

Maximize Retention and Watch Your Revenue Grow

Nearly every practice we talk to is emphatic that they need new patients to grow revenue. The truth is, for many of these practices, retention could be the real issue.

Let's say you have a patient base of 1,500 with an average of 15-20 new patients per month. What would you think if a year went by and you still had the same active patient base and new patient numbers? This is the basis for a common retention problem. For every new patient arriving in your practice, another one is leaving. Now consider that acquiring a new customer is anywhere from five to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing customer.*

What if you could just retain more of your existing patients and meet your revenue goals without increasing your new patient numbers?

Retention can be an extremely powerful tool to increase your revenue. Let's look at an example to see how a small change can lead to a big result.

$$5 \times 12 = 60 \times \$300 = \$18,000$$

Additional Retained Patients Per Month Months Patients 2 Hygiene Appointments (\$150 each visit) Revenue

How can you identify retention issues lurking beneath the surface? Ask yourself:

- ✓ When was the last time you added hygiene hours to your schedule?
- ✓ What is your new patient flow? Has your patient base increased?
- ✓ Are your hygiene patients appointed ahead for their next hygiene visit?
- ✓ Do you know what your current retention rate is? What is the trend?

If you didn't like your answers to the questions, that's good news.

*You have an opportunity to increase retention and grow your practice.
The next question is – how?*

*Gallo, A. *The Value of Keeping the Right Customers.* Harvard Business Review. Oct. 29, 2014.

For most practices, we recommend starting with your data.

If you know your retention rate, get a system in place to track it regularly. Once you have that taken care of, get a solid plan in place for conducting effective morning meetings and regular team meetings to align your team. Then begin working on the six steps to increase retention.

6 Steps to Increase Retention Rates

1

Set Goals

Metrics matter. When you set out to do something, how do you measure success? If you set specific goals around retention, you can track your performance over time and determine whether you've achieved your objective.

2

Determine Who is Responsible for Scheduling

This starts by defining roles and responsibilities for your team. Once you've determined who is responsible for ensuring patients have regularly scheduled visits, you can develop a system of accountability.

3

Assess Performance

Review each team member's performance. Is each individual team member pre-appointing at the same rate? Are some better than others at rescheduling cancellations? Determine the most effective behaviors and tactics.

4

Identify Gaps and Develop Strategies

Are patients drifting away because they aren't getting the timely care they need? Do they understand the value your practice provides? What is the new patient experience like? Use your morning meetings to identify issues and work on developing strategies to overcome retention challenges. Could you create a policy of pre-appointing or develop a consistent plan for getting overdue patients back on track? Are there opportunities to improve the new patient experience?

5

Train and Support

We all have room to improve our performance. Provide your team with opportunities to broaden their skills. Create learning opportunities specific to each team member based on the challenges you've identified. (Spear Online, for example, is a proven tool to shape unified dental teams).

6

Evaluate and Reinforce

Continually measure performance to determine if your new strategies and team training efforts are working. Reinforce your team's learning through regular meetings and ongoing feedback.

Not sure where to get started?

If you're feeling overwhelmed, you're not alone. Spear Practice Solutions is designed to help. We combine coaching from expert consultants with tailored educational content for team alignment and real-time analytics to improve practice health.

To learn more about Spear Practice Solutions contact us at sps@speareducation.com or 866.781.0072 (ext. 3) or visit speareducation.com/practice-solutions