

VIEW FROM THE PRACTICE

ETHICAL CASE PRESENTATION

In the first part of a two-part article, Rahul Doshi explains how you can benefit by thinking about your case presentation, before providing a step-by-step guide next month

In the current economic climate and with a 'double-dip' recession looking more likely, dental practices hoping to provide a premium service need to up their game. Now, it is all about a new paradigm shift in thinking, behaviour and action by all the team.

One aspect that will allow us to make the vital leaps forward is on how we discuss and present our dental findings with our patients. We need to be providing a solution for the needs and wants of our patients. Many dentists reading may feel they are doing this already, but are you really?

Being able to provide a solution for our patients is as much about understanding their psychological behaviour and thinking, as it is about evaluating their physical conditions. This is because if you answer a problem as far as the patient's own mind is concerned and if you present it in a way that connects with the patient, every one of your patients would be saying 'yes' to all your treatment recommendations for premium dentistry. If this is not always the case then there are a few tips in this article that you may be able to take to your practices and improve the way you present your cases.

SOLUTIONS NOT SERVICES

In order to sustain a profitable business we still need to 'sell' our dental services. However, ethical case presentation is based upon not only creating an exchange of money for dental services for a monetary value but

also on providing solutions and answers for all problems and situations in our patient's mouths. It is a technique that can be applied to any aspect of dentistry and allows more comprehensive care to be undertaken. This technique incorporates communication skills that are used to decipher, understand and present treatment advice the way your patient wants to receive that advice.

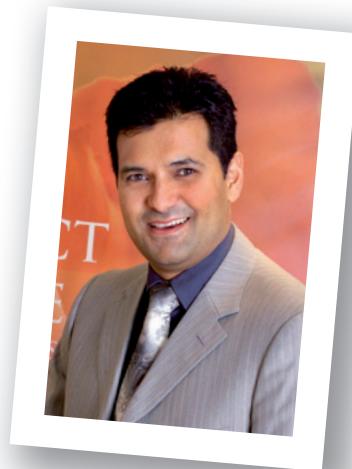
Most patients walk through the doors of a dental practice with an agenda. This is usually the driving force behind why they contacted you in the first place and it is especially true in the current difficult economic climate. Our aim is to discover what that agenda is. If we realise and understand the agenda, then we can let our patient know that we understand why they have come to seek help and we will have gained a certain level of trust. This will allow us to advise in a way that makes the patient feel we are working for them as oppose to selling something to them.

OVERALL SKILLS

Ethical case presentation also gives you the opportunity to use your clinical skills in a better and more effective way than just single tooth dentistry. After all, we became dentists so we can comprehensively take care of our patients, not so we can just 'fix' a tooth. It helps to present more comprehensive interdisciplinary and premium dentistry.

This technique will prove more profitable for your business too, since you will be producing more comprehensive long-term treatment plans that will improve cash flow. In uncertain times you need to create certain processes you are sure about. This in turn gives you back some control of your business and allows you to create safety nets to help you overcome obstacles.

Next month I'll show you a step-by-step



guide to presenting cases to your patients in an ethical manner.

Economic fluctuations create uncertainty in business. As business owners we need to combat these challenges with sound processes that allow us to enhance the standards of care that we provide. Creating a process in ethical case presentation is necessary because patients will not always tell you the real reason they have come to see you, they may be 'shopping around' or assessing you first, so you are never quite sure of their hidden agenda. The process of ethical case presentation allows you to extract that hidden agenda and provide the optimum solution for the patient. This in turn will help you increase your case acceptances, and grow your practice.

Next month: Rahul's five steps to successful ethical case presentation

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