



Your Team Is a Critical Link to Helping Patients Value, Schedule and Keep Preventive Appointments

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Your hygiene department can and should be a central and critical component of your practice's success. Your hygiene department should be strengthening patient relationships, be a constant source of new patient referrals and help create a healthy physical foundation for clinical treatment. They should also add to your bottom line by producing three times their compensation and by actively presenting potential production identified during the preventive appointment.

Before we dive into how to optimize your hygiene department, I recommend you take a minute to find out what they should be producing.

Your Hygiene Department Compensation \$ _____

X3

First Level of Profitability Goal \$ _____

As you can see from your practice's perspective, dental hygiene/preventive appointments are extremely valuable. Unfortunately, many patients don't share that same perspective. In fact, many believe that hygiene appointments are "just cleanings" and they will be just fine if they delay or cancel them.

To change patients' perspectives on preventive appointments, we need to change the conversation – internally and externally.

The Internal Conversation

We have all heard anecdotes about the dental team member who projected her own internal beliefs into patient conversations, either through her body language, tone of voice or actual words. Because she wouldn't choose to invest in her smile beyond baseline health and maintenance, she was uncomfortable encouraging patients to accept recommended dentistry, especially when there was a financial investment.

As the dentist, you know how much your patients look to your team for reassurance and recommendations – even when it comes to hygiene preventive appointments. When Mrs. Jones asks, "Do I really need to come back in six months for another cleaning?" the way your team member responds will either communicate the value of preventive care or not. Or, when Mr. Smith calls the day before his preventive appointment to cancel, the way your team manages the call will often be the difference in the patient keeping the appointment or putting it off. Before your team can communicate the value, they must understand and believe that preventive appointments are important to the patient and practice.

Just as technology and dentistry have evolved rapidly over the past decade, so has hygiene. Some of your team may be unaware of, or not fully understand, hygiene's role in the practice and its impact on patients' oral and overall health. When they do, it can change the internal conversation.