



The White Pages

FILLING YOUR SCHEDULE IN THE FOURTH QUARTER

Doctors – I NEED YOUR ATTENTION FOR A MOMENT!

Dentistry is facing some of its most challenging times with a roller coaster economy, Swine Flu, and significant open time in both the hygiene and doctor's schedules.

Just getting patients to come through your door, let alone accept your recommendations for treatment, has become a very difficult task. However, the world isn't going to end tomorrow, and I promise you that the sun will come up. If it doesn't, call me!!!!



Please do yourself and your practice a favor. Turn off CNN, stop listening to the negativity, roll up your sleeves, and go to work. You can still make money in this economy despite what the world thinks.

Here are a few ideas to help you do that:

1. Join the Chamber of Commerce.

Joining your local Chamber of Commerce will put you in touch with a large group of other small business owners in your community who need your services.

Your local Chamber will have a list of all their members so you can send e-mails and advertisements to them, depending on your Chamber's rules.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, you will have the chance to talk about your business and what services you provide. There is no better way to help grow your practice.

Get out of the operatory and have lunch with other local business owners, especially those who are not active patients in your practice, and ask them to be patients of yours.

2. Reactivate Patients.

Patients who haven't seen you in 18 months or longer will have dentistry to do.

Determine how many inactive patients you have and which patients you want to contact.

Before you call these patients, send a letter to them explaining that we want them back as active patients. This will give you something to reference when you call them. Send out only as many letters as you can follow up with a phone call within the week.

Create a calling schedule, preferably during the evening, since this is when people are at home.

You may want to use the following script:

"Hello, Mr. Jones. This is Sarah from Dr. Smith's office. Dr. Smith asked me to call you because he's concerned that it's been so long since we've seen you."

You can expect to get results in the 10 to 12 percent range.

3. What NOT to Say.

We don't want to ask the patient questions that require a "yes" or "no" answer. We want to ask the patient questions that will get us the results we want.

"Sarah, we have some time available on Monday at 10:00 a.m. or on Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. Which time would work better for you?"

The patient will automatically choose one of the two.

4. Remember – It's a Feeling; not a Filling.

People naturally gravitate toward people who make them feel welcome and special. Don't forget that there is a person attached to those teeth.

Remember your patient's name. Always greet your patients with a big smile and create a delightful experience for them.

People who feel that someone cares about them will always have a smile in their heart when they think about coming back to your practice.

5. Speak to Groups.

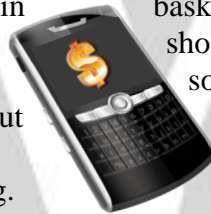
Find your local nursing home or retirement community. Call them and find out who is in charge. Arrange to do a presentation on implants, dentures or veneers. The presentation doesn't

have to be more than ten minutes long. Put together "goodie" bags filled with toothpaste, floss, business cards and an office brochure and hand all of these out.

Speaking at the local elementary school is another option.

6. Call Forwarding.

Let me ask you a question. You are spending hundreds and thousands of dollars on marketing each month. If no one is answering the phone when your potential patients call you, what kind of investment did you just make? That's called an AIR BALL in basket-shooting at something but hitting nothing.



Right now, you need to be focused on maximizing every single dollar you spend on marketing. If your office isn't open Monday through Friday, please have all calls from the office forwarded to a cell phone that your office manager or someone else in the office is in charge of answering. Potential patients want to reach someone immediately when they call you. If not, they will take their business elsewhere. You can't afford that – not in this market.

During challenging times like these, you need to ignore the naysayers, the idiots on TV, and

all those people who tell you that the sky is falling. You need to make the decision that you are going to do whatever it takes to make your practice successful.

Once you make that decision and you begin to display that attitude to your staff, it becomes contagious. This, plus the ideas discussed earlier, will help you get through this uncertain time and finish the year strong.

Helping dental practices create and sustain growth.

J. White and Associates has a personal interest in your success. Please call us with any questions or concerns that you may have. We would love to hear from you, and we are here to help.

Take advantage of our complimentary practice analysis to discuss any issues you may have with your practice.



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