



ORTHO2

Patient Check-Out: A Golden Referral Opportunity

Your most valuable practice growth asset is your current patient population, including parents! Organize the front office team to implement a three-point patient referral strategy comprised of asking for feedback, introduction of the text hotline and asking for referrals.

At checkout each parent/patient will be offered your three-part strategy.

Part One: Feedback

Ask for feedback regarding today's visit or the practice in general. Simply ask, "How was your appointment today?", or "Do you have any questions regarding today's appointment?" These questions prompt the patient to share their impression. Look at the respondent and reply before setting the next appointment. No staring at the computer while the patient is talking! Listen to the response and ask for an online review, if positive. If you utilize a third-party review outreach system you may respond, "You will receive an email or text asking to post your feedback. It is our goal to earn a five-star review!"

I recommend asking for feedback from every patient and parent at every visit. Respond to all feedback! Concerns may be dealt with immediately and compliments should receive a warm thank you. The feedback and review request is instrumental to the health of the practice as referred patients look at your online presence prior to booking the initial exam.

Part Two: Text Hotline Introduction

Designate a practice mobile phone and create a card that asks for reviews and announces a practice text-ONLY number for patients and parents to use. Assign team members to respond to text inquiries during normal practice hours and take home the mobile phone for evening and weekend coverage. In our practice, two team members alternate responsibility for off-hours responses.

Suggested script to introduce the texting service: "Here is our text hotline number. You are welcome to text us seven

days per week regarding questions, appointment changes, etc."

by **Nancy Hyman**

Part Three: Ask for Referrals

Offer a referral card, implementing this script: "We'd love to see more patients just like you! Please hand this card to any family member or friend who may need our services. Your friend or family member will receive a complimentary exam with this card." Alternative new patient offers may be mentioned at this time, as well.

You may be asking for a referral only at the end of treatment and presume that the patient's excellent result will produce a volume of referrals. This is not the case! Once a parent/patient departs your practice it is easy to forget the wonderful experience you provided. Even raving fans forget that friends and family members will benefit from your services. Start asking for feedback and referrals almost immediately after the initial bonding or Invisalign delivery and transition to a post treatment referral request strategy.

Marketing collateral associated with this three-part strategy include a designated text-hotline card, with a request for online reviews, and a patient-to-patient referral card with a new patient offer, if utilized by your practice. These business card-sized powerhouses will reap reviews, referrals, and remove phone calls from the front desk when the text hotline is incorporated into your patients' communication habits. The goal is to keep the walking testimonials of current and completed patients engaged with the practice so that you are top of mind when asked whom they trust on the road to a beautiful smile! ☺

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About the Author



Nancy Hyman founded Ortho Referral Systems to help orthodontic practices jump-start patient referrals, develop a patient rewards system, increase patient enrollment, and improve implementation of practice growth systems.