

# NEW PATIENT SCHEDULER

How to successfully book 85%-95% of  
your new dental patient opportunities  
into your practice



THAT  
Smiling  
DENTIST

**The Guident Group & That Smiling Dentist®**

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# HOW TO HANDLE NEW PATIENT CALLS

## Purpose

The most important action of the New Patient Scheduler is handling phone calls properly, to the end result that people schedule with the practice.

Nothing else is as important as this. Without patients sitting in the operator, no money is made. And what gets people in the chairs are handling phone calls properly - especially calls from and to new patients.

The phone is a difficult situation when it comes to new people. Why? Because the new patient doesn't see you, doesn't know you, doesn't see or know the doctor, doesn't see or know the staff, doesn't see or know how great your practice is, hasn't yet experienced the skills of your doctor and hygienists, hasn't experienced the caring and personal service you provide to your patients. New patients don't see or experience any of this. All they have is a faceless voice on the phone - yours.

It requires more skill and far better communication to be effective on the phones than it does face-to-face, for the reasons stated above. Think of yourself and those times you first called different doctors' offices. How were you treated on the phone? What was the tone and attitude of the staff person you spoke with? How were your questions answered? Did the staff person make you feel welcome? Did she make the practice and doctor sound inviting? Did you have the sense that this was the practice for you?

What are you trying to do when you take a new patient phone call? You're total and only purpose and intention is to get that patient scheduled and arriving in your practice. That's your job as the scheduler - get new and existing patients into the office.

Your purpose isn't to simply answer the phone, or answer questions, or be nice and friendly. All these things are important, but they are important only if they lead to the new patient scheduling an appointment. Your purpose is to schedule people and have them arrive in the practice. Your intention is to schedule people and have them arrive in the practice.



Your responsibility and purpose is simple: Get people who call, in the door! When people call, your intention is to simply get them to come in. And to accomplish this intention, follow the procedures and actions and communication skills in this manual.

Nothing happens without a patient in the office and in the dental chair - no production, no income, no pay, no bonuses, no job, no practice. It doesn't matter how great the dentist is; if there are no patients or not enough patients for him or her to work on, there is nothing. It doesn't matter how wonderful the staff is; if there are no patients or not enough patients, there is nothing. We could have the most gorgeous office ever built, but without patients, it will be empty.

Are you nice and friendly on the phone? Most likely you are. But that isn't enough, not by a long shot, not if you want to get 85-90% of all new patients in the door. All of our own staff were nice and friendly people. But that didn't get the job done. Your purpose isn't to simply answer the phone, or answer questions, or be nice and friendly. All these things are important, but they are important only if they lead to the new patient scheduling an appointment. Your purpose is to schedule people and have them arrive in the practice. Your intention is to schedule people and have them arrive in the practice. Remember, the arrival is the end result, a new person walked in your door is what you're looking for. People can schedule but not show up.

Is your doctor a good doctor? Do you and the rest of your teammates care about your patients and take good care of them? Do you and the practice deliver good clinical results and good service to people? If the answers are yes, then how would new patients know all this unless they arrive in your practice, meet all of you and the doctor, get to experience the excellent clinical care and great service you deliver? The only way they will know all this is to decide to come to your practice, and the only way this will happen is if you get them to make this decision. Keep in mind that they haven't yet met you, the other staff, the doctor. They haven't experienced your care and service. The ONLY thing they go by is a faceless voice on the phone - you.

It's amazing how much gets communicated on the phones, other than words. If you are rushed, stressed, distracted, overloaded, feeling a little down that day, upset, etc. etc., then all these things communicate loud and clear on the phones. Your emotions and state of mind communicate clearly through the phone lines.

It's also amazing how much else gets communicated over the phones. Do you really want that person to come in and find out how good the practice is? Or are you simply "answering the phones?" 98% of all front desk people are simply "answering the phones." This included our own staff years ago. But just like you, they were good people who were never shown the best ways to handle phone calls. They quickly turned into "phone superstars," and you can, too.

If your goal and intention is to get the person scheduled and arriving through the front door, how do you accomplish this? How is all this done? There are a few key ingredients to a successful New Patient call. And there is a procedure that must be followed and followed

in full. No matter how busy you are, no matter how many phones lines are ringing at the same time, no matter what, the procedures and steps cannot be shortcut. That is the reality and nature of the business, so decide to apply all this material to each and every phone call.

Keep in mind one basic and important point: people who call your office are going to go some-where, they're going to end up in someone's dental practice, sooner or later. Your most important job is to get those people to come to your practice and see your doctor, not anyone else.



# THE NEW PATIENT SCHEDULER

You are a professional. You work in a highly professional field. The field of dentistry is an important and rewarding field that helps people improve their lives in a major way. You're not flipping hamburgers at Mc Donald's or pushing paper in an administrative office. No, you're contributing to the betterment of people's health and self confidence; you actually have a major effect on their very lives. Because of this, the actions of everyone in the practice affects people's lives significantly. Your job is not an "office" job, or a "receptionist" job, or an "assistant," or just a "job." From this moment on, consider yourself a true Professional, a true Professional in a terrific and positive field, and strive to reach the highest standards of professionalism.

A true Professional New Patient Scheduler - by our standards - is one who knows how to communicate so well, she can convert a high percentage - 85-90% - of new patients into actual arrivals - not just scheduled. She knows how to handle the tough questions and the difficult patients, so as to cause those people to want to see us.

An average scheduler schedules only around 50% of new patients. You should not employ average people. Employ only skilled and true Professionals.

What is the difference between an average scheduler and a true Professional Scheduler?

- 🕒 A Professional has all of the qualities given in this manual - attitude, tone, communication skills, service, helpfulness, intention, interest, salesmanship, etc.
- 🕒 A Professional has excellent communication and skills in handling new patients.
- 🕒 A Professional has strong intention to schedule people
- 🕒 A Professional knows and uses the material in this manual, successfully.

## Qualities of the Professional New Patient Scheduler

First, let's go over the qualities **YOU** must have, and the qualities you have to communicate on the phone to every person who calls. This might sound like a lot, and it is, but there is no shortcut to success. If **YOU** don't have these qualities, then the new patients will be less enthusiastic about coming to your practice.

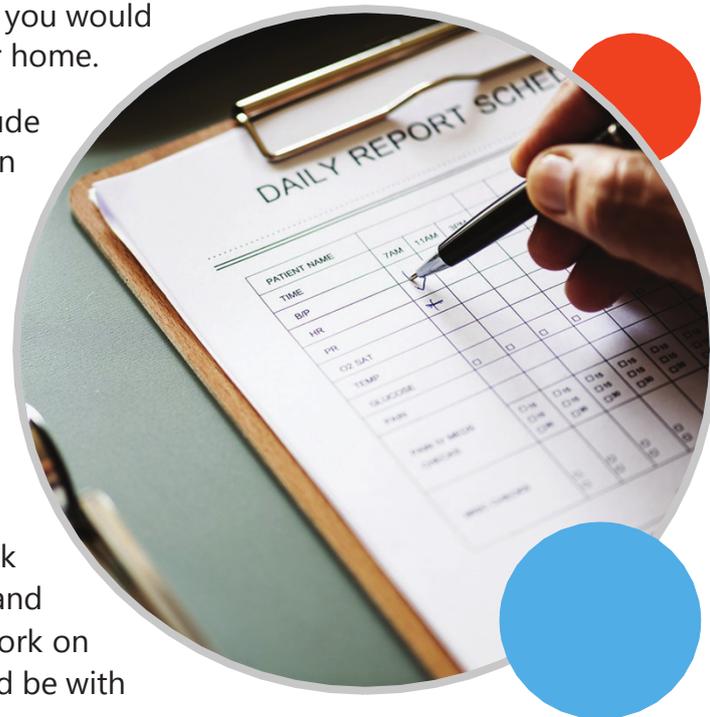
So here's a list of qualities you have to have to be a phone superstar.

1. Your **attitude and tone**. You are warm, friendly, inviting and caring. You have - and communicate - a warm, friendly, inviting and caring attitude, so that the patient wants to come to our practice. You must be happy that a new person is calling, and be happy to get a new patient scheduled, and act like you're genuinely happy this person called. (But do not be "syrupy-sweet" or phony-caring.) You must be genuine. You have the

same attitude and tone with new patients as you would in inviting a friend or family member to your home.

- Ideally, you would have the same attitude and tone with new patients as you would in inviting a friend or family member to your home. How would you talk to a loved one, a family member or a close friend, about your doctor and practice? What questions would you ask?

