



# The White Pages

## KEEPING YOUR SCHEDULE FULL AND PRODUCTIVE

### SCHEDULE

[skej-ool, -ool, -oo-uh]

1. A plan of procedure, usually written, for a proposed objective, esp. with reference to the sequence of time allotted for each item or operation to its completion.
2. A series of things to be done or of events to occur at or during a particular time or period.
3. A timetable.

#### Target Scheduling

It takes some dental professionals a long time to learn that you cannot have a \$3,000 plus production day unless there is actually \$3,000 worth of dentistry scheduled in the appointment book.

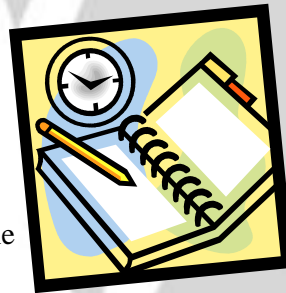
So, what do you need to do to keep your schedule full and productive?

Dr. Peter Dawson, a famous dental clinician, says: "Your appointment book is the single most important management tool in the office. Your productivity, your profitability, your quality and, to a very large degree, your

happiness, are directly related to how well your schedule is managed."

To be productive, you must master certain rules pertaining to appointment book management. It is very easy to have a full schedule that contains nothing but busy work (no production). The following is a list of suggestions that you will find helpful:

1. Mark off your schedule a year in advance with all of the holidays, vacations and other times that people will be out of the office.
2. Be aware of trends throughout the year and plan accordingly. For example, you may want to work extra days to accommodate your pre-school checkups.
3. Patients should be "guided" into those times that are best for you.
4. Fill out blocked times first (highest productivity procedures). You should not leave the block unfilled for Thursday if today is Tuesday or Wednesday.



5. Once the block is filled, you can schedule the busy work around it.

6. Always try to fill the hard-to-fill times first. Impossible appointment times can be easily filled in with short-notice appointments.

7. Ten-minute time units are more productive. This way you can determine how much time is required for each procedure to schedule.

8. Remember that the doctor can't be in two places at the same time. S/he can, however, do a denture adjustment while another patient is getting numb.

8. It is wise to maintain a call list in case of "no shows."

9. It sometimes is difficult to "work in" emergencies, but all emergencies should be seen that day. However, you should try not to make a good patient wait for a toothache patient who comes in once every five years. Sometimes emergencies can be seen just before lunch. This is a problem

in all offices but you should never turn down any emergency patients. At least get them into the office.

### Why are patients canceling or failing to show up for appointments?

The most common reasons for no shows are as follows:

1. They were forced into the appointment and made it just to save face.
2. Fear.
3. Financial problems.
4. They have not been told the value of the treatment to be received.
5. They think you are so busy that you don't need them.
6. The administrative assistant was too lax. "Could you come in about 2:00 next Thursday?" This is not sufficient.
7. They forgot.



All no-shows should be called immediately and asked why they failed to show and let them know that they were missed.

Here is an example of what procedures can be blocked for what times are available for you. The following highly productive procedures should have no other patients double-booked in another operator:

1. Major crown and bridge.
2. Denture/partial denture impressions.
3. Long oral surgery.
4. Root canals (difficult).
5. Quadrant dentistry.

The time that is allotted for these procedures should be blocked open until the day before these

procedures occur. If it is then necessary, fill them with less productive procedures so that no production is lost.

The following procedures can often be double-booked:

1. Fillings.
2. Minor surgery.
3. Single crowns.
4. Root canals (simple).

The following procedures can be double-booked but not quite as heavily as the above procedures:

1. Seating appointments.
2. Post-op checks.
3. Appliance checks or adjustments.

There are many positive ways to schedule in the book. You can schedule by the procedure or you can schedule by dollar amounts. You will be more productive if you schedule with the dollar amount in mind.

### Basic Appointment Book Control

- Set goals.
- Stay on schedule.
- Be in control of the appointment book. Always give the patient YOUR choice!
- Know how much time to allow for each procedure.
- Pre-block time for important procedures and events.
- Avoid scheduling multiple family appointments at the same time. If one cancels, they all cancel.
- Book longer, more productive appointments early in the day while the team is fresh.

- All clinical team members should consider it part of their job to educate the patient on the value of the next visit.

It's important to be a "busy" practice; it's more important to be a "productive" practice.

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