



ORTHO2

Making Your Case

Turning Prospects into Patients

by **LeeAnn Peniche**

Forget the doom and gloom of our current economic state... Bad news for the stock market is still good news for you!

Here are the facts: Your case acceptance should be soaring to a new high because when the economic chips are down, case acceptance is up. Why, you may ask?

The truth is that when financial times are tough, you can count on the fact that the prospective patients who do choose to walk through your doors are serious about making their desire for a beautiful smile a reality. These awesome patients know in great detail the state of their own personal economy... And they still chose to take time off work, take children out of school, make the drive, and visit your office. Those of us with children understand deeply the fact that loving parents do not purposely set their children up for disappointment—therefore, if they are bringing their children to see you, you can be certain it is their objective to get these kids in braces! That means the patients walking through the door of your practice are more committed to smile success now than at any other time in recent years.

So what should you do with this vital information? Celebrate your imminent success! Go on... Smile and celebrate!

Some more important facts to consider:

The families who have such great potential to help you achieve case acceptance success are not to be taken for granted. They are not shoe-ins for your practice... Rather you must work for them! After all, prospective patients in this economy are more selective about where they spend their hard earned dollars. (We can all relate, right?) Although it is important to them that they find a good value for their dollar, they are not looking for Dr. Cheap—they are looking for Dr. Right. They demand excellence, compassion, attentiveness, advanced technology, and quality care, and they are in the position

to expect extraordinary service from the office to whom they choose to give their valued business. In other words, ***you must be that practice!***

So be smart about your approach. Review your entire outlook and make sure the personal, professional, and business systems of your New Patient Process are up to par. Make sure to greet and receive patients like you would want to be greeted and treated! Pour the coffee, provide a reception room tour, and create a true welcome!

Work hand in hand with the GP to ensure that you know the details of the referral, and have on hand the supporting x-rays from the dentist or a working knowledge of them. This will communicate to the dentist and patient that you are a team and are prepared to offer the extraordinary service and care they expect from you.

Often in an economy like this one, it is easy to succumb to fears about the future... Don't fall prey to those concerns.

Do not get lost in the fear that a patient may somewhere down the road lose their job or become unable to afford your services, leading you to ask for more money down than necessary. This could become a major stumbling block to your success.

Instead remember that patients who have a history that speaks to integrity, stability, and maturity do not shrink from challenges or setbacks.

Therefore, if by chance they do lose their job or encounter financial hardships, they may ask to renegotiate at some point in time, but they will not likely leave you in the lurch.

People with integrity are people of their word and always will be.

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About the Author



Through innovative, proven, and proprietary systems, LeeAnn Peniche has consistently brought smiles to orthodontists for more than 20 years. As the founder and president of Peniche & Associates, she has earned a reputation as one of the country's premier orthodontic consultants who specializes in case acceptance, scripting, marketing, and practice systemization. Over 2,000 practices have experienced first-hand her creative outlook, years of expertise, and proven track record of success. LeeAnn has lectured both nationally and internationally. Her life has been committed to providing orthodontists and their offices with the tools and systems for their continued success. Peniche & Associates can be reached at (503) 666-8538 or leeannpenicheandassociates.com.

In order to protect yourself from inevitable setbacks, choose to use all the tools available to determine your credit risk and make excellent decisions up front based on the history of the responsible party. It is your job to soar through the credit risk process so you can get to the business of treating these lovely families.

Be the place patients want to be! This is key, and it entails creating a desirable environment in which patients thrive and smiles flourish. Allow your office to be a safe haven for your patients by giving them the opportunity to relax and escape the business of life, the reality of negative media, and the depressing news of our current economy. You can do this by simply removing magazines with headlines of economic woes and discouraging news, and instead fill your office with the sights and smells of comfort, care, and love... such as cookies baking, friendly smiles, interesting games and activities, and soothing décor.

Make an agreement as a team to not be the promoters of doom and gloom but rather of smiles, laughter, and fun! What could be more appealing than that?

Of course your team will be empathetic to stories families share with you... After all, we are often smile creators offering therapy on the side... And when someone hears a story of struggle, think of positive ways to encourage that family or patient. You might create a small token gift to share or send a note of encouragement from the heart. Remember to treat your patients as more than just patients, but rather as good friends. Offer them a jar with the ingredients for home baked cookies and a delicious recipe or even some bath salts with a pretty ribbon and card for that mother who needs a few minutes in the evening to herself to relax, unwind, and forget the troubles of the day.

You have amazing power to transform people's lives! Never forget that! You offer a service that creates amazing smiles and if you choose to couple that with incredible personal care, you will be unstoppable!

So start getting the news out about you. In addition to the basic progressive marketing methods, don't forget to make your mark in the community and give back. Be a grass roots office that shows how much you care and practices what you preach. Create strong campaigns... Take an idea, create a program, and add multi-levels to create multiple programs within one campaign! Look for the opportunity to give back at every level.

This is not the time to hunker down and weather the storm. This is the time to lead the charge, to show what you are made of—generosity, kindness, compassion, leadership, and excellence. ♡