What would you say to convince the person to come to your practice? Imagine your conversation with your spouse, or parent, or your best friend? Well, most front desk people are more shy, more timid, more stiff and formal when new patients call the office. Work on having the conversation be more like it would be with someone you care about.



- How you do this is by **building a relationship** with the new patient. This is done with outstanding communication; outstanding communication builds relationships. You provide such outstanding service and communication on the phone that each and every patient who calls thinks, "WOW! That is the best phone service I have ever received from any doctor's office or business!"

By building a good phone relationship with each new patient, you will greatly reduce the number of new patients who no-show. And one of the very best way to accomplish all this relationship-building is to ask questions of the new patients. These videos will show you how to do this.

- Keep in mind that a new patient has not been to our office, has not met the doctor and staff, has not seen how good you are, and has not had the good experience of receiving great dentistry and friendly service from your practice. All they have and know is a faceless voice on the phone. Your voice communicates your emotions and state of mind. It's amazing how much gets communicated over the phone.

If you are rushed, stressed, frazzled, angry, sad, upset, happy, cheerful or any other emotion - those communicate loud and clear over the phone. So there is no option but to apply all the points in this manual in order to build a successful relationship with the new patient.

- Listen** to what the patient says. Use our Call Sheets with each and every new patient call; these guide you to ask all the right questions and say all the right things. Don't ask questions that the patient has already answered, but that you didn't hear because you weren't listening attentively enough. Fill out Call Sheets for each new patient.
- Control** the phone conversation. Most schedulers simply allow the patient to ask questions and then answer those questions, and nothing more. This manual shows you how to take control of the conversation effectively and to the end result of the patients scheduling and arriving in your practice.

7. **Ask** the patient to schedule with your practice. You might have to ask more than once. But ask, and keep asking until the patient schedules with you.
8. **Answer** every question cheerfully and professionally, but keep the answers to questions simple and easy.
9. Do NOT try to educate the new patient about insurance, our policies and procedures, money, etc. over the phone. **Just get the person in the door**, and all that can be addressed face-to-face. You will turn people off with too much information on the phone. You will confuse people if you give them too much information.

Answer their questions, of course, but do so simply, easily and with a minimum of explanation. You can even tell people that everything can be explained in detail once the patient sits face-to-face with the doctor and staff, you can tell them that it can be difficult to explain things well over the phone.

10. **Promote the doctor and practice.** What does this mean? Promoting the doctor and practice means letting people know how great the doctor is, how great the hygienists are, how great the staff is, how well you treat your patients, how wonderful your patients' experiences are, how much your patients like your practice, etc. **Promotion is the art and intention of making the practice sound so terrific to people who call, that they want to come in; they think this is the practice for them, there is no reason to contact any other practice.**

Promoting the practice includes answering questions in such a way as to make your practice attractive. Promotion is making your practice so inviting and appealing to the person calling, that all other considerations and obstacles (insurance, fees, location, etc.) are not important. Promotion is getting the person to really want to come to your practice.

11. Don't just sell the product – sell the whole package. Promote the Doctor, promote the staff, sell the entire practice, sell the **VALUE** of the product. Make yourself part of the value people are buying by telling them "I'll be your primary care coordinator through this entire process." People today are buying the entire experience - they are buying the clinical care, the doctor, the staff, the practice, the service, the friendliness and the "treat you like family" attitude. But, how will they experience all this if they don't come to your office? The only way they'll know how good your practice is, is by you convincing them to come in and see for themselves during the phone conversation.
12. Forget about long explanations about insurance and fees and other details that do nothing but cause the person to call another dental office.
13. Your intention. You want new people to call, you want to schedule new people, you intend them to come in. You are truly happy to hear from this person, and you want to do everything possible to make it easy for this patient to schedule. If you don't genuinely want these things, you cannot schedule successfully.
14. Be interested in each new patient. Don't be interesting – be interested. Find out about him or her, get the new patient communicating to you and then sell the person on

coming in based on what he/she told you he/she is looking for. Ask questions. Discover what the new patient wants, and what is important to them. Tell stories of actual patient experiences in your practice that are similar to what the new patient is asking about.

15. Do not sound rushed, frazzled, too busy, stressed or any other similar tone. These come through loud and clear over the phone. Answer each call with an actual smile, and force yourself to be happy someone has reached out your practice. Doing these two things will create the proper tone and attitude within yourself, which in turn will communicate to the new patient.
16. Speak more slowly and clearly than you are used to doing. Phones muffle voice signals. You are never as clear and easy to understand on the phone as you are in person. Cell phones especially are muffled to some degree, and many people call you on their cell phones.
17. Don't "over-screen" the new patients. Every person who reaches out to your practice is a real potential patient. Stop looking for why they are not patients! Don't over-screen people and put them through so many hoops, especially over the issue of insurance. Don't try to educate the new patient about insurance, your policies and procedures, money, etc. **JUST GET PEOPLE IN THE DOOR!** It's a million times easier to address questions and concerns face-to-face than it is over the phone.

Plus, when the person is in your office, he or she now has met the doctor and staff, now has a good impression of the practice, is more at ease, more trusting and more willing to listen. Answer their questions, of course, but do so simply, easily and with a minimum of explanation. You can tell people that everything can be explained in detail once the patient sits face-to-face with the doctor and staff, you can tell them that it can be difficult to explain things well over the phone.

So, **Step One** in the process of scheduling a new patient call, is for you to get your attitude and intentions properly and clearly defined in your own mind. And this means truly **BEING** and **COMMUNICATING** and **APPLYING** the above qualities.

**Step Two** of the process is, what do you actually say to this person calling? This is where you answer the patients' questions, but at the same time you're promoting the practice and inviting the patient in. This manual and our videos give you guidance and examples of how to answer questions (especially about fees), how to promote the practice, and how to overcome objections to scheduling with you.

## Promoting the Practice

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Selling is a dirty word to most of us. Most of us in the dental field don't like to sell. But there is no getting around the fact that there is a sales aspect to dentistry.

There are two points in the process where a patient simply has to be sold:

- 🕒 During the initial phone call, when the patient decides to come to your practice or go elsewhere,

- 🕒 When the patient is presented the doctor's treatment plan, and the patient decides to do the work or not.

We can dance around this all we want because we don't like to sell. But those two points in the process require some sort of professional salesmanship. There is no running away from this, there is no happy pill that avoids this. When you're talking to a new person on the phone, this requires some amount of good, professional salesmanship. But we prefer to call it promotion - promoting the practice and doctor.

Why do most of us hate or fear selling?

- 🕒 We don't like to be sold ourselves, so we don't want to do that to others.
- 🕒 We don't want to come across as used car salesmen.
- 🕒 We don't want to be pushy.
- 🕒 Fear of rejection
- 🕒 We don't have the tools, scripts and knowledge of proper phone skills.

As the first step, let's re-define sales from a dental practice point of view. In fact, let's replace the words sales and salesmanship with promotion, enlighten and enlightenment. Enlighten and enlightenment are beautiful words and express exactly what you want to do with every person who calls your practice and every patient you see in your practice.

Definition of Enlighten:

18. To give knowledge to, educate;
19. To provide someone with information and understanding, or to explain the true facts about something to someone;
20. To cause someone to understand something by explaining it or by bringing new information or facts to that person's attention;
21. To give intellectual or spiritual light to, to shine the light of truth on something, shed light on;
22. To make free from confusion or ambiguity, to make clear

These definitions are exactly what you should be doing during your phone calls with each and every person. These definitions are exactly what we mean by promoting the practice. If you enlighten them fully and properly, 85-95% of all new patients will come into your practice. They will want to come to your practice and not consider going to another practice.

Proper enlightenment allows you to develop an excellent communication and relationship on the phone with new patients, without them seeing you or seeing the practice yet.

There's a reason you have to be able to enlighten people and promote the practice over the phone. **People Are Highly Insecure About Money and Making Decisions.** The way to overcome these insecurities and enlighten people at the same time is for you to

- 🕒 Tell stories.
- 🕒 Ask questions and find out what people truly want
- 🕒 Be honest
- 🕒 Enlighten people so they make a decision

**Be interested in the new patient.** Don't be interesting – be interested! Be interested in the person, be interested in their dental condition, be interested in what they need and want, be interested in what's important to them. Ask questions to get all this information. Be truly interested, because you really want to know, not just to be polite or go through the motions.

