening and responding to others. It focuses your attention on the other person when they are speaking.

ALWAYS ATTEMPT TO BUILD NEW-PATIENT CONFIDENCE IN YOU ... AND THE PRACTICE:

- Throughout the conversation, verbalize what you can do to help – avoid gaps of silence without description: “One moment, I’m just opening that screen.”
- Always use strong fillers to build confidence: “I’m so glad you called us today,” “thank you for calling us with your questions.”
- Consistently ASSURE the patient that you can help:
- Use reflective statements and simple phrases that help: “I hear you,” “I understand” OR use basic words like: “really,” “okay,” “I can see that.”
- Also, practice confidence-building phrases like: “Let me take care of that for you,” “I’ll be happy to help you with that,” “I’m sure I can help.”
- New patients don’t need sympathy, but they do appreciate empathy. “I do understand how you feel. Many of our patients have felt the same way in this situation.”

“Mrs. Braley, I’m sure we can help you replace that missing tooth and make you proud of your smile once again.”



HERE ARE SOME BASIC WAYS TO SHOW YOU ARE ACTIVELY LISTENING:

- Repeat the phrase back to the patient by rephrasing what was said in a slightly different manner. For example, the patient might say, "I'm pretty puzzled about whether you accept my insurance." You rephrase it by saying, "You are really not sure about whether we accept your insurance?"
- Reflective statements can also be used. This is when we commiserate with the patient to show we understand, as if to say, "I hear you – I understand." You might say, "You're right. These forms are complicated." Or "Yes, unless you work with them every day, they are confusing."
- Often some basic words will be enough to show acknowledgement, such as "aha," "really," "okay," and "I can see that."

YOU'RE NOT THERE JUST TO ANSWER QUESTIONS

A key function of your role is revealing important features and benefits about the doctor and the practice ... that clearly differentiate your practice from any of the other practices in the community.

WE SIMPLY WANT TO:

- Answer the question or verify your capabilities ENOUGH to have them schedule an appointment. Then the office team can educate them on the details during the actual visit.
- Avoid negative explanations like – “drill into your jawbone to place the screw-type implant.”
 - Avoid extensive explanations like quoting how many different Invisalign aligners they'll need OR even how many appointments and years the patient would have to come in to finish their treatment.

Common things that prevent us from being good listeners are feeling we have to help right away, we prefer to talk than listen, we wait for gaps to jump in with our answers, or we think we're right and the other person is wrong.

Listening is often more important than speaking!



WHY YOUR KNOWLEDGE IS VERY IMPORTANT

New patients will be impressed by your understanding of office systems, services, clinical procedures, and techniques, but there is such a thing as TOO MUCH INFORMATION! Be aware of keeping your answers concise and to the point.

1. Listen to the patient's opening statement – that's usually the reason for the call.
2. Listen without interrupting – give your full attention.
3. Detect emotion – does it match the words they're using?
4. Keep your focus – remember new-patient calls are the number-one priority.
5. Ask questions and don't interrupt when they answer.
6. Don't make assumptions about the caller or preempt what they might say. You could be wrong and that could lead to a bad impression.
7. If you get distracted, be open: "I'm sorry, I missed your last point. Can you repeat what you said please?"

Use **Practice ZEBRA Call Conversion Metrics** section to check in on your scores, listen to your calls, and practice improving your approach.

It is impossible to speak and listen at the same time. Speaking is important because you are delivering a message, but listening is often more important than speaking. Without the ability to listen well, communication can never be effective. If you do not listen to the message, you might easily give the wrong response.





KNOW YOUR PRODUCT

As the first person your prospective new patient talks to, you can make or break the patient's perception of the practice. That is a lot of responsibility, so here are some top tips to help you do the best you can:

- Answer briefly so that no additional objections are raised
- Effectively handle questions about fees or offers
- **Know the unique practice attributes** and the doctor's credentials
- Show empathy to each caller – and in the case of a pain patient, offer immediate help.

