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Strategies to Manage Complex Dental Implant Cases

Complex dental implant patients can have multiple treating dentists, several treatment stages, diagnostic needs, and variations in treatment sequence that must be managed to optimize efficiency, avoid miscommunications, and keep dentists and their staff sane while keeping the patient happy. Here at our office, we have adopted effective strategies to manage complex implant patients with ease and efficiency.

Why is a management strategy important for thriving practices?

- Create an efficient treatment process
- Shorten treatment time
- Prevent costly and time-consuming miscommunications and re-do's
- Deliver expected results
- Prevent unnecessary stress on staff and doctors
- Increase overall profits by minimizing utilization of office resources
- Achieve lifetime success for the implant therapy
- Deliver a remarkable service and create loyal patients

What makes our strategies work?

Prior to 2005 when we first implemented the strategies discussed below, we had a number of communication issues which led to treatment inefficiencies and a lot of stress for everyone. Patients sometimes fell through the cracks and were lost to important follow-up appointments. This all changed once new management strategies were put in place.

What makes this strategy work is the system that assures strong connection between all treating doctors and their staff, with specific delegated tasks and accountability for those tasks. Important updates, sharing of records, reminders, and task completion were now easy to do. Our referring doctors reported an amazing transformation of their work flow and treatment efficiency; no headaches, no surprises, no upset patients, and no overstressed staff. So let me share with you what we do:

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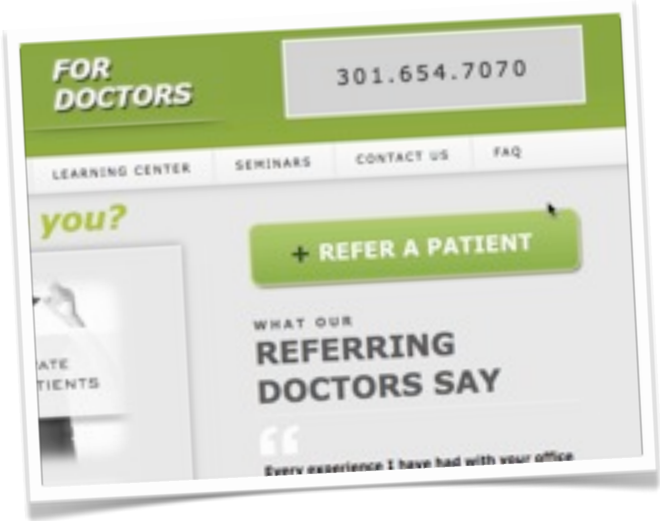
Internal Strategies

Our internal strategies help us meet patients' treatment requirements according to the agreed treatment plan. These strategies include referral tracking, keeping and updating records, and internal sharing of important data with all of our staff to make sure everything is on time, aligned, and precise. It lets us 'seal the cracks' so nothing can fall through them.

Initial referral tracking:

When a dentist refer a patient using our online referral form, automatic notifications are send to us, their office, and the patient. We document the referral and wait for the patient to call for an appointment. If a patient does not call for an appointment within two weeks, we inform the referring dentist so they can follow up with the patient as they see fit. This way, the dentist stays informed in a timely fashion, of the patient's following to his or her recommendations.



Consultation reports:

After patient's consultation in our office, we send two reports: one to patient providing preliminary recommendations and steps to follow; the second to the referring dentist and other team specialists to inform them of our findings and discussed treatment options. These reports are emailed on the day of consultation to keep everyone informed and up to date.

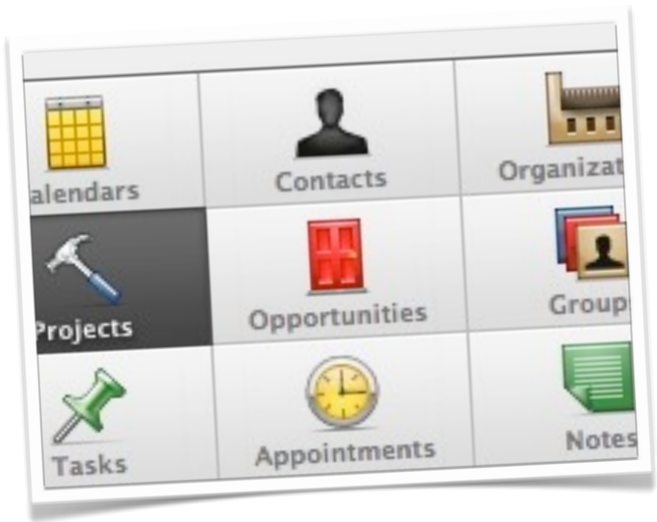
Patient treatment presentation

Following case discussion with all of the team dentists, our treatment coordinator meets with the patient to present the entire treatment plan including both surgical and prosthetic phases. We provide the patient with a detailed written guide that helps them understand the treatment phases, time line, and the responsibility of each dentist for their treatment. A copy is also sent to the team dentists.