**Apprehension.** What is one common mental barrier that everyone has when looking for a new doctor? They are apprehensive, they wonder what the new doctor is like, they don't know what to expect. They don't know the doctor yet, they haven't had a chance to become comfortable with a doctor.

People are especially apprehensive about dentistry, and there is always some concern and apprehension when meeting a new dentist. For this reason you have to reassure the new patient that your doctor is terrific, gentle, friendly and will take great care of the person. Put people at ease during the phone call.

**Everyone puts up RDR's – Reactionary Defense Responses.** Examples of RDRs include "I'm just shopping," "I'm not buying today," "I'm just looking," "I just want to get some info," and other similar statements. Understand why they say these things, put them at ease with you, understand what you need to do to make them feel comfortable with you, create responses for their objections and be most of all, be prepared. These phone videos and manuals show you how to do all this.

If people knew **FOR SURE** exactly what they wanted – they would own it already. It's your job to help people sort out for themselves what they really want. The other side of that coin is, you also have to know exactly what they want and why they want it. Until both you and the person you're talking to know exactly what is needed and wanted, you won't get the person to come to your practice.

The very best way to successfully find out what the person needs and wants, and why they want it, is to ask questions. Ask questions until you and the new patient have a clear statement of what he or she needs and wants. Engage the person in a real conversation, just as you would if you were talking to a friend or family member.



## The 4 Reasons People Buy Dental Care:

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1. It gets them out of pain
2. It improves their appearance, gives them a beautiful smile, and raises their self-confidence and self-esteem
3. It allows them to eat all the foods they like
4. To keep their teeth healthy and strong for their lifetimes while preventing future problems.

Every single patient you have ever seen, and every single new person reaching out to, has one of more of these reasons for contacting you. You must find out the exact reasons for each person. Again, as stated above, the best way to do this is by asking questions.

All of the points given above about promoting the practice, selling the value and the entire experience, and enlightening people, are weak points in almost every dental scheduler. Yet these are perhaps the most important points of all when it comes to handling new people on the phones.

## Asking Questions

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Before trying to promote the practice and enlighten the new patients, you first have to know what they're looking for, what is most important to them, what are their concerns and fears, who have they talked already about their dental condition and treatment. Then you can focus your attention and words on those points that interest and concern the person.

Asking questions also gets the person talking. You want the new patient to talk more than you, because then and only then can you use the correct words with each person as an individual. Every person is different, and has his or her own considerations of what is important. Getting people to talk tells you exactly what to say to them to enlighten them that your practice is the best practice for this person to come to.

## Sample Questions

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No need to use them all – just keep digging deep to find out their **REASONS** for needing and wanting this - because then and **ONLY** then will your prospect realize you are **DIFFERENT** than all the other dental offices they have called.

- 🕒 Have you seen another dentist for this? (Get person to give you the details)
- 🕒 What's changed recently that's made you consider?
- 🕒 How will it feel to finally be able to smile a huge grin with total confidence that your teeth look fantastic?

Ask both these next questions – and make notes:

- 🕒 How much difference would great teeth make to you personally?

- 🕒 How much difference would this make to you professionally?

Other questions:

- 🕒 What made you call today?
- 🕒 What would you change about your teeth now?
- 🕒 What's most important to you about your teeth and dental health?
- 🕒 Why is that important to you?

Asking questions and having a conversation shows exactly how much you care for your patients and more importantly how hard you are working, and will work, to find the perfect solution for them.

- 🕒 So tell me what challenges are you having in your life with missing teeth/ tooth problems? Why do you want this done now?
- 🕒 What's important to you – simply eating properly again OR the appearance of your new beautiful smile? When are you thinking of doing it?
- 🕒 What will it feel like when you can eat properly again? Are you struggling to eat certain things?
- 🕒 Do you chew only on one side?

Really dig deep! Get personal with them – and go into storytelling to explain the transformations other patients have had **AND** the transformation they will have when they choose you.

## Tell Stories About Past Patients

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You're talking to a new person on the phone, and she's telling you about her dental condition (missing or broken teeth, loose denture, doesn't like the appearance of her smile, etc.). You can tell this person a story about another patient with a similar condition, and how happy the person was after your doctor did the treatment. Explain in detail how it changed this patient's life and what your doctor did to make the patient so happy.

Is the new patient embarrassed or insecure about their looks?

Is the new patient in pain?

What does this person miss doing that great teeth would solve?

Have you seen another dentist for this? (Get person to give you the details)

What's changed recently that's made you consider getting?

- 🕒 How will it feel to finally be able to smile a huge grin with total confidence that your teeth look fantastic?

Ask both these next questions – and make notes:

- 🕒 How much difference would great teeth make to you personally?
- 🕒 How much difference would this make to you professionally?

Other questions:

- 🕒 What made you call today?
- 🕒 What would you change about your teeth now?
- 🕒 What's most important to you about your teeth and dental health?
- 🕒 Why is that important to you?

Get the answers to these and other questions

Here's an actual, real-life example of using all the principles of promotion and enlightenment we've covered so far:

A friend of ours was interested in implants. The doctor who eventually did the work said to this man, "Imagine, being able to **REALLY** enjoy a great steak again, chewing it properly, really tasting the flavor of a great Rib-eye and never having to worry again about biting down on one of your bad teeth and the immediate pain it causes, that totally ruins your meal and leaves you in pain all night long. That's before we even talk about how people will perceive you. You're a marketer, appearance is everything to you. I guarantee you that you will have 100% more confidence in everything you do"

### **OUR FRIEND WAS IMMEDIATELY SOLD!**

The doctor knew what to say because his patient care coordinator, Katie, had found out from our friend what he really wanted, from the initial phone conversation and then when our friend first came to the practice. Katie is an amazing sales woman that really cares about her patients.

She had taken all this information from the first conversation over the phone, the very first call. When they spoke, she kept digging until she found out the real reason he wanted implants. He felt comfortable talking to her, she cared about him and she told him it wasn't his fault.

She promoted the doctor and practice, she sold the entire value and experience, she covered all the objections, she enlightened our friend. They spent over 30 minutes on the phone **BEFORE** the consult. Katie wrote everything down so the doctor had all this information when he talked to our friend during the consult.

Right after his consult, our friend wrote a check for the work! He had visited 3 other practices and left without purchasing, not because he couldn't write a check right there and then, but because he didn't feel as comfortable in any other clinic. Katie is a professional and really took the time to dig deep into finding the right solution for the guy, that's why he trusted

her more and ultimately spent a lot of money there.

Our Friends Words:

“Doc **KNEW** exactly what I wanted and needed, the difference it would make in my life, all the staff was 100% confident that I would get exactly what was promised and I would love the end result (and I did!).

“He simply used **ME** to close **ME** on a big sale. I went in for multiple implants – and came out with 4 implants, a bone graft, full porcelain veneers top and bottom... and truthfully, it was the **BEST** purchase I ever made. It was that big of a game changer for me personally and professionally.

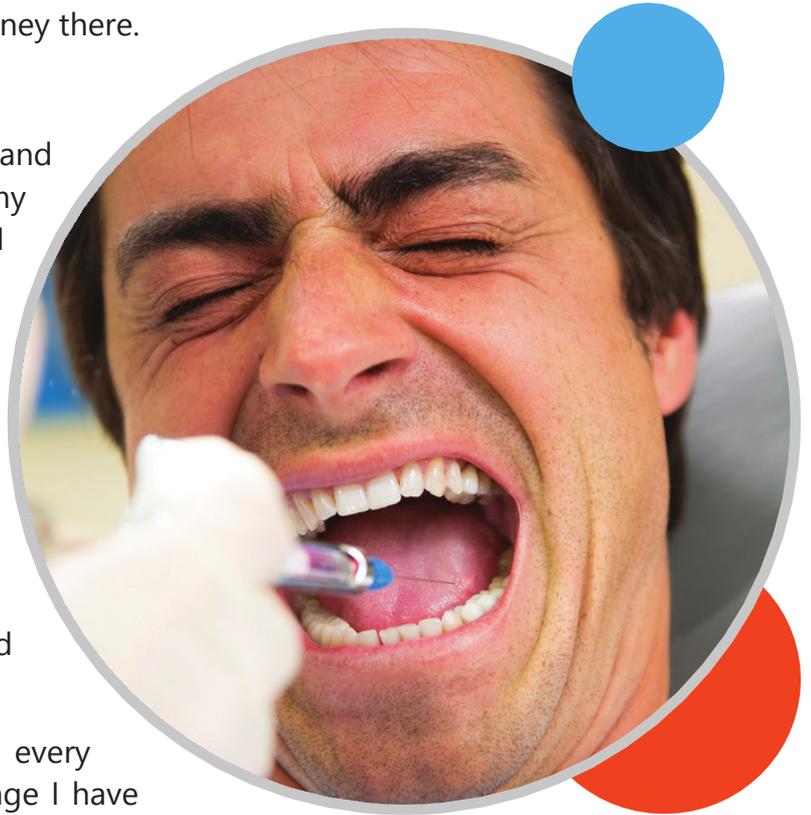
“I am SO thankful that Katie gave me every option that was relevant to me, the change I have experienced is huge as a result.”