Always be refreshing and updating your product knowledge. All team members, and especially the front-line team, should know and understand the practice philosophies, services, and the doctor's and team's credentials. Your newsletter will do a good job of highlighting the attributes that consumers find most appealing in a dental practice – so it is a good study resource. Order extra copies of each edition of your newsletter and feature them in your reception area and operatories.

REVIEW YOUR ENTIRE MARKETING PRESENCE: Review your website, your *Facebook*® page, and all marketing campaigns. Read upcoming newsletters and/or postcards to be cognizant of your overall marketing plan AND all the special offers or new-patient promotions you have in place that may drive new-patient calls to your practice.

You'll especially want to understand key points on any special promotions the practice may be offering. At Patient NEWS, we find it effective to review all materials and special promotions ALOUD at team meetings, and then we follow-up with short quizzes to ensure that everyone truly knows their stuff. When you're on a call with a new patient, you want to be able to answer questions professionally and knowledgably, without stumbling or having to put the caller on hold to find an answer. This will help you to convert callers to appointments more quickly.

Solid product knowledge is imperative.

Call handlers have an incredible amount of responsibility.

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SPECIAL OFFER EXPIRY

When it comes to special offers, we recommend that you always honor a promotion for a new-patient caller, even if a deadline has passed. Of course you'll ensure you have the doctor's approval ahead of time. Let the patient know that you'd be pleased to extend the offer as a special courtesy to them. It takes time for patients to prioritize their oral health, and when you do get that first new-patient call, it's your job to convert that person into an appointment. Plus, this is a great way to WOW the new-patient caller – (A) you're making it easy for them to do business with you and (B) you'll be providing exceptional customer service.

WEBSITES & MARKETING MATERIALS

We never want the outstanding features and benefits – related to your practice – to be your own best-kept secrets. Be ready to answer questions and build patient confidence in the practice's abilities to help them by sharing your great marketing materials freely.

Today many potential patients that are initially attracted by a newsletter – will next go to your website or *Facebook*® page to learn more. You should direct every current patient to your website and ask them to like you on Facebook. For new-patient calls, your website can be a great resource – after you've booked the first appointment. Offer copies of your newsletter to patients to take for family and friends – in fact, everyone on the team should take copies and share them with their own families!

The beneficial points or key attributes of your practice only have value when patients see and hear them. So add them to each and every conversation. That is not just for those of you on the phone, but those at chairside – in fact, for everyone communicating with patients.



SETTING GOALS

IMPORTANT – The goal of a marketing campaign is to attract new patients to call the practice. Your goal – your *commitment* – is to schedule that new patient when they call.

Are you presenting the key attributes of your practice that makes it unique and competitive? Investigate and learn these outstanding features and BENEFITS. What are the main qualities that you can tell potential patients about your practice and doctors?

This is an excellent discussion topic at a team meeting and interesting to hear different perspectives from other team members. It is worth doing – because it is critical to create focused messages to potential patients – about **“what sets you apart”** from other practices in your community. After all, we never want them to be your best kept secrets! You have to spread the word. And you have to spread it at the critical time – when a potential patient is deciding what practice to join.

Once you have these key attributes, then this information should be applied to all of your marketing messages and overall scripting. You can use your top advantages in all new-patient calls, even if a patient does not bring it up, for example:

“You can be confident in the doctor’s treatment solutions. She is committed to continuing learning for herself and our team. In fact, we’ve recently just logged more than X hours learning the latest restorative techniques.”

FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS

As the person addressing a new patient, you control the conversation. You have the patient's attention – as long as you are saying something that is of interest to them! As the practice's representative, it is your responsibility to get your message across to the new patient the way it should be delivered – enthusiastically, clearly, and positively – each and every time. You may not get a second chance.

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

How often have you heard that phrase? It's so simple yet so often overlooked. What you say and how you communicate can make a big difference in how people respond to you. This critically important component of communication is a vital consideration when dealing with prospective new patients.

