



Keep Your Strategy Moving
As Fast As You Want Your
Practice To Grow



The ADA reports that average dental production continues to hover around 5-90% of pre-COVID levels, while Patient NEWS' clients are much higher; in a year-over-year comparison, production is 35% higher than 2020 and 11% greater than 2019.

Patient NEWS clients have not just fully rebounded, but have catapulted beyond pre-COVID to record levels of production.

How have they done this? Is their situation different than yours?

By continuing healthy patient communications throughout the pandemic and continuing to market externally, these dental offices have been able to rebound. They have been proactive and committed to prioritizing marketing communications, and they've been reassuring consumers that it's important (and safe) to prioritize oral health. Through their actions, these dental offices have alleviated concerns of both active patients and consumers who live in households surrounding their offices and they have been rewarded for it.

For practice growth, what's better – patient retention or patient acquisition?

On one hand, it can *appear* less costly to focus on patients you've already met to build relationships and work to keep them loyal. However, there is always attrition. So, without a steady flow of new patients, practice growth, long-term security, greater profits and higher valuation just cannot be truly realized.

So it's not retention VERSUS acquisition. It's a mix that maximizes success.



"WHEN TIMES ARE GOOD, YOU SHOULD ADVERTISE.
WHEN TIMES ARE BAD, YOU MUST ADVERTISE."

– Bruce Barton, advertising pioneer

5 Ways To Improve New-Patient Acquisition

You'll have read that it's more cost-effective to retain customers than to try to attract more new ones. However, that's because businesses struggle to measure client value accurately, factor in the need to make up for naturally occurring attrition, and what's required to realize GROWTH. Practice ZEBRA, the only dental software that provides accurate attribution, reveals that the average new DENTAL patient is worth 2-3 times MORE than an existing patient in the first year of business with you.

An average new dental patient is worth about \$1,800 per year, in most cases. 2-3 times more than an existing patient. That new patient contributes significantly to your topline – as well as your bottom line as you don't need to add hard overhead costs when bringing them into your practice. This is why it's imperative to allocate room in the schedule for high-value new patients.

It truly isn't patient retention VERSUS acquisition. It's how these two strategies work together to generate a more steady flow of production and profit.



Here are five proven ways to increase your exposure in your community and get more new calls at your practice:

- 1 Nail down your target audience & offer strategy.** Before identifying which dental marketing strategies to use, it's imperative to identify your ideal dental patients and core draw area. Run an analysis of your existing patient base to find out where these areas are. You will achieve a higher ROI if you reach out to the right consumers – the ones most likely to respond. Once you know who they are, it's easier to target your marketing effort and craft offers that resonate with ideal potential patients and prompt them to call your practice for care.



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Share valuable content. To generate a response, you want to answer your target market's most common challenges. Dental care routines have been disrupted during these ever-changing times. But because people still want to look and feel great – and many have the discretionary funds to spend on themselves – it's essential to let them know you exist and that you begin to build their trust. When potential patients know about you, come to like your practice and approach, and believe you're serious about providing them exceptional, safe care, that's when you'll win them over. To achieve this...

- Send out informative and engaging newsletters that will build awareness and trust, and establish your authority and reputation in your community
- Implement paid media for those who are searching. Update your website and online business listings (including Google My Business and business Facebook page)
- Share dental health tips, practice updates, and patient reviews on social media.



- 3 Stick with it and be consistent.** Practice visibility is important because it helps both patients and your prospective patients become familiar with you. The more often they see your name, particularly when associated with reassuring and confident information, the more likely they will be to choose and stick with your dental services.

Consistency builds awareness and TRUST.

Being visible helps people recall your practice when they are ready to research and hit the buying decision and conversion phase of the patient journey. Direct mail and newsletters beat all other types of advertising for trust, recall, and memorability.

The patient journey is comprised of the five specific stages each person experiences as a potential patient and as your patient-of-record. **The five stages are:** practice awareness, patient research, buying decision and conversion, patient experience, and advocacy and practice growth.

- 4 Determine your goals for 2022 and beyond.** Are you trending to beat last year's numbers (or more importantly 2019's)? Based on your current metrics and the ideal journey you want for your patients, put your plan in writing. Successful practice owners make patient retention and new-patient acquisition top priority with specific tactics to support them – ones that include new technologies, new products, enhanced services, team training, and a customer-service focus to ensure that all patients have a great experience and refer, return, and review!