You see - we don't think dental staff realize (or maybe you've forgotten) how much of an impact you have in the lives of those you touch and those you help. You fix what is broken, you give people confidence, you show kindness, and you want what's best for people.

You make others **SMILE** again! And that is truly priceless!

Tell stories and make the patient comfortable. One of the most powerful stories is your own personal story, especially if the dentist you work for now did your dentistry.

We want to take them from where they are now and build a bridge to the other side – a place where we have no more dental problems - 'The Dental Promised Land'!



# COLLECTING INSURANCE INFORMATION

So when do you ask for the patient's insurance information? What if the patient never asks anything about insurance? How and when do you bring this up?

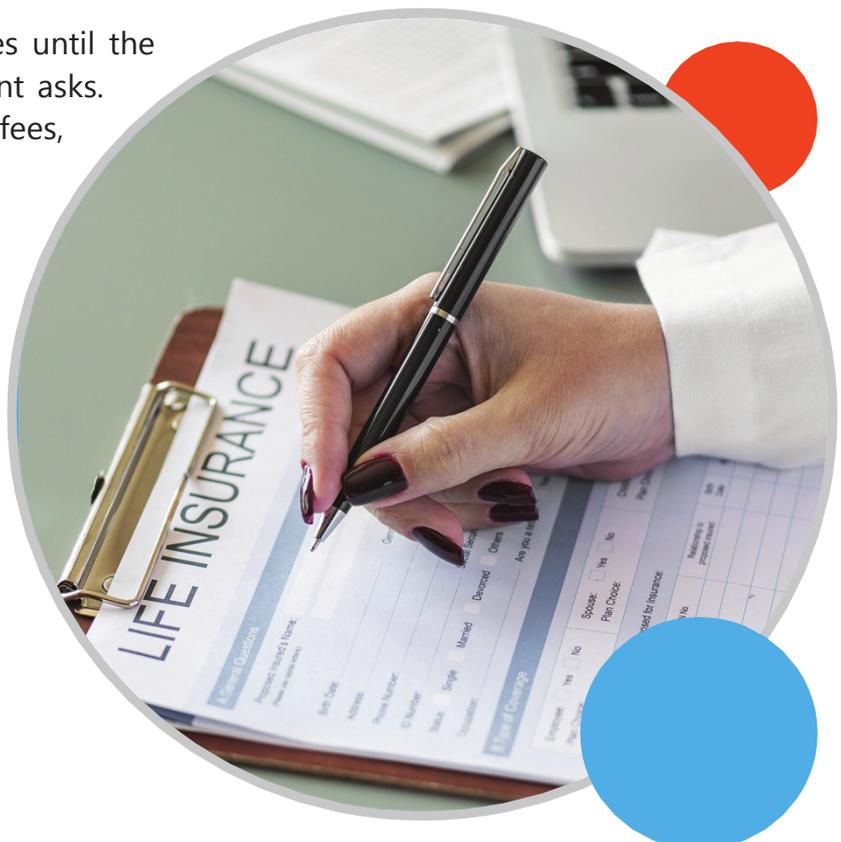
Ask the patient if he/she has dental insurance **AFTER** the patient has scheduled. **"Oh, by the way, do you have dental insurance?"** Ask the question in those words. Ask it in a casual, couldn't-care-less tone of voice. You might have spent 10 minutes or more with this person on the phone, all to the end result of scheduling with your practice. Unless the person brings up insurance, you don't say a word about it until **AFTER** the patient schedules.

**NEVER NEVER NEVER** get into long, detailed explanations of how dental insurance works, what it covers and doesn't cover, or anything else. Just collect the insurance information you need to verify coverage.

Why? Because we have listened to approximately a thousand calls between our schedulers and new patients. And every time the scheduler gets into a lengthy discussion about all the ins and outs of insurance, the call gets rough, and most of the time the patient doesn't schedule. It's best to get the patient in the office and then the financial manager can explain everything face to face.

Also, do **NOT** get into insurance or fees until the patient has scheduled, unless the patient asks. And when they ask about insurance or fees, follow the scripts.

It is an enormous turn off to call a medical or dental office and the scheduler asks "Do you have insurance?" As one the first questions. It sounds terrible, sounds like we're interested only in their money, turns off the patients, and results in a lower scheduling rate. So don't do that.



# 15 TELEPHONE FUNDAMENTALS

1. Always talk to new patients with cheerfulness and friendliness.
2. Communicate on the phone with the attitude you are glad the person is reaching out to your practice. This is especially important when you are totally stressed out with 10 things to do at once.
3. Always identify yourself along with the doctor's name. The ideal greeting is **"Hello, Dr. Dentist's office. My name is Mary. How may I help you?"** ALWAYS PAUSE AFTER EACH PERIOD. Do not smash together this greeting as one fast statement:

**"Hello Dr. Dentist's office my name is Mary how may I help you?"**

When asking, **"How may I help you?"** ask the question as if you truly want to know, not as just a polite and mechanical question.

4. Always be willing to dig in and communicate with people. Be willing to ask questions, get answers, find out what is happening, etc. Communicate your own reality; ask whatever it is you want to know. Be direct and forthright.
5. Be enthusiastic about the doctor and the practice. Promote how great the doctor is, how caring everyone in the practice is, how competently the patients are treated. Do not be uncomfortable about selling the patient to come to **THIS** practice because it is the best in the area.

The words are not as important as the intention and desire to get the patient in the office. If you really want the patient to come in, you will find the right words to say to that specific patient. But when the patient is tough to handle, ask questions designed to get more information about the person's problem and show that you really care about their health. Finally, take every opportunity to promote the doctor's abilities and communication skills to patients.

6. Get in good communication and rapport with the person.
7. Consider the patient to be very important, and convey that attitude throughout the conversation.
8. Be courteous and use good manners. Use "Mr." "Mrs." or "Ms." when addressing patients on the phone. Don't use first names unless the patient asks you to. **"Yes"** instead of **"Yeah"**.
9. If you don't hear or understand what a new patient says, ask them to repeat it, such as **"Could you say that again?"** or **"Could you repeat that?"** Do NOT say **"Huh?"** or **"What?"** like a moronic teenager.
10. Always have the intention in your mind that you really want the patient to come into your practice because that patient will be helped here. Then do whatever it takes to get that person to come into your practice.

11. Care enough to really handle questions or concerns so that the new patient feels good about scheduling. Have the attitude that this new patient needs to come into **THIS** office because your doctor is the best at what he does and it is best for the new patient to come here. It is this **INTENTION** on your part that makes the difference between a cold new patient coming to you or going elsewhere.
12. Field questions with friendliness and openness. Get the patient talking about their condition. Some questions to ask during the call include but are not limited to:

***Is this an emergency?***

***Are you in pain? Where does it hurt?***

***How long have you had the pain or condition?***

***Has it been getting worse?***

***What are you looking for in a dental practice?***

***What would you like to have done on the first visit?***

***When did you last see a dentist?***

You do not have to ask all these questions of all new patients. Nor are you limited to only these questions. Communicate in any way that gets the patient to want to come into **THIS** practice.

13. Be **HELPFUL** during the conversation. There is a definite lack of genuine helpfulness and cheerfulness among our schedulers. How would you respond to your best friend who was calling you with a question or problem or desire to come in?
14. Always return calls **promptly**. When pulling messages off the voice mail, return those calls ASAP.
15. Write the patients' names down for yourself as soon as the patient gives it. This way you don't have to remember it, or have to ask for it after the patient has already given it.



# COMMON QUESTIONS

Here are the most common questions people ask, and the best way to answer each question.

## **New Patient in Pain / Dental Emergency**

Patient: I have a toothache/I'm in pain/ My tooth is killing me. Can you see me today?

