

## Podcast 1/8/18

1. **Tips to increase case acceptance - What separates high-earning doctors** from the low-earning ones? There are many things, but one of the most important is case acceptance. You may be the best clinician with the most precise hand skills, but if you cannot articulate why patients should allow you to treat their dental needs, then your success in dentistry will be limited. There are several ways to promote higher case acceptance, but they require following consistent principles to ensure the patient is educated effectively and given the option to start treatment in a timely manner
  - A. **Establish rapport**—Most dentists are so busy going from operator to operator that they do not take a minute to consider the patient’s perspective. Do not just walk in, introduce yourself, and lean the patient back to get to work. The patient is already nervous and may take time to warm up. You want to leave a lasting impression, and a big part of that is having the ability to converse about topics that are far from dental related.
  - B. **Ask key introductory questions- Three top questions to start off with.**
    1. What brings you in today?
    2. When was the last time you saw a dentist?
    3. Were there any problems during your last dental visit?This last question is important not only for the answer; it also helps with something you should always learn when meeting a new patient.
  - C. **Establish that time is not an obstacle**—When considering future treatment, many patients will ask, “How long will it take?” If a patient asks me how long it will take, rather than giving them a time frame of an hour to an hour and a half. It is best to ask the patient “What time do you need to be out of our office today?” This will give you a much clearer idea if same-day treatment is an option.
  - D. **Focus on same-day treatment**-The world is changing, and people prefer things done immediately, yet still effectively. People are constantly being given options to have things done in a more efficient manner, and you must adapt your practice to follow this same trend. Your office and team should allow time and strive to offer same-day treatment for the majority of cases.
  - E. **Stress urgency**—It is easier to get a patient to stay for treatment when they are in pain because the patient is already feeling the consequence of not having treatment. By that same principle, when a patient comes in without pain, you must remember to emphasize the same type of urgency.
  - F. **Use pictures, not words** - You can also use intraoral pictures to show previous cases that are similar, especially those that demonstrate the consequences of leaving the problem untreated. Another important tip is to make a point to leave the picture of the problem area on the screen as you transition from case presentation to financial presentation. These few minutes alone allow the patient to look at the screen in silence to think about the issue and come to the realization that the problem needs to be addressed.
  - G. **Remove the fear**—Always use reassuring terms throughout your case presentation, such as simple, basic, quick, and easy. When you are doing something that is more complex, make sure to emphasize how often you perform this procedure so the patient is at ease that it is routine. This exhibits confidence and makes the patient much less apprehensive.
  - H. **Use everyday language**—Another way to ease patients’ fears is to give them step-by-step, easy-to-understand explanations of what is needed. Do not make it confusing. Speak to patients at their level instead of in technical dental terms.
  - I. **Always offer financing**—A third-party financier such as CareCredit is a great tool for overcoming a patient’s financial concerns. Patient financing should be easy to use and allow instant approval.
  - J. **Avoid money talk**—I believe in the rule that the front office should handle the finances, whereas the clinical team should handle the dentistry. You never want a patient to think of payment for a crown as if it were an unavoidable car payment. Furthermore, if there is a billing question or dispute, you as the dentist should always keep yourself out of the equation.

**If you find yourself talking financing with a patient, be prepared for your front office not being happy about this. Dentist should NEVER talk fees, or make payment arrangement, except in cases of family, friends, and maybe some patients that have been in your practice for a long time.**

## **2. What is the Section 179 Tax Deduction?**

Section 179 is the IRS Tax Code that allows a business to deduct the full purchase price of equipment and off-the-shelf software on their income taxes as an expense, rather than requiring that the property be depreciated over time.

### **How much can I deduct?**

The 2017 maximum deduction limit is \$500,000. Equipment must be purchased and placed into service before 12/31/2017 to qualify for a Section 179 tax deduction for 2017.

### **What is the Bonus Depreciation?**

Bonus Depreciation allows a business to deduct 50% of what is spent in 2017, above the Section 179 cap, up to \$2,000,000.

### **What is the first-year MACRS Depreciation?**

Standard first-year MACRS (Modified Accelerated Cost Recovery System) deduction applies to the remaining amount up to \$2,000,000.

What types of purchases qualify for a Section 179 deduction?

Most tangible office equipment, office furniture, computers, machinery, technology and off-the-shelf software qualify for the deduction.

What types of agreements qualify for a Section 179 deduction?

- Equipment financing agreement
- Equipment leases with a \$1.00 purchase option (aka Capital Leases)
- Loan Agreement

### **What type of purchase does NOT qualify for Section 179 deduction?**

Operating Leases — those with a purchase option (i.e., 10% Purchase Option Leases, Fair Market Value Leases) at the end of the agreement.

### **When can I take a Section 179 Deduction?**

A Section 179 Tax Deduction must be taken in the year the equipment or software is purchased and put into use. For example, equipment purchased and put into use in 2017 would be deducted off 2017 taxes.

**For additional information, consult your personal tax advisors.**

**3. Are these hidden costs eating into your profits?** When you analyze the financial health of your practice, don't forget to look into those hidden costs that impact your profit margin. Here are some considerations that may be under the radar.

