How to Create a Successful Dental Call Center

What do you want the DSO call center operators to do?

- Answer all inbound calls or just calls from new patients?
- Call back people who leave voicemails for the dental office(s)?
- Staff the online chat feature on your office website(s)?
- Conduct appointment confirmation calls?
- Make reactivation calls to patients with treatment plans but no future appointments?
- Document the results of each conversation, including whether the call was booked?

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What information will the call center operators need?

Call center operators typically need to have several computer screens in front of them to display:

- **The information the patient knows** (dental practice name, the phone number, any promotional offers associated with that ad/source)
- **The dental practice information** (hours of operation, driving directions, dentists' names and services, hygienists' names, insurances accepted)
- **The scheduling system** (they'll need the same access as in-office receptionists so they can enter in the caller's contact information)

Which SOPs do you need to create?

As you're designing your call center SOPs, it's helpful to think of it from the caller's point of view. Here are some guidelines for getting started:

Establish a simple phone tree and determine where each type of call should be routed

A very basic script may include: "Thank you for calling (Practice Name). Para continuar en español, por favor, oprima nueve. If you are a current patient, please press 1. If you are a new patient, please press 2. For all other calls, please press 3."

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Establish new patient phone call scripts

If all of your calls are being routed through a call center, it's important for operators to quickly understand whether they are interacting with a new or existing patient.

For new patients, a lot of information will have to be gathered for the first time, so it's important that your call center have questions scripted out.

- How did you hear about our office?

- When was the last time you saw a dentist?

- Are you currently having any problems we should be aware of?

Establish protocols for calls not answered by the third ring

If the call center operators are returning voicemail messages, then it's important to establish protocols to capture the information for each callback attempt and ensure the correct number of attempts are made before changing the caller status from potential patient to lost patient.

Develop SOPs for every function of the call center

There should be Standard Operating Procedures in place for every function the call center operator manages. This will reduce mistakes and improve the patient experience.

Create a Stellar Hiring & Training Program

One of the keys to success is developing a "repeatable playbook" for success. Every single call center operator needs to know and follow the same protocols.

Here are a few ideas as you're getting set up:

- Hire happy people who are genuinely compassionate and enjoy helping others.
- Have the new hire shadow a call center operator for at least three to five days.

Patient Prism could help your company track key performance indicators (KPIs) and improve the skills of dental call center teams.

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