***OK, let's get you in as soon as possible so Dr. Dentist can take care of that. Have you been here before?***

(If this is a new patient calling :)

***I'm sorry you're in pain, but I'm glad you called us. Dr. Dentist is an excellent dentist, and he is very gentle. You will love him, all our patients do.***

***Why don't you come in (time)?***

(Give patient times to come in; right away is ideal, if possible. Go through money scripts as appropriate)

(After patient is scheduled:)

**Closing Statement** (Shortened version for an Emergency NP call)

***(Name), I want to welcome you to our practice. Once you meet Dr. Dentist you'll be happy with him, and he'll take good care of you. We look forward to meeting you at (time).***

***Are you seeing and/or taking new patients?***

***Yes we are! What are you looking to have done? or What would you like to have done?***

## **Patient wants cleaning and/or routine exam**

***Well, that's great because Dr. Dentist is an excellent doctor. She is a highly skilled dentist, and our patients love her. And our hygienists are awesome. They're very gentle, friendly and thorough. Thousands of people have seen our hygienists for cleanings over the years, and they keep coming back to our practice.***

(Ask any questions needed to get all information about the person and what he or she really wants. Tell stories as best fits the conversation.)

***How about I get you scheduled?***

***What day of the week is best for you? OK, is morning or afternoon better for you?***

## Closing Statement

***"Mrs. Jones, I want to welcome you to our practice. Once you meet Dr. Dentist you will like her, and I believe you will like our practice and come here for all your dental care. We look forward to seeing you on (day & time). Oh, just one thing. If for any reason you need to reschedule, would you promise to call us so that we can give that time to someone else who's waiting? (Wait for answer) "Great, thank you. This time has been reserved just for you. We look forward to meeting you."***

## Patient asks about implants

***Yes, we place and restore implants here. Dr. Dentist is excellent with implants, and he's delivered (hundreds or thousands) to people over the years. He does a great job with implants, and people are very happy with their crowns/bridges/dentures. You'll be very happy with the final result, you will look great and be able to eat any-thing.***

OR

***Yes, and Dr. Dentist also has a specialist he works with for implants, and the final crown/bridge/denture is done here. Dr. Dentist and Dr. Jones work together to make sure you get the best results. You'll be very happy with the final result, you will look great and be able to eat anything.***

(Ask any questions needed to get all information about the person and what he or she really wants. Tell stories as best fits the conversation.)

***How about I get you scheduled?***

***What day of the week is best for you? OK, is morning or afternoon better for you?***

***Closing Statement - "Mrs. Jones, I want to welcome you to our practice. Once you meet Dr. Dentist you will like her, and I believe you will like our practice and come here for all your dental care. We look forward to seeing you on (day & time). Oh, just one thing. If for any reason you need to reschedule, would you promise to call us so that we can give that time to someone else who's waiting? (Wait for answer) "Great, thank you. This time has been reserved just for you. We look forward to meeting you."***

## Do you do Cosmetic Dentistry/ Smile Makeovers?

***Yes we do! Dr. Dentist is very skilled in cosmetic dentistry; she produces gorgeous smiles.***

***What are you looking to have done?***

(after patient answers:)

***Well, that's great because Dr. Dentist is especially good at (that procedure). She is highly skilled in all general dental procedures, but She loves doing (procedure). She has done this on many people over the years, and they come out looking fantastic. You will love work.***

(Ask any questions needed to get all information about the person and what he or she really wants. Tell stories as best fits the conversation.)

***How about I get you scheduled? or Let's get you scheduled.***

***Good, I can get you in tomorrow or the next day; which is best for you? OR What day of the week is best for you? OK, is morning or afternoon better for you?***

If patient asks if insurance covers cosmetic procedures:

***Insurance doesn't cover any cosmetic procedure. This is true in any dental office, not just ours. But we offer all sorts of finance options. But the most important thing is that Dr. Dentist is an expert in cosmetic dentistry. You want the best and most beautiful smile possible, and Dr. Dentist will give that to you. Let's get you scheduled.***

### **Closing Statement**

***"Mrs. Jones, I want to welcome you to our practice. Once you meet Dr. Dentist you will like her, and I believe you will like our practice and come here for all your dental care. We look forward to seeing you on (day & time). Oh, just one thing. If for any reason you need to reschedule, would you promise to call us so that we can give that time to someone else who's waiting? (Wait for answer) "Great, thank you. This time has been reserved just for you. We look forward to meeting you."***

### **Do You Accept Insurance? Or Do You Accept \_\_\_\_\_ Insurance?**

(This is NOT the same question as "Do you participate with \_\_\_?")

or "Are you in network with \_\_\_?" That's a different question and is addressed next)

***Yes, we do. What are you looking to have done? or What would you like to have done?***

(After patient answers:)

***Well, that's great because Dr. Dentist is an excellent doctor; she gets great results with our patients. She is highly skilled, and our patients love her.***

(Ask any questions needed to get all information about the person and what he or she really wants. Tell stories as best fits the conversation.)

***How about I get you scheduled? Good, I can get you in tomorrow or the next day; which is best for you? OR What day of the week is best for you? OK, is morning or afternoon better for you?***

(If Patient wants to get more into insurance:)

***We accept your insurance, and we'll do a benefits check on your first visit, so you'll know exactly what your insurance covers before the doctor does any dental work. In our office, you only need to pay your co-payment.***

### **Closing Statement**

**Do you Participate With \_\_\_\_\_, or Are You in Network With \_\_\_\_\_?**

This can be a difficult question to handle, IF your practice does not participate with the insurance in question. If your practice does not participate, don't simply answer "NO" and that's the end of the conversation. Work to enlighten the patient and promote the practice. You can get at least 50% of all such new patients to come to your practice even if you don't participate with their insurance.

Here are some ways to address this; use any of these wordings you feel comfortable with. But remember, the end result is that you do your best to get the patient wanting to come to our practice. These answers below all came from some of the best schedulers I have ever worked with. These answers have been successful in getting in many new patients who wanted an in-network dentist, but still came to our office even though we didn't participate with that insurance.

***We accept Delta, and we handle it the same way as any participating provider would. We see a lot of patients with Delta insurance. What would you like to have done?***

After patient answers:

***OK, that's good, because Dr. Dentist is an amazing doctor, he does fantastic dental work. Our patients really like Dr. Dentist.***

Get patient to talk about his/her dental condition if the patient asks about things like crowns, extractions and filling, because these indicate the patient has or thinks he has some sort of problem. Engage the patient in a real conversation, asking any question you like. After getting a little more information from the patient, you can say something like this:

***You asked if we participate with Delta. We accept Delta and handle your claims the same as any participating dentist does. We don't officially participate, for a couple of important reasons. But from your point of view, there isn't a lot of difference between an office that accepts Delta like we do, and one that participates. We do all the filing, we collect directly from Delta, and you pay your co-payment as usual. But there are big advantages to our patients if we don't participate. How about we get you scheduled?***

If patient schedules, go through the usual scheduling process.

If patient hesitates and questions the participation aspect, you can say something like:

Mrs. Jones, we have a lot of people here who have Delta, just like you. They don't have any complaints because they get pretty much the same benefits as they would with an office that participates. But let me tell you why we don't participate. If we did, Delta would try to diagnose our patients without seeing them, and question our treatment recommendations.

They would try to lower our standards to save money. By not participating, we can give all our patients an honest and accurate diagnosis, and give them state-of-the-art dentistry. So with us, you have the best of both worlds. You have us to accept your insurance and handle it the same way as any participating office would, but we can still deliver the highest quality dentistry, the kind of dentistry we would have done in our own mouths. So how about we get you scheduled? Tell stories as best fits the conversation.

If patient still hesitates:

**Ms Jones, I know how amazing Dr. Dentist is. I truly believe that when you meet him, you'll want to keep him as your dentist, he'll really take great care of you. You'll still have us handle your insurance just like you're used to, but you'll be able to get a much higher standard of care because we don't let (name of insurance) or any other insurance dictate our treatment or diagnosis. I'll tell you quite frankly, I would never let my family go to any other dentist after having worked closely with Dr. Dentist. I want you to have the best, and Dr. Dentist is the best.**

You can also say something like this, IF this is true for that particular insurance plan:

**The great thing about your insurance is they pay very well, pretty much the same percentages if a dentist participates or not. We have many patients here who have your insurance plan. Your insurance coverage is good enough that you can go to almost any dentist, and we accept your insurance here. But the advantage coming to us is that we use only high-quality materials and labs, and we aren't restricted by your insurance as we would be if we participated.** (You can go into this in more detail as needed, this is an important point.) **We would love to schedule you for an appointment!**

Schedule patient.

