

Foolproof Ways to Boost the Dental Patient Experience

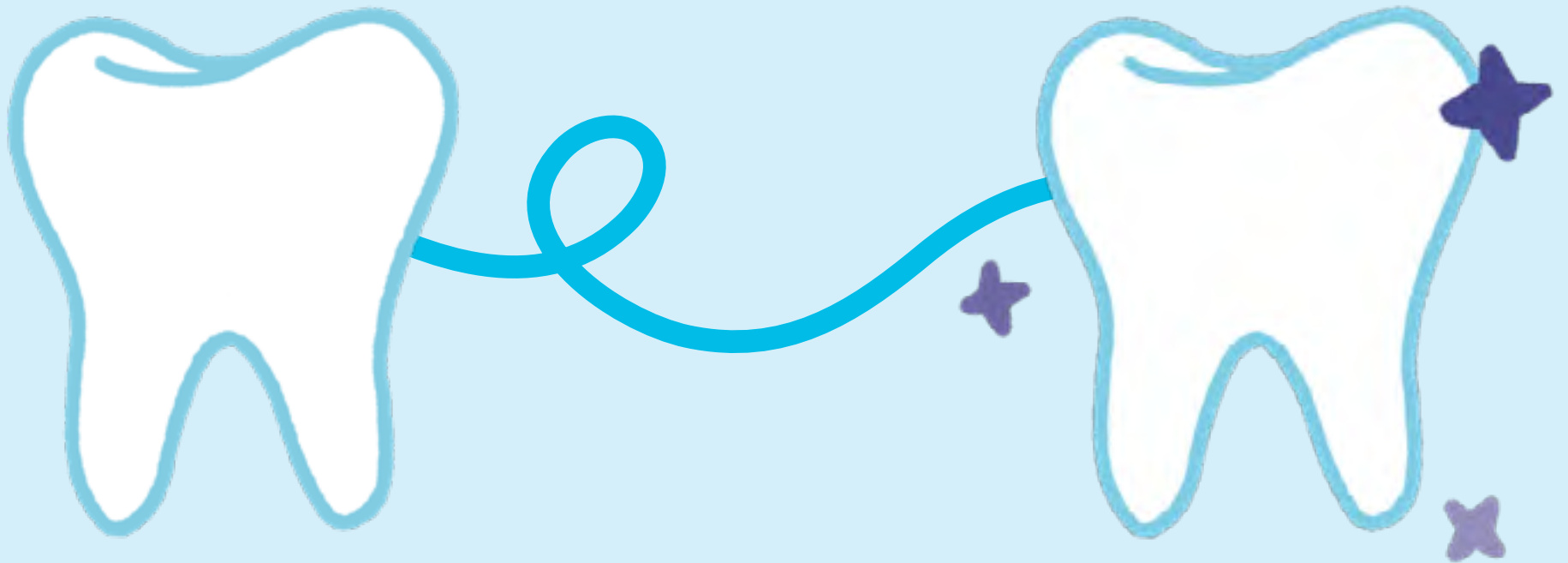


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Introduction

There aren't enough words to describe the importance of providing a great patient experience in modern-day dentistry. These experiences determine your credibility in the dental community and whether or not patients return for future appointments.

In this guide, we'll take a look at the signs your patients are unhappy, how you can streamline your dental office's processes with the help of software, technology, and a sprinkle of kindness.

Are you ready to boost the dental patient experience and retain clients for life?



4 Signs Your Patients Are Unhappy



1 Your Practice Is Not Growing

Patients are the mainstay of any dental practice. If your patients are unhappy the care they receive, they are unlikely to refer friends and family members to your practice. Unfortunately, this can lead to an absence of new faces and no growth for your dental care business.



2 Your Patients Don't Come Back For A Second Appointment

If your patients are difficult to reach before and after appointments, it's likely that something has gone wrong. To fix this, start by taking a look at the level of service within your practice.

- Do you feel that your patients have a high level of trust in your practice's ability to provide great service?
- Does your practice provide a comfortable environment for your patients?
- Are you contacting your patients in a communication method they prefer?

Quality of service and convenience are among the top three factors that influence patient satisfaction. This is why patients value dental providers that show expertise, care, and compassion for their well-being. In addition, they are more likely to return for a second appointment if they are contacted via a communication method they prefer, such as by text or email.



¹What is the most important factor affecting patient satisfaction – a study based on gamma coefficient. (2019, April 10). NCBI. Retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6489650/>

3 You Are Seeing High Cancellation and No-Show Rates

It can be difficult to follow through with a treatment plan if your patients aren't showing up for their appointments, or repeatedly canceling at the last minute. Is this the case for your practice? Well, requesting feedback from your patients might just be the key to solving this problem!

In fact, analyzing feedback can reduce no-show rates by giving your patients a voice and allowing you to identify areas within your practice that need some TLC.



4 Are You Experiencing Negative Online Reviews?

Negative reviews can greatly damage your dental practice's reputation. Not only can it affect your practice's search engine rankings, it can also decrease your credibility in the dental community.

If this is you, don't panic! A [TripAdvisor survey](#) revealed that 89% of consumers' views on a business improved when they see thoughtful responses to a negative review. This is why it is crucial to address both negative reviews and patient complaints right away to ensure the highest level of patient satisfaction.