- 5 Ensure you have a team of superstars.** Your team will set the tone for the patient experience. At the first phone call, your reception team *is* the practice to the new patient. They are the only live contact patients will have with your office until they come in for their first appointment. Once new patients are in your office, hygienists and assistants will make or break the first visit, and once again, your front desk team is back in play as the last point of contact before patients leave. It's also important that team members are trained on proper phone call handling to convert as many leads as possible into dental appointments, thereby boosting production and maximizing marketing ROI.



Strategies To Keep Patients Coming Back

The average dental office loses 15-20% of its patients annually due to naturally occurring attrition (deaths, moves, job changes, etc.). This can be a severe problem, especially if attrition outpaces new-patient acquisition and reactivation efforts. But other factors lead to patients leaving. Factors that dental teams

can – and must – influence and control to keep attrition to a minimum. The pandemic has had a tremendous impact on recall, and in fact, patient activity is slumping after a surge in early spring and summer months. But there is good news. The right communication to the right patients can spur the activity you want.

6 Tips To Help Your Practice Retain More Patients

1. Keep an eye on attrition. The key to improving patient retention is to understand your underlying metrics. How many active patients do you have right now? When you compare how many new patients you gained, how many patients did you lose in the same period? What's your average patient value?

How many patients missed their 6-month recall and are now floating and unscheduled?

Which patients were presented a high-value treatment but haven't converted?

Many consultants will talk to you about your no-show rate. The most important metric, they'll tell you, is how many patients show

up, not how many are scheduled. But guess what? If patients aren't scheduled, they're not getting a reminder, and they'll definitely NOT show up. Patient scheduling is the backbone of retention. It measures the number of patients connected to you right now. The higher this metric is, the more willing patients are to commit to your practice. **The lower that metric is, the more likely your practice is headed for a financial struggle.**

Added-value patient communications can have a significant impact on retention RIGHT NOW. Beyond transactional communications, consider a high-value educational patient newsletter. Let patients know they are valued by you and your team.



2. Increase patient value. The ultimate goal of retention is to increase patient lifetime value. That means you need to review your unique value proposition (UVP).

Questions to consider:

- Is your UVP the strongest it can be to attract and then retain quality patients?
- Are you doing all the right things at every phase of the patient journey to create loyal long-term practice advocates?
- When was the last time you completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) exercise or reviewed your top competitors and their offerings?
- Can you and your team give a 10-second elevator pitch with your top three competitive advantages?
- When was the last time you reviewed your patient communications and marketing strategies to ensure that you're elevating your services and highlighting the ways you and your team go above and beyond to provide exceptional services?





3. Identify top-value patients. Then surprise and delight.

Do you know who your top-value patients are? Not knowing which patients have invested with you can lead to awkward moments and patients feeling less than valued. Imagine how you would feel at your luxury car dealership if they didn't shower you with love. If your realtor or favorite sommelier at your regular restaurant didn't jump at your beck and call. Identify your best patients and then allocate resources in the most optimum manner. When you know who these folks are, you can strengthen your relationships, improve your reputation and obtain positive reviews, generate referrals of people just like them, and upsell more services.