(Say this only **AFTER** the person is scheduled):

**Since every insurance policy is different, let me get your insurance information now so we have all that done by the time you come here.**

(Get the insurance information and verify.)

### **Closing Statement**

**Mrs. Jones, I want to welcome you to our practice. Once you meet Dr. Dentist you will like her, and I believe you will like our practice and come here for all your dental care. We look forward to seeing you on (day & time). Oh, just one thing. If for any reason you need to reschedule, would you promise to call us so that we can give that time to someone else who's waiting?**

(Wait for patient to answer. Ask the same question again if you don't get a solid promise.)

**"Great, thank you. This time has been reserved just for you. We look forward to meeting you.**

**"How much do you charge for \_\_\_\_\_?"**

Follow these steps **EXACTLY**:

1. **"Sure, I'll look up that fee for you. What's your name? OK, nice to meet you, Mary. While I'm getting that fee, let me ask: how did you find out about us?"**
2. Get the answer, and acknowledge appropriately. This step might lead to other discussions, so be prepared, think fast on your feet, and take up what the patient says

in any way that works to get the patient scheduled. If the patient doesn't schedule on this step, go to step 2.

- For crown, bridge or denture fee: ***"You asked about a crown/bridge/denture. Would this be a replacement for one you have now?"*** You want the patient to talk about what they're looking for, what they have now, or was this procedure recommended by another dentist, etc. Get the full picture from the patient. Ask questions. Then say, ***"Dr. Dentist has done thousands of crowns, and they're beautiful!"***

**Extraction fee:** ***"You asked about an extraction. Tell me about your tooth, what's going on with it?"*** Wait for answer. ***"OK. Well, Dr. Dentist is a terrific dentist and he is very gentle. He'll get you out of pain quickly and take good care of you. How about if you come in at (time) to meet him and you can have this taken care of?"***

**Filling fee:** ***"You asked about a filling. Do you have a filling that needs to be replaced? Or would this be a first-time filling for that tooth?"*** Get patient talking about the tooth and what's going on.

**Implant fee:** ***"You asked about an implant. Are you looking to replace a single tooth with an implant, or several teeth, or an entire denture?"*** Get the full picture and story of what's happening and what the patient needs and wants.

- From the information gathered in Steps 1 and 2, work to schedule the patient, using any and all promotional statements as given in this manual. ***"How about I set you up to meet Dr. Dentist and you can discuss with her what you want and what you're looking to have done? Then you can make the decision to have her take care of you or not."***
- If the person persists in asking for the fee after you have gone through steps: ***"Fees for this range anywhere from \$ (give the lowest fee) to \$ (give a high-middle fee). Let me tell you about us. Dr. Dentist is a terrific doctor. He's a superb clinician, a true master. He's one of the most competent and skilled dentists you will ever meet. He's also a great guy, very friendly, and he communicates so well that our patients just love him. Once you meet Dr. Dentist, you won't want any other dentist to treat you. And our staff are also the best. So in our office, you'll get the very best and highest quality (procedure), and our fees are pretty much the same as most other dentists charge. How about I get you scheduled?"***
- If patient persists about the fee: ***"As I mentioned, our fees are pretty much the same as any other dentist in this area. But dentists aren't alike in their skill, knowledge and expertise. You would be surprised how different dentists are. This is your mouth and health after all, don't you want the very best dental care? And Dr. Dentist is fantastic, you'll love her when you meet her. How about I get you scheduled for a no-charge consultation so you can meet Dr. Dentist, talk to her about what you want and need? She'll go over everything with you, and then you can decide what to do from there. Does that sound good?"***

Give a fee range if you must, but only as part of the conversation above. Make the fee secondary and unimportant in the person's mind. No other information or explanations

such as “But that depends on insurance and blah-blah-blah and the doctor will have to examine you and depending on what he finds and blah-blah-blah.” Too many schedulers tend to talk new patients out of scheduling with the practice, because of all the disclaimers the schedulers say.

### **If the patient balks at scheduling:**

**I don't know how many other dental offices you've called about this, but all dentists around here charge similar fees. But there is a HUGE difference in the expertise from one dentist to another, the quality of dentistry, the expertise and friendliness of the staff, etc. Dr. Dentist is fantastic; he is excellent in (that procedure), he is very gentle, our patients don't feel any pain. He is very friendly and genuinely likes to help people. You won't find a better doctor. And our staff is great, too. They're friendly, helpful and will do anything for our patients.**

**I can personally assure you that you will be very happy with our practice and Dr. Dentist once you meet him.**

### **How about I get you scheduled?**

If patient is hesitant or questions the fee, there are different ways to address this:

- 🕒 **We don't want money to keep you from coming here and getting great dental care. I know that once you meet the doctor and staff, you'll like our practice and want to come back. So, let me make it easy for you to come in and see for yourself how good we are. We have a First Visit discount we mail out to the area. I can offer that to you. You can get a complete exam and any X-Rays for \$45. This saves you \$150-250. Then you can get the treatment you want and save money at the same time.**

### **How about I get you scheduled?**

- 🕒 **Our fees are in line with most dentists, but you can definitely find a cheaper dentist than us. But one reason for the difference in fees is that different dentists use different dental materials and labs for their procedures. There are cheaper materials and labs out there, but Dr. Dentist only uses high-end materials and labs. We made the decision to use higher-end materials and labs because the patient will be far happier with the results. So, for a few dollars more, you'll get great dental care and great personal service, and results that you'll be happy with and that will last for many, many years.**

**You'll know how good we are only if you experience our office yourself, so let me offer this: Why don't you come in for a no-charge visit, talk to Dr. Dentist, and see what you think. He won't do anything without your approval. How about you come in and see how good we are?**

### **If patient continues to ask about money:**

- 🕒 **We have a wide range of flexible financial options. We never want money to get in the way of our patients receiving the care they need. We'll work with you as much as possible on the financial side of things.**

How about I get you scheduled?

## Closing Statement

### How Much Do You Charge for Dentures?

#### Do you wear dentures now?

This question **MUST MUST MUST** be the first words out of your mouth when someone calls and asks this question. Your answer then depends on the person's answer.

#### IF YES, PATIENT WEARS DENTURES NOW:

OK. Are you looking for economy, cheaper dentures, or a higher-end denture?

- ⌚ (If patient wants cheap dentures:) ***OK. We provide only high-end dentures. They're not the cheap, economy kind. We use only high-end materials, and Dr. Dentist spends a lot of time and attention creating your dentures, so we don't compete with the economy dentures offices. Our dentures are between \$( ), which is a lot higher than you might be used to paying. But the end result is well worth the cost, because our dentures look more natural and fit more comfortably than the economy dentures. You'll look great and be able to eat anything.***

***Let me offer this to you. You can sit down with Dr. Dentist and talk to him about what you want, and he can go over all the options with you. It won't cost you anything, and he'll show you how good your dentures can be. Even if you decide not to have Dr. Dentist make your dentures, at least you will learn a lot from him. So how about we schedule you for that free consultation?***

- ⌚ (If patient wants premium dentures:) ***That's great to hear, because Dr. Dentist delivers only high-end, premium dentures. She produces fantastic dentures. She is a real expert in dentures, and takes great care in creating custom-made and custom-fitting dentures for each individual. She is painstaking when creating dentures, and uses only high-end materials and labs to make sure you get dentures that look natural, are beautiful, fit very well, are comfortable and that allow you to smile and eat with confidence.***

***How about we schedule you for a free consultation with Dr. Dentist? It won't cost you anything, and he'll show you how good your dentures can be. You and she can sit down together and talk about everything you want to know.***

#### IF NO PATIENT DOES NOT WEAR DENTURES NOW:

***OK. First-time denture wearers usually don't know what to expect from their dentures. Most people think all dentures are alike. But there is an enormous difference in fit, comfort and looks from one practice's dentures to another. A lot of people who buy cheap, economy***

***dentures are very unhappy with the finished product. Those dentures hurt, and don't look natural. So, what are you looking for in your dentures?***

(Listen to what the patient says:)

