HOW TO AUTOMATE PATIENT ENGAGEMENT

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Dentistry has evolved in some astounding ways over the past few decades. We've gone from treating patients with no gloves and maintaining finances on ledger cards to infection control protocols, practice management software, CAD/CAM and digital imaging.

As dentistry has evolved, so has the world around us.

Consumers are demanding more from their businesses and healthcare providers. Consumers want subscriptions and online purchasing and payments, fast and easy communication and instant access to information.

With the advent of the Affordable Care Act, medical providers were required to adopt electronic medical records. As such, healthcare consumers have become accustomed to being engaged by their providers with text messaging reminders, post-operative care instructions, and information about their practitioner. Numerous medical research studies have shown better patient outcomes when patients are engaged in their care. Yet dentistry lags behind medicine in a lot of areas. Patient engagement has only recently become a focus for dental practices.

The benefit of patient engagement

Patients who are engaged with their providers value dentistry more and are more willing to commit to case acceptance. Dental teams often lament that patients don't value dentistry, but with engagement and education patients begin to see the importance of oral health. With the increasing evidence of the medical/dental systemic connection, dental teams need to engage patients where they are on a variety of levels.

Schedule reminders

Dental team members are often faced with last-minute cancellations or no shows. Although a variety of reasons account for a high degree of dis-appointments by patients within any practice, one reason is the lack of communication. For example, if a hygiene patient is scheduled six months out, postcard reminders are sent when the appointment draws near. However, with so much "junk mail" received today, it is entirely possible that the office reminder card is discarded by the patient without any thought. Or if reminder calls are left on voicemail, many people don't even listen to their messages. However, if a two-way text messaging service is used where the practice texts a reminder and the patient is able to confirm, the rate of no shows or cancellations

can be reduced. Today's mobile society wants quick, easy communication and relies heavily on text messaging.

Engaging patients via social media

Social media is an important part of today's world. From Facebook and Instagram to Yelp, today's consumers are engaging with others about products, services and companies with both positive and negative opinions. How often have you searched online for an opinion on a company or product? We all do it – dental patients are no different. Still, there is a right and a wrong way for a practice to be involved with social media. For example, a Dallas dental practice was recently fined $10,000 for disclosing protected health information on social media! Care must be taken whenever social media is used in dentistry to be able to protect the patient and the practice.

Patient education

Patient education improves patient outcomes. Whether via informal discussions or formal video presentations, patients want to be engaged in the discussion of their health or disease. Using video and other media can alleviate the fear of dentistry while allowing patients to make the decisions about treatment by turning dental "needs" into "wants."

One patient engagement tool to rule them all

With so many conflicting demands on the dental team, how are team members able to maintain a proper balance of patient engagement? There are many companies that provide patient engagement services, but dental teams want and deserve easy, patient-friendly engagement tools that allow the practice and patient customization.

A patient engagement tool should provide seamless integration with your existing practice management software, along with accommodating team preferences. One such tool is RevenueWell, a robust software with fully baked marketing for patients with unscheduled treatment, simplified and strategic social media capabilities, and so much more.

With RevenueWell, practices also benefit from online reputation management and marketing tools with no annual contracts – in addition to its online phone service with ScreenPop. Patients can also request online appointments, pay bills, or even text your office. Everybody wins. One practice manager likened RevenueWell to a 24/7 employee – always available as patients need, when they need, while providing great support for the practice.

Want to read more? Check out RevenueWell here and see how you can integrate this robust tool in your practice.

Ready for a conversation? Our eService Specialists can speak with you right now and help you take the next step. Call 800.294.8504 to connect today.

From Patterson Dental's blog, Off the Cusp. View the original blog post:
https://www.offthecusp.com/how-to-automate-patient-engagement/