ORTHO2

Getting the New Patient to Say YES to Your Practice

by **Carol Eaton**

A substantial number of patients and parents, when surveyed regarding their choice in selecting an orthodontic office, stated that they made the decision before they even met the orthodontist.

Although much emphasis is placed on the actual new patient consultation appointment as well as the ongoing training of both the treatment coordinator and the doctor in their specific roles during this critical appointment, feedback indicates that there are some key factors that can help "pre-sell" your practice to new patients.

Michael LeBoeuf calls these key factors "Moments of Truth" in his well-read book, *How To Win Customers and Keep Them for Life.* Here are some suggested "Moments of Truth" for you to evaluate as you look at ways to enhance your new patient process and increase your conversion rate.

- **IMPRESS them at the New Patient Phone Call**

  In the orthodontic industry we refer to this important phone call as the $5000 phone call (or more depending on your average treatment fee) and encourage you to treat it as such. Make sure you have an upbeat, personable and knowledgeable live body to answer this call and give it top priority without interruptions. Invest the time in training all team members who will be handling this call for consistent top-notch customer service and verbal skills that are positive, pro-active, and promotional.

- **WOW them with your Welcome Packet**

  This is usually the first visual image they have of your office and will be part of the "first impressions" made about you and the practice. Make sure the patient and parent's names are spelled correctly in addressing and mailing this information. Forms that need to be filled out such as the new patient acquaintance form, health history form, and child questionnaire should all be easy to read (appropriate layout and font size) and professional looking (no poor quality copies allowed). Utilize this informational packet to begin educating the new patient and parents about your unique qualities and multitude of services that you provide. Make sure you refer them to your web page for additional information and visual pictures of your office, the doctor, and the team.

- **CONNECT with them during the Confirmation Call**

  This is a great opportunity for either the TC/NPC or the doctor to connect with the new patient. Making a personal call after office hours to introduce yourself and let them know you are looking forward to meeting them at their scheduled appointment (confirm day and time) is a welcome change from the typical telemarketing phone call. This is a good time to see if they have any questions about the packet of materials you sent them (please bring the completed forms with you), answer any questions about the upcoming appointment (length of appointment, what to expect, next step, etc.), and make sure they know where you are located.

- **WELCOME & GREET them at the Initial Consultation**

  All front desk personnel should be anxiously awaiting the arrival of the new patient and warmly welcome them to the practice. Here is where that important invisible message needs to be BOLDLY seen and heard: "Make Me Feel Important!" If applicable to your office, show the new patient how to check in on the computer and invite them to make themselves comfortable in your reception room (beverage

Reprinted from
The Newsletter for Members and Friends of Ortho2
January 2007 - Volume 25 Issue 1

and high-end reading material) while you gather their paperwork and let the TC/NPC know that they have arrived. Treat them as you would a cherished guest in your home.

- **BUILD RAPPORT with them during the TC Introduction & Tour of the Office**

  During the introduction, place the emphasis on the patient and parent while the TC/NPC introduces them to the practice and how the orthodontic process works in your office as well as promoting the doctor and team. Assume that all new patients need some type of orthodontic treatment and they wouldn't think of going anywhere else but your office. As you give a tour of your office, do so with enthusiasm and pride in your practice as you highlight key points about the office: computer check-in, patient restroom, homework stations, play area, oral hygiene center, patient contests and motivational programs, the treatment area, sterilization standards, in-office records, and lab if applicable.

These are a few ideas to get you started on "pre-selling" your doctor, practice, and team to the new patient.

About the Author

Carol has been involved with the dental/orthodontic community for over 30 years as a management consultant and international speaker with hands-on training and experience as a registered dental assistant and treatment coordinator. If you are unable to attend these sessions and would like more information about Eaton Consulting or the topics being addressed, you can visit Carol's website at www.eatonconsulting.ws or contact her at CarolEaton@aol.com.