***OK. We provide high-end dentures. They're not the cheap, economy kind. We use only high-end materials, and Dr. Dentist spends a lot of time and attention creating your dentures, so we don't compete with the economy dentures offices. He is a real expert in dentures, and takes great care in creating custom-made and custom-fitting dentures for each individual. He is painstaking when creating dentures, and uses only high-end materials and labs to make sure you get dentures that look natural, are beautiful, fit very well, are comfortable and that allow you to smile and eat with confidence. Our dentures are between \$XXX and XXX, which is a lot higher than you might expect to pay. But the end result is well worth the cost, because our dentures look more natural and fit more comfortably than the economy dentures.***

***Let me offer this to you. You can sit down with Dr. Dentist and talk to him about what you want, and he can go over all the options with you. It won't cost you any-thing, and he'll show you how good your dentures can be. Even if you decide not to have Dr. Dentist make your dentures, at least you will learn a lot from him. So how about we schedule you for that free consultation?***

**If patient continues to ask about money:**

***We have a wide range of flexible financial options. So if you like, you could split up your payments over a few months. We never want money to get in the way of our patients receiving the care they need. We work with you as much as possible on the financial side of things.***

***How about I get you scheduled?***

## **Closing Statement**

If the patient is hesitant about scheduling, or wants to shop around

***What is most important to you in a dental practice, what are you looking for?***

1. If the answer is purely cost, then say this:

***OK. Our fees are in line with most dentists, but you can definitely find a cheaper dentist than us. But one reason is that different dentists use different dental materials and labs for their procedures. There are cheaper materials and labs out there, but Dr. Dentist only uses high-end materials and labs. But we made the decision to use high-end materials and labs because the patient will be far happier with the results. So, for a few dollars more, you'll get great dental care and great personal service, and results that you'll be happy with and that will last for many, many years. You'll only know this is true if you experience our office yourself, so let me offer this: Why don't you come in for a no-charge visit, talk to Dr. Dentist, and see what you think. She won't do anything without your approval. How about you come in and see how good we are?***

2. If the answer is something other than cost, such as “good clinician,” “excellent dentist,” “good bedside manner”, etc. then say:

***Well, then, having seen thousands of people Dr. Dentist has helped over the years, I can tell you from personal experience that she is just what you’re looking for. She is (use words patient said he/she was looking for in a dentist), but she is also (warm, friendly, very gentle, a great clinician, a highly-skilled dentist, etc.) Our staff is also extremely friendly and helpful. You’ll never find a better group in any dental medical office. You’ll only know this is true if you experience our office yourself, so let me offer this: Why don’t you come in for a no-charge visit, talk to Dr. Dentist, and see what you think. She won’t do anything without your approval. How about you come in and see how good we are?***

**If patient continues to ask about money:**

***We have a wide range of flexible financial options. So if you like, you could split up your payments over a few months. We never want money to get in the way of our patients receiving the care they need. We work with you as much as possible on the financial side of things.***

- 🕒 Dr. Dentist is fantastic; he is an excellent dentist, just a great doctor. He is very gentle, he is very friendly and genuinely likes to help people. Our patients love Dr. Dentist.
- 🕒 Our hygienists and staff are great. They’re friendly, helpful and will do anything for our patients.
- 🕒 There are dentists around who charge less than we do and some who charge more. But I can personally assure you that you will be very happy with our practice and Dr. Dentist. I’ve seen thousands of happy people after their dental treatments here, because the doctor and staff treat people like family.
- 🕒 Dr. Dentist is especially good at (procedure). She is highly skilled in all general dental procedures, but she loves doing (procedure). I’ve seen so many people who have had great results here with their (procedure).
- 🕒 We don’t want money to keep you from coming here and getting great dental care. I know that once you meet the doctor and staff, you’ll love our practice and want to come back. So, let me make it easy for you to come in and see for yourself how good we are. We have a First Visit discount we mail out to the area. I can offer that to you. You can get a complete exam and any X-Rays for \$45. This saves you \$150-250. Then you can get the treatment you want and save money at the same time.
- 🕒 Our fees are in line with most dentists, but you can definitely find a cheaper dentist than us. But one reason for the difference in fees is that different dentists use different dental materials and labs for their procedures. There are cheaper materials and labs out there, but Dr. Dentist only uses high-end materials and labs. So, our costs are a

little higher. But we made the decision to charge a little more because we think the patient will be far happier with the results. So, for a few dollars more, you'll get great dental care and great personal service, and results that you'll be happy with and that will last for many, many years.

- ⌚ You know, (name), I've worked here quite a while, and I've seen how well our patients are treated, how happy they are with the practice, and how great our doctor and staff are. But you'll know this is true only if you experience our office yourself, so let me offer this: Why don't you come in for a no-charge visit, talk to Dr. Dentist, and see what you think. He won't do anything without your approval. How about you come in and see how good we are?
- ⌚ (Name), I've seen thousands of people Dr. Dentist has helped over the years, so I can tell you from personal experience that he/she is just what you're looking for. She is (use words patient said he/she was looking for in a dentist), but he/she is also (warm, friendly, very gentle, a great clinician, a highly- skilled dentist, etc.)
- ⌚ Dr. Dentist is very skilled in cosmetic dentistry; he produces gorgeous smiles. What are you looking to have done?
- ⌚ In our practice, we take great care of people. We treat you like family here.
- ⌚ I'll tell you quite frankly, I would never let my family go to any other dentist after having worked closely with Dr. Dentist.
- ⌚ We are very proud of the work Dr. Dentist does here and the (crowns, onlays, root canals, etc.) he places are very strong, solid and permanent. We've performed this procedure on many patients and all of them have been delighted with the results. Are you ready to schedule?
- ⌚ Patients Who Question the Amount of Money: We are a very preventive practice. We do not wait for accidents to happen, we avoid them. Our commitment is to provide excellent dentistry to every patient. The fee of \$\_\_\_\_ I just quoted you seems like a lot of money. But this is an investment to help you keep your teeth for a lifetime. We feel it is worth it,



don't you? Mrs. Dentist, our goal for every patient is to help them keep their teeth healthy and strong for a lifetime.

- 🕒 Do **NOT** get into money too much, or too early in the conversation. This comes across as having too much attention and concern about money. Money is NOT the most important consideration - the patient himself or herself is. Communicate with the patient about the patient. The money is addressed as an after-thought.

## Other Important Points

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1. Why are people calling your office? Because they need a dentist! They are going to go somewhere, and we want that to be our office.
2. If the person hasn't already given his or her name, ask for it. Also get the email address and cell number.
3. Simply ask the person, "What is it you would like to have done?" Get the person to explain whatever the problem is or why he or she wants to schedule an appointment with the dentist. You have to really listen to what this person is saying, because what this person is saying is what you will need to address in order to get the patient to schedule an appointment.
4. Once you know what the patient is looking for, you then promote the doctor and the staff as being a great dental office to handle this very thing, the thing that the patient wants done. You have to know in your own mind that your doctor and the staff will do the best job possible for that person. You have to be proud of your doctor and the practice. You promote the practice. You sell the practice to the patient.
5. Whatever the patient is looking for at the dental office, make it easy for the patient to get it. This means saying "Yes, Dr. Dentist does that (as long as that is true), and he/she is an excellent dentist."
6. Your practice is a great practice. Your doctors are superb clinicians and excellent doctors. The staff are friendly, helpful, hard-working, and will do whatever it takes to help our patients. No practice will take better care of people than we do. New people calling on the phone do not know any of this. They will only know this if they can experience it for themselves. And they can only experience it for themselves if you're able to get them in the door. And the best way to get them in the door is to follow all the principles and wordings given above.
7. Use the New Patient Call Sheets. This is important information, and should be placed in their charts so the assistants and doctor have a little information about the patient.
8. Keep it all simple.

Now, all of the above is very simple, and should be common sense. But, all too often our schedulers miss this simplicity. The most common errors we hear from our schedulers are:

- 🕒 A less-than-genuinely-happy-to-hear-from-you attitude. Sometimes, it even comes across that the new patient is annoying or bothering the scheduler. Sometimes

schedulers sound rushed, or even put out when a patient calls, as if that new patient is interrupting the scheduler.

- 🕒 Too much information given on the phone, too much detail, to the point that schedulers put the new patients through hoops just to schedule. In particular, there is WAY too much talk and chatter and detailed explanations about money and payments and insurance. All of this can be categorized as “too tough a screening process.”
- 🕒 Lack of Promotion and Enlightenment
- 🕒 Did not ask the patient to schedule



# SCRIPTS

Most people do not like the idea of scripts. Most people feel that scripts are demeaning and make themselves sound like telemarketers reading from their index cards. Most of our staff hate scripts.

