

## THE MODERN DENTAL OFFICE: 3 THINGS TO EXPECT WHEN GOING PAPERLESS

By Patterson Dental

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As the world moves toward more and more digital operations, it's time to start considering what life in paperless dental offices will look like.

From airports to banks, industries are finding ways to streamline their operations by going paperless. And dentistry is no different. Be it electronic forms or a patient portal, dental practices are finding more ways to engage with patients, sans-paper.

With that said, as dentistry continues its shift toward paperless practices, here are a few things to expect.

### 1. Increased patient satisfaction

When it comes to patient intake, online forms are simply way more convenient than paper forms. Patients can fill out their info while at work, at home, or even while traveling. Basically, right when their appointment is top of mind. Even when at the dentist office, electronic forms are completed by tapping on a tablet rather than awkwardly scribbling on a knee-balanced clipboard.

Speaking to the convenience of online forms, a survey by business website The Manifest found that only 13% of people prefer using physical forms. Not only do patients prefer online forms, they can also help safeguard your practice against no-shows.

In a recent webinar, RevenueWell founder Alex Nudel spoke on just how powerful electronic forms are with regards to no-shows.

“Patients that fill out forms are a lot more likely to come in,” Nudel told his audience. “[In fact] 98% of patients that take time to fill out forms online will make it in [to their dental appointments].”

In completing their forms before an appointment, a patient has already committed to coming in to the office. They've also successfully tackled the first part of their visit and now can show up on time (rather than 15 minutes early) knowing you'll be fully prepared for them.

There's also a mental component to digital forms. In sending these out, you show patients just how much you care about their experience in your office.

You don't want them sitting hunched over a clipboard, shuffling through a purse or wallet for insurance info, stressing over whether they've updated everything properly and wondering if this extra time is eating into their already busy day.

You want them to feel relaxed from the moment they step in the door. You've given plenty of lead time and set expectations for a lovely, comfortable visit to the dentist.

## **2. Eco-friendly dental office operations**

There's nothing wrong with going green, especially when you consider that, according to a Nielsen study, 73% of Millennials will pay more for services if they benefit the environment.

Yep, that's right, eco-friendly dental practices have a better chance at landing new patients from the largest generation in American history.

"Brands that establish a reputation for environmental stewardship among today's youngest consumers have an opportunity to not only grow market share but build loyalty among the power-spending Millennials of tomorrow, too," says Grace Farraj, SVP, Public Development & Sustainability, Nielsen.

Cloth towels, reusable bibs, paperless EOBs, and digital impressions are all tangible changes patients will notice during their appointments. They're also fantastically manageable steps toward a more sustainable dental office.

Practices that move away from paper not only help cut down on startling statistics like the fact that one million ink cartridges are thrown away daily, they're also marketing themselves toward a huge, environmentally conscious patient base.

That's a win for both the practice and Mother Earth!

## **3. Big savings**

Patients love it and it's great for the planet. Awesome. But, a dental office can also save a substantial amount of money by going paperless.

According to practice management consultant Wendy Aldhamen, paperless dental offices can save \$10,000 a year (and in some cases upwards of \$11,000). By Wendy's estimate, a dental practice can save \$7,751 on film, charts, and mount costs alone.

To be sure, going paperless takes initial investments. Eliminating paper towels means that you'll spend on cloth hand wipes. Completely nixing paper forms means that you'll need to invest in a tablet for in-office intake.

But, as with most sustainable alternatives, up-front investments lead to savings down the line. Those two changes alone alleviate the need for: clipboards, staplers, sticky flags, paper towels, and filing trays. They'll also cut down on the usage of toner, pens, and pencils.

And, tying back to the acquisition of younger, more loyal patients, the long-term gains that come from sustainability far exceed any short-term investments.

## A paperless future

Going paperless isn't like ripping off a Band-Aid. It means a change in your systems and operations. There will certainly be some hiccups, but such is the way of any update — staffing, procedural, or otherwise.

However, there is no denying that the world is moving to a paperless existence. Eventually there will be a tipping point where offices still using only postcard reminders and paper intake forms will seem antiquated. For where we stand right now, it's the perfect time to begin transitioning toward operations and monitoring just how much they change your practice for the better.

Get started on your paperless journey with [RevenueWell Forms](#), the easiest way to collect patient information, reduce no-shows, streamline your operations and increase patient satisfaction.

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From Patterson Dental's blog, Off the Cusp. View the original blog post:

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