

The Basics of a Successful Hygiene Department

In order to achieve huge success in your hygiene department, a strong vision must be in place. That vision must embody this idea: “Of all the practices in the area, these patients picked us. It is our responsibility to absolutely ensure that we take care of them. **THEY MUST HAVE AN APPOINTMENT. IT IS UP TO US TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN.**”

Is this good economics as well as taking care of our patients?

Absolutely it is! Let’s do the math – simply. With 1200 patient files, each patient being seen twice per year, this equals 2400 hygiene visits per year. Working 185 days per year, this equals 13 hygiene visits per day. In addition, if you assume three new patients per day, your hygiene schedule is full with two full time hygienists working.

The average hygiene visit generates anywhere from \$130 to \$170 depending on your fee schedule. Assuming \$150 per patient visit, hygiene would then produce \$1950 per day plus new patient exams. On an annual basis, this comes to \$360,750 plus production for new patient exams. Not only is this a very profitable area of your practice, you’re also taking care of your patients.

A hygienist is the best investment you can make – it beats Wall Street.

Steps to Make it Work

1. Pre-appoint at the start of the appointment with the patient filling out the address side of the appointment card. The hygienist enters the agreed upon date and time on the card in pencil.
2. Bundle the cards weekly.
3. Three weeks before the appointment, take the weekly bundle and compare the dates and times on the card with the schedule. Ink in the date and time, and mail
4. One week before the appointment, call the patient to CONFIRM that it still works for them. If not, re-appoint and fill the opportunity in the schedule from your short call list.
5. The day before, call the patient with a “courtesy reminder.”

There must be voice contact with the patient during this process. The scheduler must be supported in this process by team members taking phone numbers home to call. One missed appointment can never be replaced – it amounts to \$150 of lost income, plus the costs associated with that hour – a total cost of about \$240.

Put these steps in place, be clear about your vision and purpose, and make it happen!

