

Never Sell Implant Dentistry Again!

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INTRODUCTION

Never sell dentistry again, you ask? Are we trying to put you out of business? No, actually, we're going to teach you about the importance of patient education as it relates to selling dentistry. What does selling dentistry have to do with patient education? Well, they are virtually synonymous as you will soon discover, and the two are so critical to your success in practice, we have made them the core of the practice development portion of our program. However, since the word "sell" is truly as vulgar and repulsive in dentistry as some other four-letter words, let's first handle what selling really means and why you need never have to sell dentistry again.

One of the earliest and little-known meanings of the word "sell" can actually be traced back to ancient China when selling meant to aid, assist, or support someone in getting something they really needed. What a novel idea! Selling was perceived as beneficial to both seller and buyer. In modern western civilization, we have long since perverted the definition of sell to suggest coercion and taking advantage of someone (see used car salesman, definition of). An investigation into the semantics of the word sell reveals it's not nearly as harsh as we capitalist Americans believe. Its origins derive from the terms to present, offer, and deliver. Now what would be so bad about presenting, offering, and delivering dentistry to people after aiding, assisting, and supporting them in getting the treatment they really needed? Absolutely nothing! This is the mentality from which selling dentistry should be approached.

Truly, though, the best salespeople (or sales dentists, if you prefer) never need to sell anything – they are simply great at getting you to buy. You can always recognize these beguiling salespeople. You spend an hour with them and you feel as if you have known them your whole life. They captivate you with their enthusiasm, as you hang on every word they have to say about their product. Simultaneously, they attentively receive your questions and concerns, dispelling any doubts you might have held. Then, mysteriously, as you are happily driving home it dawns on you that you have just spent your entire paycheck on a new sound system and the lifetime service agreement. We know it sounds funny, but it has happened to all of us, and yet we rarely complain because we got what we really needed and wanted. Yes, people hate to be sold, but they *love* to buy. So how do you have your patients buy dentistry without you having to sell them on it? The following are just some of our favorite laws in **not** selling dentistry and not necessarily in order of importance.

LAW 1: IT IS WHO YOU ARE BEING ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE DOING THAT MAKES THE SALE

If you are doubtful or unsure or your approach to patients is motivated by money, personal gain, ego, or prestige, you ultimately will not be successful. If you are diagnosing, presenting, and educating your patients with certainty, strong personal conviction, integrity, and a high sense of purpose in helping sick people get well and preventing the well from getting sick, you will thrive and flourish. Who you are as a person, your motivations and intentions shine through and are more readily apparent to people than you realize.

LAW 2: COME FROM A POSITION OF ABUNDANCE VERSUS SCARCITY

You need to realize that there is no shortage of unhealthy mouths in the world. Only 50% of the population goes to the dentist, and only 50% of those people who do go have a dedicated dentist or a dental home, so to speak. Therefore, your opportunities for potential new patients are virtually unlimited, not to mention the abundance in your patients of record where new opportunities are available daily. You **want** everyone to be your patient, but you should not **need** them. Needing every person who calls or comes into your office often has you compromising your philosophy of practice and standard for care simply to please someone who is not a fit for your practice due to personal or professional reasons, and all for the sake of making your production or maintaining the illusion of a full schedule. In the end, coming from a position of scarcity does nothing but cause breakdowns in the office and prevent patients who will bring you abundance from getting into your schedule.

LAW 3: PATIENTS BUY FOR THEIR REASONS, NOT YOURS, AND YOUR GOAL IS TO DISCOVER WHAT THEIR REASONS ARE

Everyone has a motivating factor, be it pain, function, or the appearance of their teeth, which will get them into action if you speak to the one that is most important to them. A key talent in getting a patient to buy is being good at getting the patient to tell you his or her problems, needs, wants, and concerns. You will have more fun and success when you stop trying to get what you want, and start helping your patients get what they want. This does not mean you should not also give patients your reality on the health of their mouths and thoroughly educate

them in order for them to make an informed decision about their health care. So learn whatever you can about your patients in advance in order to be prepared to serve them in the best possible way that they can relate to.