This is not what I'm talking about here. You should be able to handle any and every question properly, and with confidence and certainty. Talking with a new patient on the phone is **NOT** the time to fumble around trying to think of a clever answer or good way to address the person's concerns or questions. No, you must know your business, and your business is communicating so superbly that each new person is guided and literally drawn to scheduling with you. You must be a **Professional New Patient Scheduler**.

Does an actor "wing it" when shooting a movie or TV show? Of course not. The actor knows her lines cold. But at the same time, the actor makes the lines her own. The actor is being that character saying those lines. The actor believes in her lines and communicates them so well that the audience forgets they are watching an actor and thinks they are actually watching the character. So the best actors (1) **know** their lines (scripts) and (2) make the lines their own.

In the same way, you must know the scripts in this manual well, but you also believe them and make them your own. I don't expect you to memorize each script word-for-word perfectly. But the closer you stick to these wordings, the more successful you will be. Why? Because 15-20 of our best staff - plus a dozen or more expert schedulers from other practices - have contributed to these scripts, over a 2-year period. I didn't sit in a dark closet one day and write all these scripts myself. I took the successful actions and wordings from all our schedulers and organized all of their successes into these scripts. These scripts truly are yours, as schedulers like yourself - and possibly even you reading this now - provided these most successful wordings.

So, stick to these wordings as much as is appropriate. Make them your own, of course. And send me any successful wordings you use, so they can be added to our scripts. Most of the scripts in this manual came from our schedulers.

## The Key Statements In Any New Patient Call

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In each and every non-emergency new patient call, no matter what else you say or what questions you answer, you are to use these statements with people as part of each call:

### ***The Greeting***

### ***The Key Questions***

***"Yes, we do!"***

## Practice Promotion Statements

### The Closing Statement

These statements are discussed throughout this manual and training. No matter what else is discussed, always use these statements on every call.

## The Greeting

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***Dr. (name's) office, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, how may I help you?***

or

***Thank you for calling Dr. (name's) office, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, how may I help you?***

This is the exact and only greeting. This greeting is to be said slowly enough that people can understand you, and so you don't come across as rushed. Enunciate! (Enunciate means to speak, express and pronounce words clearly so they are easily understood.)

### The Scheduler's First Motto

The answer is **YES!** Yes, we do!

We're a **YES!** practice.

### The Scheduler's Second Motto

Come on in! We want You **HERE!** Let's get you scheduled.

Your goal is to simply get the patient scheduled. It's not important to get every detail from the patient, or give the patient every detail about the practice. Just get the patient in the office; everything can be sorted out once the patient arrives.

Here are examples of applying the "Yes We Do!" Principle:

***"Dr. Dentist's office, my name is Stephanie, how may I help you?" Do you take Aetna Insurance?***

***"Yes we do! What are you looking to have done?"***

***"Dr. Dentist's office, my name is Stephanie, how may I help you?" Do you do smile makeovers?***

***Yes we do! Dr. Dentist is very skilled in cosmetic dentistry; she produces gorgeous smiles. What would you like to have done?***

***“Dr. Dentist’s office, my name is Stephanie, how may I help you?” Are you seeing new patients?  
Yes we are! What are you looking to have done?***

## Closing Statement

These words will help to reduce no-shows and change-of-mind. You tell each patient this Closing Statement after they have scheduled:

***(Name), I want to welcome you to our practice. Once you meet Dr. Dentist you will like her, and want to continue with our practice. We look forward to seeing you on (day & time). Oh, just one more thing. If you need to reschedule for some reason, would you promise to call us so that we can give that time to someone else who’s waiting?***

(Wait for patient to answer. Ask the same question again if you don’t get a solid promise.)

***“Great, thank you. This time has been reserved just for you. We look forward to meeting you.”***

## Practice Promotion Statements

A Practice Promotion Statement is any statement that promotes the practice, that sells the new patient on coming to your practice, that applies the definition of salesmanship as given in the Qualities of the Professional Scheduler section above.

Use any or all of these statements during a call with a new person, whatever fits that person and their situation. You might use one of these statements in a call, or you might use several of them in one call.

- 🕒 Dr. Dentist is fantastic; she is an excellent dentist, just a great doctor. She is very gentle, she is very friendly and genuinely likes to help people. Our patients love Dr. Dentist. You couldn’t find a better doctor than Dr. Dentist.
- 🕒 Our hygienists and staff are great, and very gentle. They’re friendly, helpful and will do anything for our patients.
- 🕒 There are dentists around who charge less than we do and some who charge more. But I can personally assure you that you will be very happy with our practice and Dr. Dentist. I’ve seen thousands of happy people after their dental treatments here, because the doctor and staff treat people like family.
- 🕒 Dr. Dentist is especially good at (procedure). He is highly skilled in all general dental procedures, but he loves doing (procedure). I’ve seen so many people who have had great results here with their (procedure).
- 🕒 I know that once you meet the doctor and staff, you’ll love our practice and want to

come back.

- ⌚ You know, (name), I've worked here quite a while, and I've seen how well our patients are treated, how happy they are with the practice and Dr. Dentist, and how great our staff is.
- ⌚ (Name), I've seen thousands of people Dr. Dentist has helped over the years, so I can tell you from personal experience that she is just what you're looking for.
- ⌚ In our practice, we take great care of people. We treat you like family here.
- ⌚ I'll tell you quite frankly, I would never let my family go to any other dentist after having worked closely with my Dr. Dentist.
- ⌚ We are very proud of the work Dr. Dentist does here and the (crowns, onlays, root canals, etc.) he places are very strong, solid and permanent. We've performed this procedure on many patients and all of them have been delighted with the results. How about we get you scheduled?

## The Key Questions

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There are three questions that are the most important questions you can ask any new patient.

1. ***What are you looking to have done?*** or ***What would you like to have done?*** This question takes control of the conversation, and opens the door to a successful call.
2. ***How about if I get you scheduled?*** or ***Let me get you scheduled for this.*** Always ask the patient to schedule if he or she hasn't already asked.

A third valuable question that you will use in many calls is

3. ***What is most important to you in a dental practice, what are you looking for?*** This question opens the door to the patient letting you know what he or she really wants, what is most important to him or her.

These are the "Big 3" questions. But there are many others you can ask to get the information you need. Asking questions and having a conversation shows exactly how much you care for your patients and more importantly how hard you are working, and will work, to find the perfect solution for them.

Have you seen another dentist for this? (Get person to give you the details)

What's changed recently that's made you decide to see a dentist?

How will it feel to finally be able to smile a huge grin with total confidence that your teeth look fantastic?

How much difference would great teeth make to you personally?

How much difference would this make to you professionally?

What made you call today?

What would you change about your teeth now?

What's most important to you about your teeth and dental health?

Why is that important to you?

So tell me what challenges are you having in your life with missing teeth/ tooth problems? Why do you want this done now?

What's important to you – simply eating properly again OR the appearance of your new beautiful smile? When are you thinking of doing it?

What will it feel like when you can eat properly again? Are you struggling to eat certain things?

Do you chew only on one side?

Really dig deep! Get personal with them – and go into storytelling to explain the transformations other patients have had **AND** the transformation they will have when they choose you.



# Call Sheets

Use our Call Sheets for all new patients and all emergency patients (new and existing). Using this Call Sheet helps guide you along the conversation, and makes sure you follow the scripts.

EMERGENCY CALL	
Name : _____	Cell Phone : _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Existing Patient	<input type="checkbox"/> New Patient
Describe the problem :	
How severe is the pain?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extreme <input type="checkbox"/> Mild
Is there any swelling?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How long has it been hurting? _____	
Are you taking any medication?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, what medication: _____	
Can I get your email address? _____	
REMARKS: (Include important patient comments, nature of problem, fears or concerns)	

## Ask the Person to Schedule

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It's amazing how few schedulers actually ask the patient to schedule with the practice. In 95% of the calls I have listened to (out of around 1,000 calls over the years), the scheduler NEVER asked the patient to schedule. 95% of the time, the scheduler waited for the patient to ask to schedule.

**ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS** ask the new patient to schedule with you (unless the person has already asked to schedule).

After the New Patient is scheduled, ask this question:

- 🕒 Is there any other family member I can schedule at this time?

A good percentage of the time, the new patient will schedule a family member as well.

**Need New Patients or Help Closing Them?  
Book a Strategy Session Click on Link Below**

**<https://www.thatSmilingdentist.com/strategy-session>**