CHOOSE WORDS THAT THE PATIENT WILL UNDERSTAND

When you speak to a new patient who may not be familiar with your practice's services or policies, choosing the right words will help convey the correct message. Select easy and familiar words. Trying to impress people by using clinical words may only add confusion to what you are trying to explain. Definitely build positive words into your vocabulary. When you use words that sound positive and confident, you will project a positive and confident attitude to your patient. Use words and phrases like, "Yes, I'll be happy to!" and "Sure I can!"

Words like "definitely" and "absolutely" send a message that you are enthusiastic and interested. It is difficult to say *definitely* without showing conviction and interest. It is difficult to say *absolutely* without showing enthusiasm. Interjecting these and other positive words into your conversation conveys a sense of conviction that you truly want to help. Send a message to your patients that you really are happy to help them.

SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

You are a skilled and knowledgeable dental professional. To quote personal development trainer Brian Tracy, "Your success will be in direct proportion to what you do after you do what you're expected to do."

Patients expect a certain amount of information when they contact a dental practice. When you go above and beyond, and when you convey that you're very confident in and proud of your dental practice by using enthusiasm and energy in your voice, you become a trusted resource to them.



Approach each telephone call with the knowledge that you are there to help your patients and prospective patients solve their problems or achieve their goals.

Too much information, depending on the patient, may scare them away. You never want to create “barriers” that may prevent new patients from scheduling.

When it comes to billing, financial options, and fees or the technical nature of procedures, sharing expertise in far greater depth than is necessary can be detrimental. Our vocal and verbal skills are paramount for communicating over the telephone. In fact, over 35% of our effectiveness is related to vocal. That’s why we emphasize enthusiasm, energy, attitude, tone, speed, and clarity.



COMMON QUESTIONS

Handling common questions can be a real battle.

To be more successful, discuss the most common questions you get at your team meetings and brainstorm the best ways to answer them. Script out your talking points and then practice with each other. As a team, listen to recorded calls to see where you might have handled an objection differently, or share calls where you know you did a great job so everyone can learn.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU COULD HANDLE ONE OF THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS...

“What is the fee for the procedure?”

As my example, we'll talk about the most common ...a crown. This is usually a challenging question.

As a preface, we'd like to emphasize that one of the most difficult problems we face in dentistry is that a portion of our target audience does not value the benefits they are receiving from the oral care you offer. Some are “shoppers” in search of the lowest price. That is mainly because WE ALLOW THEM TO BELIEVE that there is UNIFORMITY among dentists. That dental care is a commodity ... all dentists and the services they offer are the same. They must be educated! And it will take effective marketing communications.

Through marketing initiatives like the programs you're participating in with Patient NEWS, we'll gradually turn these patients around into those who value their own dental health and the care you offer.

IT'S USUALLY ALL ABOUT EDUCATION

These patients don't know what else to ask for – so they ask about the cost. They really can't assess your customer service or clinical skills over the telephone. What they are really asking when questioning a fee is:

“Are you going to properly care for me and charge me appropriately for the services you perform?”

That gives us a direction as to the information we want to provide them with.

“Mrs. Brown, I will be glad to discuss that fee with you. First, let me understand a little more about your dental needs.”

Then you listen and discuss her needs.

“Mrs. Brown, our experience shows that every patient's needs are different, but I'm confident the doctor and our team can help you. We'd like to see you in the office as soon as possible to check it out. Our fees are reasonable for our area and I'm sure, as our other patients can affirm, you're really going to appreciate the care you receive at our office.”

Understand that you'll never do an effective job diagnosing over the phone. Get the caller into the office and find out. You just don't have enough information to make a responsible professional quotation over the phone.