LAW 4: LESS IS MORE

Having patients buy takes time. Slow down and focus your attention and efforts on fewer patients and devote more quality time to each one. How your patients know you care about them is based upon the attention you give them when they are in your office and in your chair. You cannot be effective at closing patients on your treatment recommendations when you are rushed, scattered, or pressured for various reasons nor when you are attempting to be mentally and physically in two or more places at one time. When you are with a patient, be with a patient with your full intention, attention, and interest. In addition, learn to talk less and listen more. As a general rule, if a patient is talking you are winning. The converse is also true: If you are talking, you are losing. Have fewer answers and more good questions to evoke the self-assessment process in the patient and get them thinking, having realizations, and making the decisions that you want your patients to make on their own. *Remember:* If you say it, the patient can doubt it, but if they say it, it is true.

LAW 5: MAKE THE OFFICE EASY TO EXPERIENCE

From the first phone call through the end of their visit and beyond, patients are deciding whether or not they are going to buy from you. Therefore, the service you and your staff offer must be impeccable, the physical environment and your facilities need to be immaculate, and the three primary objections to getting care – time, money, and pain – need to be removed. If patients must deal with you or your team being discourteous, inattentive, disorganized, and rushed or face an office environment that is aesthetically unappealing, unkempt, and archaic, they are much less likely to buy from you. Patients equate the level of service they receive and the condition of the environment of the office with the quality of the dentistry they will receive and will not want to buy from you if these are below par. In addition, you need to handle the patient's primary objections. Remove the objection on time by booking sufficient time in the schedule for procedures, new patients, and hygiene visits, and err to the high side. Start on time, finish on time, and most of all, avoid making patients wait. Remove the objection on money by offering sensible and flexible third-party financing options and in-house payment options that benefit you and the patient. Avoid surprises when it comes to dealing with insurance companies and presenting your fees by having a strong financial coordinator and good financial policies which are discussed prior to doing any treatment on a patient. These are just a few of the many ways to remove monetary objections. Handling the objection on pain is relatively simple. Given the way modern dentistry has evolved to the present day, usually

all you need to do is to demonstrate how gentle, safe, and precise your techniques are as compared to what they may have experienced in the past or under the care of another doctor. Take away the fear of the unknown by having patients experience how you work using good communication to set proper expectations. As an added plus, utilizing patient testimonials will go far to alleviate the fears and concerns of patients who are new to your office.

LAW 6: THE CLOSE EQUALS COMMITMENT

For the most part, patients buy emotionally and justify later by logic. More buying decisions are based upon impressions and perceived need than on reason. This is not to say you should take advantage of patients through manipulation and scare tactics when they are in a weak emotional state. On the contrary, you want patients to make informed decisions with a sense of urgency about their health care while at the same time understanding the need for treatment based on an awareness of current and future consequences of their dental health issues, and when their comprehension of necessary solutions is at their peak. This occurs at the time of case presentation and diminishes considerably within 24 hours of leaving your office. Thus, the basic rule of case presentation is to get the patient closed on care. Keep in mind that the close is not only a scheduled appointment. It is not only a signed treatment plan. A close also involves money in hand. A patient who gives you his or her money in addition to making an appointment for treatment and signing a treatment plan is one who is truly committed to care. So be sure that all financial decision-makers are present (be they parents or guardians, husbands, wives or significant others) whenever you make any case presentation or discussion of finances. Set up private consultation time in a quiet, undisturbed, private room in your office so that you and your treatment coordinator can give your patients the best opportunity to buy from you under optimum conditions.

That's all for now – more on selling and other dirty words later. We hope that you have gained a new viewpoint on selling dentistry so that you never have to actually sell it again.



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