#### **A. Ongoing Maintenance**

When your equipment isn't working efficiently, neither is your team. Unreliable equipment that's constantly breaking down or out of service not only cuts into the profit margin, but it frustrates doctors and dental teams.

#### **B. Patient Perception**

Growing your patient list is top of mind for increasing profits. But what about how patients (current

or potential) feel when they visit your facility? If your practice is dated compared to the one down the street with the brand-new office and state-of-the-art equipment, it's hard to compete. A calm, modern environment communicates a level of comfort and reassurance that your dentists are also high caliber. Environment drives perception.

### C. Physical Discomfort

Ergonomics is a tough concept to grasp since it's not a tangible concept. Yet the cost of a physical disability that originates from the dental occupation is quite real in terms of worker's comp and downtime. The most common injuries in dentistry (tendonitis, pinched nerves, ruptured discs in the neck and lower back, or carpal tunnel) develop slowly over time, and if not addressed properly, become debilitating and career ending.

### D. Ownership Costs

Distinguishing between products to make confident purchase decisions in the first place is challenging. But have you followed the total cost of the equipment beyond the acquisition phase

4. **Every Dental Practice Needs a Current Valuation!** There is a highly important reason to have a current practice valuation. Your associates, staff, patients, and most importantly family, depend on the success and continuity of your practice. It represents one of, if not the most, important assets you own. You need to protect it and your loved ones in the process.
  - A. All practice owners need to have a Letter of Instructions that spells out in detail what needs to be done in the case of an emergency and who the key contacts are (e.g., accountant, attorney). That way the practice can continue to run, your employees can work, and your patients can be cared for even in dire circumstances.
  - B. If you are a sole practitioner, it is especially important that you have a current practice valuation. In the case of a disability or the untimely death of the practice owner, approximately 30% of practices will sell within 90 days. After that timeframe, the chances of a practice selling at any price decrease dramatically. If a practice value hasn't already been established, the likelihood of selling quickly is significantly reduced.
  - C. That same practice valuation is also available for the many other reasons normally associated with practice valuations. If you purchase equipment, expand your practice, or take on an associate, you will need a practice valuation for financing, and to determine any future buy-in arrangements for the associate. While the practice valuation may not be current at the time you go to the bank or are ready for an associate, depending on the appraiser, you may be able to have the valuation updated rather than getting a completely new valuation. There are many reasons to get a practice valuation; buying and selling a practice is just two of them. Protecting your family and legacy may be the best.
5. Dentists don't have unlimited funds, and dental office remodeling can be expensive. There are simple changes that will keep your patients happy and will make your office more attractive to new comers.
  - A. **The Bathroom**

Most people visit the dentist on the go, and don't have the option to schedule the first appointment of the day. When traveling from the office, there's no time to stop home and give the teeth the 2 minute treatment, and many patients find themselves brushing and freshening up in the waiting room restroom. Patients **are aware of cleanliness**. When the bathroom isn't clean it sets the tone for the rest of the patient's visit. They might come in wondering, "What else is clean, should I be letting my hygienist anywhere near my mouth? What can I touch in the waiting area?" These questions only add to the anxiety of going to the dentist. The bathroom is the handshake of the dental office, if it smells bad or isn't neat patients won't feel comfortable the remainder of the visit knowing the rest of the office might not be clean. Keep the bathroom sanitary and not only will you reassure your patients, but you will give them a good impression before shaking their hand.

## **B. Color**

Color is an important element in any professional space. It not only sets the mood, but is an outward expression of the practice that you have built around you.

## **C. Light**

Whether it be in the waiting room or in the operatory, patients are going to notice windows and lighting. Make the most out of natural lighting.

**6. Multioffice Practice Made Perfect in the Cloud** - A cloud-based practice management system keeps your multisite practice on the same page, because your team can see the same patient files, schedules, databases and ledgers no matter where they're working. Below are five more advantages to practicing in the cloud.

### **A. Accessibility**

From the receptionist to the dentist, the ability to access patient files, schedules and other information is crucial. Cloud-based dental software can be accessed from any location, even after office hours. All you need are login credentials and a device with a web browser. The cloud is the perfect software solution for mobile dentists and practices that have grown beyond a single location.

### **B. Availability**

The cloud makes updating patient files, scheduling appointments and other daily tasks more efficient by allowing instant availability of information. When a patient calls, you can see their file and the schedule for each office and provider. It's much easier to find the next available opening if you can see all schedules at once. And, any changes to the schedule or to a patient file are synchronized and immediately visible in all other locations.

### **C. Flexibility**

Cloud-based dental software gives your practice flexibility in the devices you use. Your team can use the devices they're already comfortable with—Mac or Pac or tablet—as long as they connect to the Internet. This flexibility means less time learning how to use a new device and more time using its features

### **D. Reliability**

With cloud-based software, you no longer have to worry about server glitches, software updates or backups. Cloud systems are maintained by technical experts in off-site data centers. There's no down time for maintenance, so you can stay in constant communication with all of your practice's office locations.

### **E. Adaptability**

Cloud-based software is adaptable to specific team members. Customized to-do lists, preferred schedule display, status reports, charting and more can be adapted to the way your team works. With a cloud-based system, efficiency improves across all of your dental offices.