HERE ARE TWO ADDITIONAL SCRIPT SECTIONS THAT WILL HELP RELATING TO THIS FEE QUESTION:

“Usually we feel that without a proper diagnosis, we can’t be sure what treatment is necessary. You may not need a crown, or you may need something in addition – like a bridge or implant. We also have to review your particular dental insurance coverage. You can see why we require an exam before we begin or deliver a treatment plan to you, and best of all, right now you can take advantage of our FREE CONSULTATION appointment. You’ll be able to tour our practice, meet the doctor, and we’ll talk about your concerns. There’s no fee or obligation. Is tomorrow or Friday better for you?”

Here’s another...

“I’m so happy you made the decision to call us. Our entire team is dedicated to providing you with the finest dental treatment available. Your safety and comfort is our primary concern. Can I schedule an appointment for your initial exam? I have an appointment available tomorrow at 2:30.”

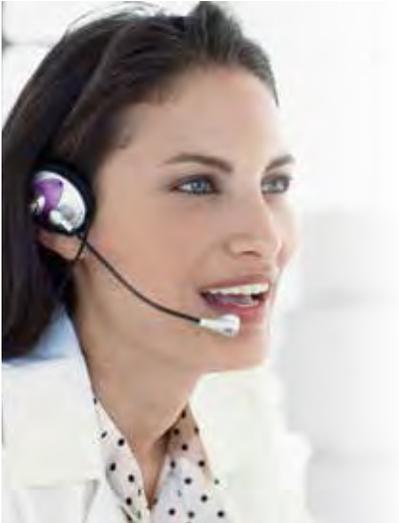
I realize some patients are very aggressive. If you are continuously pressed – and only if the doctor agrees – quote the fee, but keep it within a range – for example using a crown: \$1,000 to \$1,500. Be sure to reiterate that you’ll require the diagnostic information mentioned previously to be more specific about the fee.

Patients want empathy – not sympathy. Showing empathy doesn’t just mean taking immediate care of a pain patient. For example “I do understand how you feel. Many of our patients have felt the same way in this situation.” This often comes out when a patient requests information about a specific fee and they feel the fee quoted is high. “Thank you for mentioning that so I have an opportunity to help you understand.”

SCRIPTING GUIDANCE

What sets you apart

“I believe it’s important for you, as a potential patient of our practice, to understand what sets us apart from other dentists in our community.”



“As implant specialists, we have completed 1000 placements in the past 2 years.”

“We use the latest technologies. Let me mention just a few...”

“Our special intraoral camera is an amazing miniature video camera device that displays a close-up picture of the inside of your mouth. You’ll see exactly what we see and you’ll love how this works.”

“Silver-colored fillings have been used for 100 years and many practices still use them. However research has shown that they have shortcomings. There is fear of mercury contamination, they don’t bond well to teeth, and bacteria often leaks under them to attack the tooth. The biggest reason many of our patients choose white fillings is because of their look. People don’t want those silver-colored plugs in their teeth anymore. That is why we offer modern state-of-the-art restorations that are a natural-looking white, contain no metals such as mercury, and can actually strengthen your teeth.”

“Using our laser scanner, we can find cavities much earlier, when the small cavity can be repaired with a small invisible bonded filling. It can find previously undetected decay and, once identified, allow us to remove it and leave you with a healthy smile.”

“Did you know that one American dies every hour from oral cancer? The good news is that there’s a 90% cure rate if it’s detected early. We are very pleased to provide one of the most effective oral cancer screening available today.”

“We are one of a few offices in our neighborhood offering digital imaging. With this technology, images are immediately available and it results in 90% less radiation than conventional x-rays, plus we don’t have to wait for images to develop and we don’t pollute the environment with chemical waste.”

“We are pleased to be among one of the first in our community to offer one-visit crown restorations. No more temporaries, additional visits, or crowns that don’t seem to fit. These modern restorations dramatically reduce cracking, lowering the likelihood of needing future root canal treatment.”

New-Patient Call

PATIENT: “Hi, my name is Cheryl Switzer. I received your newsletter. Tell me about the practice. I just moved into town and I’m looking for a new dentist.”

