

## **It's The Little Touches That Count**

**Dental Town**

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"What do you mean when you say everything needs to be in place before we get started eliminating the assignment of benefits in our office"? That is a question many offices have asked me. The answer, you must create value in the dentistry and customer service you provide your patients, so they would not think of leaving your practice.

Your customer service must be top notch, "Ritz Carlton", by design. That does not mean sometimes, or when someone remembers, but ALL THE TIME, every minute of every day . Patients in your office should always be treated like guest in your home.

Make your practice stand out from the rest by doing things in your practice that no one else in your areas does. Those caring people skills we use in communicating with our patients that seems to get lost in the busy dental practices of today. Take the time to really care. The manner in which you and your staff show your respect for your patients will be noticed. From the verbal skills used in answering the phone, to a simple phrase, "Oh, it was my pleasure", as a response to a patients thank you. Or when a patient calls to schedule an appointment and before you are finished you simply ask the patient, "Mrs. Smith is there anything else I can help you with today?". Patients are impressed by the little caring things we do . Perhaps the ability to always make our patients feel special is one of the biggest ways to make a difference and costs nothing more then our time. But the rewards from this can be worth thousands.

Have financial options in place to help the patient find comfortable ways to pay for their dental treatment, whether it be by credit card (accept all of them), American General Finance, Dental Fee Plan or any of the many other plans out there. Just be sure you give yourself options to work with to make accepting treatment in your office easy for the patient.

Invest in a few extras for your patients. Have a play area for children, maybe a TV with video games, movies, books to read and toys. Nice amenities in the restrooms for patient use. A beverage bar stocked with fresh coffee, tea and juice. Fresh cookies baked in office each day. Hot towels for patients after treatment. Do a monthly newsletter to keep your patients updated on what is new in the office. Try sending it by email, our patients love it. If you do not have a website get one. And this list can go on and on, but I just wanted to give you a few ideas of what I mean by extras.

Being sure your staff members are 100% behind making the change is very important to the success of implementing new payment options. Staff members need to be given the training and verbal skills to use when speaking with patients regarding the changes . Most staff members want to do a great job, but you have to give them the tools they need to achieve the goals you have decided on. Your staff is a reflection of your practice, give them what they need to excel and you will wonder why you waited so long to get paid the day of service, and put the assignment of benefits check in your patients mail box.

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