

Three Steps to Making Dentistry Affordable

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Is dentistry expensive? You bet! So is a new car. Do you ever wonder why people with perfectly good cars go out every day and buy more expensive ones? To a casual observer, this seems like erratic or foolish behavior. And what is the underlying reason? It's pretty simple, really. They want new cars. Auto dealers are masters at understanding how to appeal to the wants (versus needs) of potential customers and at finding ways for their customers to pay for the vehicles they want.



Determine where the resistance to price begins in your practice

Would you like to know the secret to making dentistry affordable? We'll give it to you in its simplest form: Find out what your patients really want and help them find a way to pay for it. It's that simple. And if you are groaning because you've heard this message before, that's only because it's the truest axiom ever. Many dental professionals (maybe you?) are making it way too hard for patients to say yes.

We can't send you out to get this done without help. So, here are the details:

1. Determine where the resistance to price begins in your practice.

At your next staff meeting, ask your entire team, "What is the highest dollar treatment plan you're comfortable discussing with a patient?" Have each team member and doctor write their response on a small piece of paper and fold it in half. Next, have everyone pass their sheets of paper to one individual and have that individual read the numbers aloud. Most likely, the answers will range from a few thousand to thirty or forty thousand dollars.

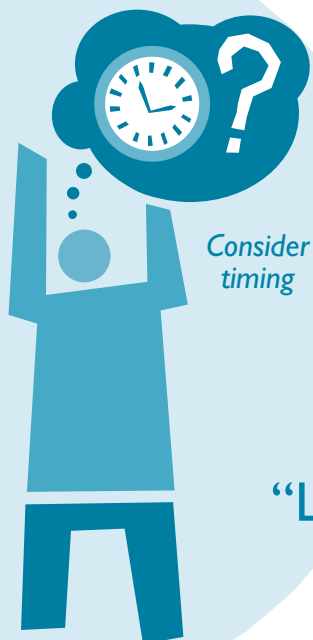
Remember, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. It starts with the individual dentist and the overall mindset of the practice. Everyone on your team must believe no case is too expensive if the patient really wants to have the work done and the dentist approves of the treatment plan. No case is too expensive, no matter what the cost.

2. Consider timing.

Some patients may not be ready to take the plunge and get what they want, right now. Think of the patient who is asking questions now as the one who will get the work done in their own time and refer to you for years to come. Pushing a patient is never the right thing to do; in fact, telling or bullying a patient to say yes leads to cancelled appointments and patients leaving your practice. Learn to ask questions and overcome objections. We define objection as merely a question a patient needs to answer for themselves in order to say yes.

3. Consider payment.

While it rates a zero on the excitement scale, financing is simply the means to your end. The treatment plan is presented and the patient says, "That's so expensive, there is no way I can pay for it all!" If you've discovered the only barrier to preventing your patient from having treatment done now is a financial one, you're ready to begin the financial arrangement conversation.



Consider timing

**"Lack of money is no obstacle.
Lack of an idea is an obstacle."**

— Ken Hakuta, author

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Let's use the analogy of the low-end luxury car at \$40,000. The idea of spending that amount of money in one whack can be daunting! Most people wouldn't dream of paying cash for a car that costs that amount. Think back to your last car purchase. The financial manager meets with and speaks to the customer not in terms of interest rates, length of agreement, buying or leasing, but monthly payments. In other words, \$676 per month sounds much more palatable than the full deal! Change your conversation with the patient. Start with, "If you were to have this procedure done now, what is the monthly amount you will be able to invest?" By utilizing tools like Care Credit, you'll have a multitude of monthly payment options for your patients to choose from.

There has never been a more exciting time to make dentistry affordable. 



Angie Skinner and Penny Reed Limoli are co-founders of Dental Genius™, a practice management and marketing firm specializing in the business of dentistry. In addition to consulting services, they offer a free email newsletter and teleforums for distance learning. **FMI:** 866.33COACH, www.dentalgenius.com, or info@dentalgenius.com.