TEAM MEMBER: *“Welcome! Is it Miss, Ms, or Mrs? To be sure I have it correctly can you spell Switzer for me please? By the way, am I pronouncing it properly? Thank you, now before I tell you about our practice, just in case we get disconnected, can I jot down your telephone number? That’s great, thanks. You made an excellent decision calling us: we’re dedicated to providing you with the finest dental treatment available. Your comfort is our first concern. Let me provide some other information that will be helpful to you.”*

At this point you’re prepared to present the key benefits and features of the practice. Callers are making a big decision. They’re looking for a quality dentist to care for themselves and maybe their family. (You may even state that.)

“Like most of our patients, you’re looking for a quality dentist to care for your dental needs. Let me explain why our office is the right choice.”

Review, understand, and memorize the top practice attributes highlighted in your newsletter. Verbal repetition will help educate and reinforce your position. It will also create credibility with patients.

Be prepared to speak concisely about what makes your practice stand out from the other practices in your community.



SCRIPTING GUIDANCE *CONTINUED*

These are a few of our most popular scripts. We encourage you to customize them to your practice to use in your everyday incoming telephone conversations. Keep these posted at the front desk so they are readily accessible by all.

New Patient – Non Urgent

“Good morning! Thank you for calling Dr. Smith’s practice where we are committed to providing you with extraordinary service and clinical excellence! My name is Susan. How may I help you today?”

“Hi, my name is Mrs. Jones. I’m not a patient in your practice. I’d like to make an appointment, please.”

“Welcome Mrs. Jones. I will be happy to make that appointment for you. If I may, I’d like to ask you a few questions first. Would that be alright?”

“Ask away.”

“Terrific. Mrs. Jones, are you having any dental problems or concerns that are of an urgent matter for you?”

“No. I just want to find a new dentist. We moved here a few months ago from California and I need to find a good dentist who is gentle.”

“Mrs. Jones, you have called the right place. Dr. Smith is happy to have new patients join our practice. I assure you, Dr. Smith is an excellent dentist and his chairside manner is second to none! I’m curious, how did you find our practice?”

“My neighbor, I believe her last name is Martinez. I know her first name is Mary. She says she’s been going to you for years and recommends Dr. Smith anytime someone is looking for a new dentist.”

“Of course, Mary Martinez has been with us for years. We’ll be sure to thank her for sending you our way, Mrs. Jones. Did Mary tell you anything about our practice?”

“Just that all the team members there are fantastic and will make me feel so comfortable. And the doctor is very good and is really kind!”

“Mrs. Jones, I am confident that you will be truly pleased once you’ve spent some time with us. Let me share with you a little about how we bring new patients into our practice.”

(Here is where you would explain whether new patients see the doctor or the hygienist first. Be very precise in your explanation of what the patient can expect from you at the first visit.)

“Do you have any questions about what will happen at your first visit with us, Mrs. Jones?”

“Not really other than when can I come in?”

“We see new patients on Monday evenings or Thursday mornings. I have this Thursday, February 23rd at 9am or Monday, February 26th at 6pm.

Please keep in mind that for your initial visit you will be here for 1½ hours. Which time would work best for you, Mrs. Jones?”

“I will take the 6pm appointment on Monday the 26th. This way my husband can take care of our children so that I can come by myself.”

“Very well. I am reserving Monday, February 26th at 6pm for you, Mrs. Jones. We will be sending you a welcome packet in the mail. In there you will find information about the doctor’s education and some

general information about our practice such as hours, directions to the office, payment expectation, and insurance handling. There will also be an information form that we would like you to complete prior to your visit and bring with you on Monday the 26th.

Regarding the payment for your visit Mrs. Jones, the fee will be \$250 and we do request payment at the time of each visit. We accept cash, check, and all major credit cards. Do you have any questions?"

"Well, Susan, how does my insurance work? I have Aetna. Do you accept it?"

