

OFF THE CUSP

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3 WAYS TO CREATE END-OF-YEAR EXCITEMENT AND ENGAGE WITH YOUR PATIENT COMMUNITY

By Cassie Brehmer

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With Thanksgiving just two weeks away, the holiday season is fast approaching. Though holiday plans for many families will be different in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are still plenty of ways to show your patients they're part of your practice's family and create some excitement heading into the new year. We asked Cassie Brehmer, a marketing campaign specialist at Patterson Dental and former marketing lead for a multilocation pediatric practice in Minnesota and Wisconsin, for her top tips for marketing during the holidays, reactivating patients and getting a boost leading into the new year.

Marketing during the holidays

The holiday season is ideal for connecting with your patients and making them feel like "part of the family." It can be as easy as hosting a giveaway, using social media to highlight your patient appreciation or creating holiday excitement by displaying your patient holiday cards around the office. Below are a few ideas to keep your patient community engaged during the holiday season.

Host a social media giveaway

With the ongoing uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, now is the time to take advantage of spreading some joy and to reassure patients during the holiday season. Consider hosting a virtual giveaway where your patients can post their holiday decorations or favorite holiday traditions to win a fun gift basket.

Make an office holiday card

Patients love connecting with your practice and to feel like they really know your entire staff. As simple as it may be, taking an office holiday photo and posting it on social media is a simple way to foster a deeper relationship with your patients and community. The office holiday card not only helps patients feel connected to your office but will also help show the type of community you have within your staff. To take it step further, send out your office holiday card via email and even through traditional mail.

Donate to a local charity

Even with extra precautions being taken such as social distancing, we can still make a difference and donate to a good cause. As many families may have experienced hardships due to COVID-19, donations will be especially appreciated in communities large and small. Consider placing a bin outside your office for your patients to place gifts or host an online donation event. Remember to promote your donation drive or event on your social media accounts and via email.

Reactivating your patients

Many practices around the country are still needing to reschedule canceled appointments from when their office was limited to only emergency care during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even during normal times, the end of the year is a good time to reach out to any patients who may have missed a routine exam or never scheduled their next six-month checkup. Here are a few ways to connect with any inactive patients.

Send an end-of-year email reminder

Send out an end-of-year email to all inactive patients letting them know the importance of oral health care and that they are missed within your practice. This is also a good way to share your office holiday card or promote your donation drive as mentioned above; giving patients another reason to visit your office.

Host a referral program

Throughout the month of December, let your patients know that for every patient referred to your office they will receive an eGift card or something of high value such as a free teeth-whitening service. Sometimes a small incentive is all your loyal patients need to bring their friends or family to your practice.

Getting a boost leading into the new year

Finishing the year strong should be a goal of any dental practice. But more important is making sure your practice is set up for success come January 1. Consider the following tips to give your practice the boost it needs as you ring in the new year.

Launch a month of giving

Have December be the month of giving by letting your patients know you appreciate them trusting you in this uncertain year and add in a percentage off dental work that is completed before the new year.

Communicate end-of-year benefits

Educate your patients on their end-of-year benefits; many patients are unaware of what they might have left to use before the year ends. Train your front office staff to check benefits for each hygiene patient when coming in for their recalls to see if work is needed that can be done before the end of the year.

Educate patients on benefits that start on the new calendar year

Along with end-of-year benefits, inform patients on when their benefits start over. Have your financial coordinator sit down with each patient to discuss any benefits they should take advantage of before scheduling their next appointment.

Although the holidays may feel different this year, it's important to stay engaged with your patient community. By ramping up your holiday marketing efforts, reaching out to inactive patients and finishing the year strong, your practice will be set up for success leading into the new year.

About the author

Cassie Brehmer is a marketing campaign specialist for equipment and technology at Patterson Dental. Cassie has worked in the dental industry for more than eight years. Before coming to Patterson Dental, Cassie worked as a licensed dental assistant and marketing lead for a multilocation pediatric practice with locations in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Cassie earned her associates of science degree and passed her boards to becoming a licensed dental assistant through Herzing University and went on to complete her bachelor's degree in marketing at Rasmussen University.

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