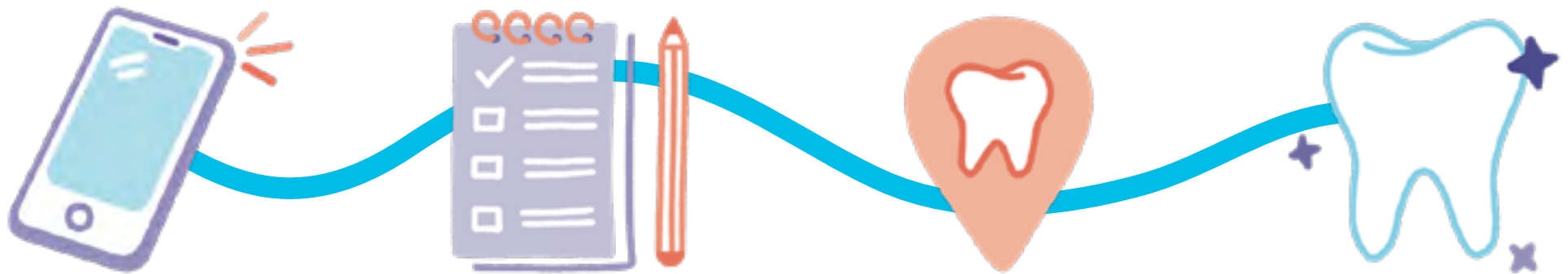


The Patient Experience

Although routine trips to the dentist are essential in maintaining a patient's oral health, there can be many factors that lead to difficulty in getting patients to show up for their appointments.

In fact, [a survey conducted by WestMonroe](#) showed dental providers earning one of the lowest patient satisfaction ratings among all service-related industries, with a Net Promoter® Score of 1.

But it doesn't have to be this way. The dental care industry has an opportunity to reinvent itself by focusing on delivering the best possible experience for patients. And of course, this wouldn't be an Intiveo guide without mentioning the benefits of leveraging technology for your practice, so without further ado, **let's see how!**



Seamless Scheduling, Appointment Reminders, and Updates

Communication is the most integral component to focus on when looking to improve the patient experience!

You might be thinking, why communication? Well, the National Library of Medicine conducted [a study on patient-centered communication](#) and concluded that good communication skills lead to more satisfied patients. It's safe to say that patients want to feel prepared and know exactly what to expect before, during, and after their appointments.

Wouldn't it be great if you could get in touch with patients via their preferred method of communication (text, e-mail, phone call)? Now, wouldn't it be **really** great if you could overcome language barriers and send out patient reminders in several languages?

Well, with today's technology and all its advancements, it's not hard to find an effective patient-focused software that can help you seamlessly communicate with each and every patient.

From appointment reminders to pre- and post-visit instructions, patient communication software can be customized to fit your practice's needs.



Long Wait Times Will Cost You

Long wait times are a common sight in dental practices, and can result in frustrated patients.

Because the longer they have to wait, the more likely they are to feel anxious or uncomfortable. In turn, this can lead to poor patient experiences that impact the credibility of your dental team and practice as a whole.

To ensure that your patients aren't waiting too long, consider utilizing a patient communication software to:

- Send health screening questionnaires to be filled out ahead of time to avoid holding up the patient intake line.
- Attach any relevant pre-appointment instructions to be followed for ideal patient preparedness levels.
- Chat live with your patients to update them on wait times and when you're ready to receive them.

These features can help optimize practice workflows as well as reduce stress on your patients and your dental team. However, there can be instances when prolonged wait times are unavoidable.



In that case, here are some of Intiveo's best tips:



Greetings

The first and last impressions of your dental practice are created by your administrative team. By greeting and acknowledging each patient as they enter the room, it shows that you value them as individuals and are glad that they chose your practice over others!



Check In With Patients

It's easy to get caught up in your work, especially during busy days. Even so, make sure to check in with your patients every 15-20 minutes so they know you haven't forgotten about them and aren't ignoring them.



Be Flexible

Have your team be understanding and flexible when it comes to rescheduling appointments due to the long wait times.



Keep Them Busy

Give them something to do while they wait. Offer a separate Wi-Fi network that patients can connect to, reading material such as books and magazines, and water in case they get thirsty. This will help pass the time more quickly and keep patients' mind off how long they've been waiting.

Social Reviews and Feedback

According to [BrightLocal's Local Consumer Survey 2022](#), online reviews are one of the most important factors when it comes to choosing a dental provider.

As a result, dental providers should be aware of how patient reviews affect the dental patient experience, and how they can leverage online reviews to benefit the practice.

A patient communication software with a tool that can request patient feedback is a great investment for your practice. When patients see others leaving five-star reviews, it helps boost confidence in their dental providers- ultimately resulting in optimal patient outcomes.

In fact, [Marcotte Dentistry](#) utilized Intiveo's Patient Communication Software and saw a 43% increase in online patient reviews.

But what happens when patients haven't felt like they received exemplary

service? A great patient communication software would encourage your patients to leave constructive feedback directly to the dental practice.

Constructive feedback is just as important as the positive ones. Why? Because they help guide your practice on what you need to improve in order to provide the best experiences possible.

An added bonus: A search engine like [Google trusts word-of-mouth marketing](#). Therefore, positive patient reviews help improve search rankings and higher visibility scores for the dental practice!



At Last...

The patient experience is paramount to the overall success of a dental practice. Choosing the right patient communication software can allow your team to focus on making your patients feel welcome and comfortable.

However, we shouldn't leave all patient communication efforts up to software and technology. Your dental team also has an important role in making sure that patients feel at ease during their visit. They should be prepared to explain procedures correctly, answer questions directly and provide a safe environment for everyone in the practice.

With these factors in place, your dental practice has all the tools it needs to provide positive patient experiences and great treatment outcomes. We hope that this guide has been useful for you, and we cannot wait to see your dental practice thrive.

