

6 WAYS FOR YOUR DENTAL PRACTICE TO MINIMIZE **DEPENDENCE**

UPON
PPOs



Brady Group
Beyond Practice Management

6 Ways to Minimize Dependence Upon PPO's

Are you hearing from other consultants that if you don't jump on the PPO wagon, hire more people or go corporate, that you'll drown? Well, that's just not true. Interestingly enough, the 'consultants' out there preaching this message aren't even dentists. Their message is appealing because it doesn't require you to really change.

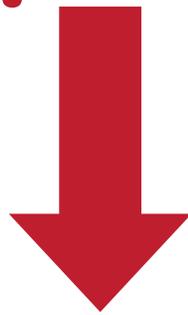
You just have to work harder.

And longer.

And harder.

With all of the **mixed**
messages out there, **it's**
tough to figure out just where
to start.

We've simplified
our proven process
for you...



Here we go:

- 1 Stop talking about Insurance.**
- 2 Have a reality check.**
- 3 Broaden your referral opportunities.**
- 4 Build your skillset.**
- 5 Beef up your online reputation.**
- 6 Provide an exceptional experience.**

1

Stop talking about Insurance

It's the first question we've all been trained to ask when a new patient calls.

This bad habit immediately sends the message to prospective patients that insurance is an important part of our practice... and then we can't figure out why our patients are so 'insurance-driven'.

If it's important, the patient will bring it up – I promise.

Once they bring it up, it's fair game.

HOWEVER, resist the urge to get caught up in an insurance discussion.

KEEP IT SIMPLE.

Do yourself a favor and stop fulfilling the role of the 'all-knowing' connection to their insurance.

Instead, focus on building relationships and helping people.

Stop talking about Insurance continued:

Additionally, remove all written communication pertaining to insurance.

Take it off of your new patient forms (you can just copy their card- they fill it out wrong most of the time anyway).

Take it off of your treatment plan – what if you simply gave the patient a total for their treatment, instead of committing FOR the insurance company what you think they will pay?

I know that sounds like a crazy idea – but is it any crazier than you taking ownership for how much THEIR insurance might pay?

Don't get me wrong – I'm not proposing that you stop taking insurance assignment - it's just a matter of learning how to communicate differently.

You'd be amazed at how your patient relationships will improve when you minimize the insurance factor.

2

Have a reality check

Evaluate the PPO influence on your practice.

- **Do you even know how many plans you participate in?**
- **Do you know much more dentistry you are having to produce to make up for the adjustments?**

So many doctors have no idea where to start. They just know that they have to stay 'busy' in order to pay most of the bills.

In spite of what you might be hearing from other consultants, you will be more profitable if you are not 'busy'.

In fact, the more your schedule becomes clogged with extra hygiene columns (to support the ppo influx), the less time you have to spend with patients and diagnose long-term, ideal dentistry.

Have a reality check continued:

Your production per patient goes down, and soon you find yourself operating like an emergency dental clinic.

Here's the plan...

- Run a list of all of the PPO's that you accept.
- How many patients have you seen on each plan over the last year?
- Figure the revenue that each plan has brought to the practice.
- Figure your \$ per pt by dividing the number of patients on each plan in to the total revenue on that particular plan
- What is your average write-off % for each plan?

Now that you have this data, you can quickly identify the plans that are costing you money when you see those patients.

You may find that you would be better off giving those patients fifty bucks and sending them to the guy down the street!

3

Broaden your referral opportunities

How many referrals are ppo vs. those that find you on the internet, through community involvement, or through non-insurance related referrals?

Do you even know?

I'm **amazed** at how many practices don't have a feel for where their new patients are coming from.

Ask yourself:

- ▶ **Do you ask for referrals?**
- ▶ **Reward referrals?**
- ▶ **Are you so 'busy' that your patients' perception is that you're too busy for new patients?**
- ▶ **Do you consistently cultivate win-win relationships with other professionals in your area?**
- ▶ **Give back to your community?**

Broaden your referral opportunities continued:

Do this:

- Identify** 12 professionals/businesses/community events that you can add to your calendar over the next year.
- Plan** to participate in the events with the purpose of adding to your marketing list of prospective patients.
- Introduce** yourself to professionals and businesses in your area that you already contribute to as a consumer.
- Thank** them for their service, and introduce yourself.
- Share** the benefits of your practice, and share an offer with them that makes it easy to become a patient.

You then have access to their circle of influence.

It's a win-win!

4 Build your skillset

Build your skillset to provide services that are beyond the scope of insurance.