Client relations management (CRM)- Internal case management

We use an CRM software that helps us manage a patient's treatment internally. With this tool, we can link the patient's treatment to our staff and all of the treating dentists involved. Tasks are assigned to the appropriate individuals with assigned notifications, reminders, and instructions. Because each task is delegated to an individual on a specific day, it is easy to monitor its progress and status. The individual responsible for a given task receives notification precisely when it is due. A treatment pipeline provides everyone a visual cue of the patient's progress and upcoming treatment stages. We also use CRM to do the following:

1. Get reminders about diagnostic work-up, implant exposures, post treatment follow-ups, scheduling, and any other task.
2. Order the right implants and components using linked forms.
3. Manage laboratory deadlines for surgical guides.
4. Obtain necessary records in preparation for various stages of treatment.
5. Schedule important team meetings and log all activities.



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External Strategies

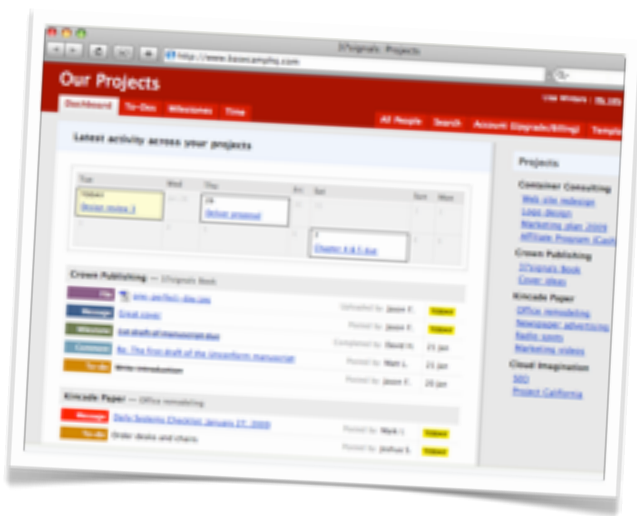
Our external strategies use a number of communication tools to help bridge the gap between the referring dentist and other specialists involved in patient's care. These strategies help to align our office with all of the other offices in a seamless fashion, and assures timely and precise communication of important information.

Team dentists meeting

Following consultations, we schedule a meeting with the restorative dentist and other relevant specialists to review the entire treatment plan and coordinate efforts. We do this in two ways- face to face or via online meeting. The goals of this meeting include:

1. Reviewing all records and diagnostic information
2. Designing the right treatment plan based on patient's needs
3. Discussing timing and treatment order
4. Discussing challenges and solutions
5. Writing comprehensive plan for presentation to patient

Online case management



We post every patient's treatment on an online platform and invite the team dentists to join in. Each dentist and their staff can then access the patient treatment progress, X-rays, photos, and other relevant information whenever and from wherever. Treatment updates can be easily posted and shared with other treating dentists.

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We use this project management software to accomplish the following:

1. Centralize all information with easy access
2. Post overall treatment plan, stages, and time line
3. Upload all available records including X-rays, CT scan images, photos, and treatment letters
4. Post messages regarding treatment progress and keep everyone in the loop
5. Post tasks, milestones, and deadlines
6. Use the calendar to post important dates
7. Write collaborative letters modifiable by team dentists

Treatment coordinator

Our assigned treatment coordinator will become patient's personal liaison guiding them through all the various stages of their treatment. Treatment coordinator also manages the online information, keeping all the treating dentists informed and up to date. Additionally, the coordinator will send important reminders and treatment tasks to the appropriate dentist. As a 'project manager', our coordinator will ensure that all the treatments by various dentists are provided in a seamless and easy fashion for the patient. The patient will never have to worry about what to do next.

To learn how to implement an implant treatment management strategy for your office, call us at (301) 654–7070 or email me at hkazemi@facialart.com