"Yes, we do accept Aetna. Your estimated portion for the first visit to our office will be \$85. We will enter your insurance information into our computer when you arrive on the 26th. This will allow us to electronically submit your claim at the end of each visit. We ask that you be prepared to handle your estimated portion of the bill. Should there be any balance after the insurance payment is received, we will send a bill to you. Any other questions Mrs. Jones?"

"No, you have explained everything to me very clearly."

"Great! We are looking forward to meeting you on the 26th. We will give you a courtesy call two days in advance to verify the appointment. Thank you for calling us today. We'll see you on Monday, the 26th Mrs. Jones! Goodbye."

Make sure every team member knows the top 3 reasons a patient should choose your practice!



SCRIPTING GUIDANCE *CONTINUED*

Emergency Appointment

“Hi. I need an emergency appointment as soon as possible.”

“As I mentioned, this is Susan. May I have your name? Thank you. In case we are disconnected may I have your telephone number to call you back? Thank you. What is your particular dental problem?”

“My tooth has been aching for a few days.”

“Let me see how best I can help you today. I am sure that Dr. Smith can get you comfortable. Where is the problem located?”

“I am fairly certain it’s coming from an upper right molar.”

“Do you have any swelling?”

“Not that I can see or feel.”

“Has a tooth broken or chipped in any way or has a filling come out?”

“No. I don’t think so.”

“Alright, do you have any sensitivity to hot, cold, or pressure?”

“Only to cold.”

“Very well then, we do reserve time in our schedule daily to handle urgent emergency matters. Our reserved time for today is at 3pm. Dr. Smith will do everything he can to get you comfortable today

by providing you with minimal treatment. He will determine what your tooth needs and then we will schedule another longer appointment for the necessary treatment.”

“Thank you very much for seeing me so soon.”

“It’s our pleasure. Normally we would send you a packet of information prior to your first visit, but since we are seeing you this afternoon, I will give you the packet when you arrive. There will be a few forms that you will need to fill out, but I will be more than happy to assist you in completing the paperwork. Be sure to bring your insurance information with you.

Also, our fee for the emergency examination and necessary x-ray is approximately \$125. We ask that you take care of the fee at the appointment. We accept cash, check, and all major credit cards. If any further treatment is necessary, we will advise you at the end of your visit what the fee will be for your subsequent visits. Do you have any questions?”

“No. I will come a few minutes early so that I can complete the paperwork. I will bring my insurance information and my checkbook. Thanks for being so thorough, Susan. I will see you soon.”

“We’re looking forward to meeting you. See you soon!”

Always keep your tone upbeat, stay positive, and remain focused on your caller!

Practice Location & Hours

“Thank you for calling our dental practice and asking about our hours and location. At [practice name] our goal is to combine dynamic oral health care with the strength and beauty of cosmetic dentistry. ‘Practice name’ is located at [address]. There is ample parking in our private lot at the rear of our building.

Our office hours are Monday through Friday from _____am to _____pm and Saturday from _____am to _____pm. We are always available for emergency treatment.

We are well-versed in all types of dental insurance and will file your insurance forms for you. We also accept most major credit cards. Please ask if you would like me to explain more about the financing plans we offer.

We appreciate you calling. Do you have any other questions I can answer?”

About The Doctor

NOTE: As we mentioned in earlier chapters, to the new patient, you represent the practice. In fact you *are* the practice. In that role, it is imperative that you have a clear understanding of the doctor’s experience and the features and benefits that set him/her apart from other doctors in the community. This info should definitely be part of the introductory discussion with new patients ... even if the patient does not bring it up. You must also find unique ways to inform current patients who might not know it.