Sleep apnea, 6-month smiles and holistic dentistry are just the tip of the iceberg.

- **When was your last clinical CE course?**
- **Have you learned anything new in the last year?**

If all you are doing is trying to sell more single-tooth dentistry, it will be an uphill battle to become profitable, especially if your practice is PPO-influenced.

However, if you are trained and confident in offering state-of-the-art solutions that extend beyond the scope of insurance (not covered by most dental plans, choices patients make regardless of insurance, significant treatment plans that max out their benefits, etc.) you'll find that your practice becomes less dependent upon the PPO monster.

Build your skillset continued:

Don't get me wrong - it's not about adding as many products to your shelf as you possibly can -

It's about finding something you enjoy outside the scope of typical bread and butter dentistry and becoming the 'expert' in that area.

5

Beef up your online reputation

If someone were to google you, what would they find?

Are your reviews plentiful?

Is your online presence up to date?

Is your social media updated and engaging?

If I googled 'Dentist, your town', would you even come up?

The internet is how people make decisions.

Even referrals – if your patient Suzie tells her neighbor Jane about you, Jane is likely to go home and google you to get more information- ie: phone number, location, see what you look like etc.

Would their findings reinforce or contradict Suzie's endorsement?

I'm not necessarily talking about SEO – yes, that's a factor, but even optimizing your website won't do any good if your driving people to something boring or negative.

5

Provide an exceptional experience

Provide an exceptional, relationship-based experience.

I recently switched pharmacies.

Over the last 4 months, we've had illnesses, surgery, injuries, etc in our family that have required us to visit the pharmacy about 1-2 times/week.

This pharmacy happens to be in the grocery store 2 blocks from my home – not counting the pharmacy visits, I'm there a couple of times/week, and often walk right by the pharmacy counter while shopping for groceries.

It's safe to say that my face is pretty familiar.

The Starbucks barista and I are on a first-name basis – just as I am with several of the cashiers.

Then there's the pharmacy – THE SAME GUY is there 95% of the time.

One day I dropped my rx off, grabbed a few items and

Provide an exceptional experience continued:

returned 10 minutes later to pick it up and pay.
Here's how I was greeted –

(head down looking at computer with hands on keyboard), **'Name, please?'**

Are you kidding me?

Geeeezzz.

And yes, he's the same guy that took my rx just 10 minutes earlier.

Then one night I had to go to Walgreens late to get a prescription filled after my grocery store pharmacy was already closed.

My very first time to drop off a prescription there and I was thanked... by name.

When I returned to the counter a few minutes later to retrieve my prescription, I was greeted... by name.

'Mrs. Drewery, we have your prescription ready!'

Provide an exceptional experience continued:

'Thank you for coming in!

Are there any other prescriptions we can help you with?

If you have any that you'd like to transfer over, we'd be happy to take care of that for you -

oh, and just to show our thanks, you'll receive a \$10 gift card for each RX transferred'.

Well, yeah!

Deal done.

How are you even different from 'fill-in-the-blank' busy practice down the road?

And don't even say, 'we provide a warm, caring environment'.

Do you spend just as much time on relationships as you do teeth?

**Are you ready
to make some changes in order
to regain your freedom?**



Words from our client: Jim Craig

I know my old consultant probably isn't the best reference here, but one thing I learned from him is that you can either live by Faith or by Fear. He recommended living by Faith. Of course, they were concerned, living by faith basically amounted to "have faith and give us a lot of money and we'll help you do better.

Looking back now, I realize that at that point I should have hired the Brady group. I didn't know about you guys and I went with the other guy instead, which taught me a few things but ultimately the math didn't work out with them (as you know).

If I had hired the Brady Group, you guys would have coached and encouraged me to get out of some PPO's and I probably would have been less busy and much happier. Instead, I hired more staff, signed up for more insurances and started spending very heavily on marketing. We all know how that turned out.

You guys are great to work with, too! You are always SO responsive – I feel like I can get a response from you pretty much any time day or night. Even text messages occasionally in the evenings...that's customer service you can't get anywhere else. And I can't tell you how much I appreciate that."

One month later, we received this note

from Dr. Craig -

“

Thanks to our 'new' new patient experience, we are having some very successful planning appointments!

It feels so good to help this patient get what he wants.

If I had treatment planned him the 'old way' that I was used to (chairside diagnosis, patching things up and putting him on the "crown-a-year club") then we would have never really gotten him the result he wanted, and he would have probably spent a lot more money over the next 30 or 40 years.

I love this concept of giving patients what they want instead of what we think they need or think they ought to have!"