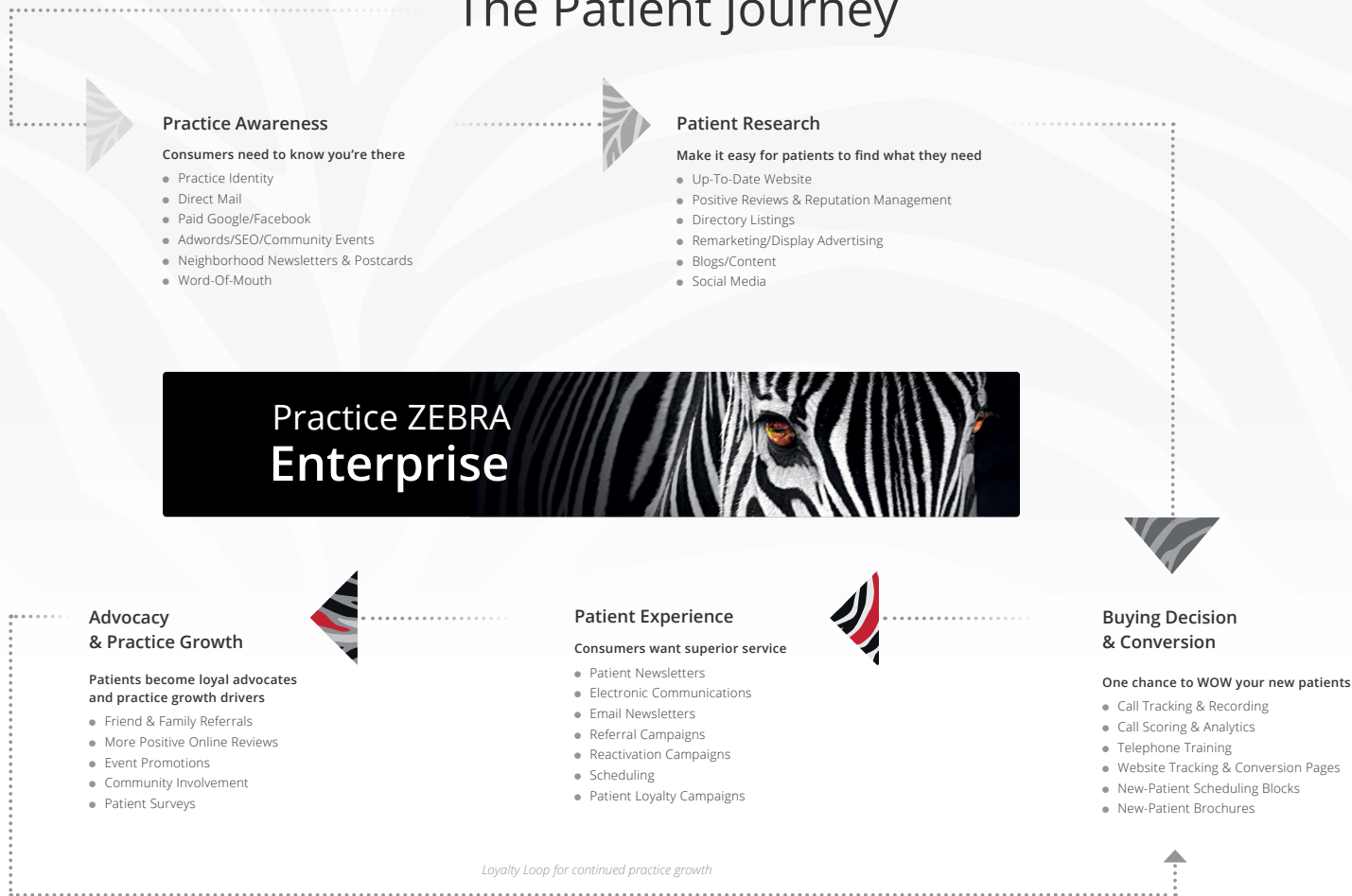


4. Invest in customer service and technology. Support systems help you effectively communicate with patients and provide them with the right level of servicing. Automated patient communications, reminders, reactivations, reviews, and staff training can help both pre and post appointment by enhancing patient communications.

And nothing beats patient satisfaction more than communication by mail.

5. Set your practice apart. Every dental office should be (and is) committed to educating patients, AND to communicating regularly on all things dental health related via a patient newsletter – **it's foundational marketing AND the right thing to do.** It takes no effort to implement a monthly email newsletter (but complement with quarterly mailings – the only way to reach 100% of patients). It's all affordable for your practice, and patients appreciate hearing from their dental office.

The Patient Journey



6. Focus on the full patient journey. Every patient has a unique way of arriving at your practice, and similarly, each patient has a different way they will leave. When you focus on all phases of the patient journey and ensure that every stage has a consistent brand and style of communication and commitment, you will improve retention.

Patients are becoming harder and harder to please. Expectations are increasing and competition is intense. Decision making is more complex, and products, services, and value propositions are evolving faster than ever. Today you must engage in activities at each stage of the journey.

7. Use reciprocity. Research shows that if you do something for someone first, they are more likely to reciprocate. It also shows that you can give something small to get something big. But the give cannot be contingent on another thing – that’s a transaction. Ideas include mailing your quarterly newsletter with special offers, offering patients a choice of gift card (e.g., \$10 for a sporting store, salon, etc.). Little things like these show patients you appreciate them choosing your practice and make a big impact.

You can then feel confident reminding patients that you welcome more patients like them and appreciate referrals, or that you’ll be sending them a link to post a positive online review.



Dental Marketing That Works

Free Market Research Report

One of our experts will be happy to guide you through our process! Regularly \$795, for a limited time, you can get your market report FREE and gain insights into the information you need to understand your immediate market and position your practice to maximize new patient flow. Your report includes area demographics, buyer information, market share between you and other dentists, key areas to target, top-value neighborhoods, competitive maps, practice benchmarks, active patient vs. new patient value, digital footprint score, and more!



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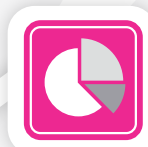


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Creative Development
Tactical Team Training
Campaign Deployment

MEASURE

Call Tracking & Scoring
Success Benchmarks
Performance Dashboard



IMPROVE

Informed Coaching
Fact-Based Feedback
Continuous KPI Analysis