■ *Dr. _____ has dedicated over _____ years to providing his/her patients with healthy beautiful smiles.*

■ *He/she received his/her bachelor’s degree from _____ University and went on to earn his/her dental degree from _____ University College of Dentistry.*

■ *He/she believes strongly in lifelong learning in order to keep up-to-date on the exciting new advances in modern dentistry. In fact, he/she has completed over _____ hours of continuing education. This includes advanced training in cosmetic, restorative, implant, and laser dentistry.*

■ *Here is something special: Dr. _____ is in the process of completing an additional _____ hours of hands-on training in 16 specific areas of dentistry. This will enable him/her to become a Master in the Academy of General Dentistry.*



■ *Dr. _____ is devoted to practicing the highest-quality dentistry to provide all of his/her patients with excellent treatment, a caring and relaxed atmosphere, and beautiful results. He/she specializes in cosmetic dentistry and his/her office is a fixture in the community where he/she is now in his/her _____th year of practice.*

SCRIPTING GUIDANCE *CONTINUED*

Higher Fees

“Mr. Green, I understand your concern. You want to receive the most for your money spent. I want to assure you we use the latest quality materials and work with the top dental labs to produce the highest-quality solutions to your dental care problems. In addition, our equipment is state-of-the-art, especially our sterilization system. All our instruments are either sterilized or disposable and each patient is seen with their own personal setup.”

Questions

CLEANING WITHOUT X-RAY?

“That’s a great question Mrs. Brown.

Let’s review when you had your last x-rays taken and the types of x-rays that were taken. As a safety principle at our practice, the doctor and our hygienist must have a clear picture of what is going on in your mouth before any procedure. X-rays are the primary diagnostic tool they use to take pictures of the teeth, bones, and soft tissues around them to help find problems with your teeth, mouth, and jaw. X-ray pictures can show cavities, hidden dental structures (such as wisdom teeth), and bone loss that cannot be seen during a visual examination. Now, do you have the date of your last x-rays?”

TOUR THE PRACTICE

“Would you like a tour of [Practice Name] without leaving home? It’s simple. Visit us at www._____.com where you can tour our office and our treatment rooms, meet our team and our doctors, and learn about the dental techniques and technology we offer. There is a handy map on the newsletter/postcard you received – do you need any help finding our location?”

I’d also be happy to mail our welcome brochure to you.”

DENTAL INSURANCE?

“Please feel free to request our help regarding the use of your dental insurance. We accept numerous insurance plans and our team is well-versed in the coverage provided. When you come to your appointment, please bring your insurance forms with you so that we can assist you in filing them. Our experienced team can also work with you to develop a payment plan to suit your budget. Please let us know how we can be of help. We want you to receive the care you need.”



QUICK TIP: Never answer yes or no to the question “do you accept my insurance.” Regardless of whether you do or don’t, you need to determine what the patient is really asking. They may not know their exact plan, they may not realize that only a portion of treatment will be covered, and they may want to know if you’re a participating partner.

CONSCIOUS SEDATION?

“I know that a lot of dentists offer conscious sedation, but what I’m afraid of are the needles. What good will conscious sedation do for me if I have to experience another needle in order to take advantage of it?”

“You’ll be happy to know that having another needle won’t be necessary. If your fear of dental treatment is in regard to injections, you’ll love our practice. We provide sedation in the form of pills. This is known as oral sedation. If you are needle-phobic and would like to take advantage of oral sedation, you won’t have to worry about experiencing an injection. Now nothing will stand in the way of you receiving important dental care. Why don’t we book a free consultation to help further alleviate your concern. You will be able to meet our team, we can talk about your concerns, and we can show you how it works.”

When greeting patients, maintain a helpful and friendly demeanor and never fake it. If you don’t know the answer, tell the patient, find the answer, and get back to them quickly!

Ending A Telephone Call

“I’ve enjoyed speaking with you. Before I say goodbye, is there anything else I can be of help with for you or your family?”

“No. I also enjoyed talking to you. That’s it for now.”

“Great! Remember I’m Terry, and when you come in, stop by and say hello! In the meantime, if any additional questions come up, don’t hesitate to call me. I’ll be here.”



For the dental practice or DSO that
wants to **STAND OUT** & *Grow!*



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