What are the Top 5 Areas of a Dental Practice Most Important to Patients?
Foreward

This is the page to describe the survey, what it means, why it’s of value, and how to interpret it.

How to use this survey to your benefit

When reviewing this survey, keep in mind that these are all quotes from patients based on what they felt was most important to them when visiting their dentist. When reviewing these results ask yourself the question, ‘Do my patients think this way about my practice?’. If not, then you should immediately begin to address the way you and your staff are handling your patients. Remember, one satisfied patient may never tell anyone, but one unsatisfied patient will tell everyone.
Survey Patient Selection Criteria

For the purposes of the survey, patients who met the following criteria were hand selected by their doctors:

- Desire for comprehensive quality care and placed a high value on oral health
- Refer the best patients
- A joy to see on your schedule
- Keep their appointments
- Accept specialist referrals
- Accept comprehensive plans for optimal oral health
- Don’t consider insurance as a determining factor for treatment acceptance
- Pay their bills on time
- Have an appreciation for you and your team
- The type of patients most dentists of your skill and commitment want to build your practice with

Survey Methodology

- 100 individual practices with Dawson trained doctors selected from 250-500 patients in the practice with the above criteria.
- Results based on 20,000 patient responses over 15 years.
- Survey responses range from 40% to 50% returns.
- The surveys were sent out by the practice with a cover letter and were returned to a third party for analysis.

Results

The 3rd party broke down the top 5 areas of importance to patients taken directly from the questions that required explanations. This report contains some of the actual quotes from patients and a detailed breakdown of the specific areas within the top 5.
Survey results:

The top 5 areas of a dental practice most important to patients:

1. Staff
2. Quality
3. Communication
4. Scheduling
5. Professional Ethics

Staff Specifics

Attitude

- “The Attitude”
- “Lots of smiles and enthusiasm”
- “Attitude at the front desk”
- “That the staff love their work”
- “Operate as a team”
- “Positive and Upbeat”
- “Marvelous attitudes expressed to us and to each other”
- “Air of superiority in the office”
- “Pride in their work”

Friendliness

- “Staff calls me by name”
- “Staff has name tags on their smocks”
- “Congenial personality of the staff”
- “Pleasant staff”
- “Intense enthusiasm”
- ‘Personable”
- “Cogeniality”
- “Friendly care by the entire staff”
- “Friendly personalities”
- “Friendly and helpful in every way”
- “Friendly atmosphere, not just a number”
- “Friendly service”
- “Friendliness of technical staff needs improvement”
- “The way people make me feel”
Concern/Care/Courteous

- “Concern by the practice that I keep up with semi-annual cleanings”
- “Care and attention I receive from everyone on the staff”
- “Concern and assistance offered by the entire staff”
- “Caring attitudes of the entire staff”
- “Administrative staff should be more courteous”
- “Courtesy of everyone”
- “Politeness”
- “Being treated rudely by receptionist”
- “Courteous extended”
- “Concern for well being”
- “Really care about patients”
- “Seem concerned when I have a problem”
- “Attitude of genuine caring toward patients”
- ‘Dr. calling me to follow up on how I am feeling after dental work”
- “Care and concern of how I should take care of my teeth”

Knowledge

- “Talented, trained staff”
- “Knowledgeable about procedures”
- “A Knowledgeable staff”
- “Knowledge of the job”
- “Knowledge of Dentistry”
- “Educated”
- “Intellectual Understanding of Dentistry”
- “Ability of staff”
- “The Staff’s Continuing education”
- “Efficiency of office management”
- “High efficiency in all areas”

Competence

- “Competence of all staff involved”
- “Competent Care”
- “Competent hands”
- “Confidence in knowledge of team”
- “Expertise and Ability”
- “Confidence in their training, expertise and ability”
- “The staff know what they are doing”
- “High level of competency”
- “Having my teeth and bite right”
- “Expert interpretation and explanation of my dental x-rays”
- “Expertise”
- “Understanding and handling of my specific treatment needs”
Service

- “Good service”
- “Professional Service”
- “Customer service”
- “Personal Service”
- “Excellent Service”
- “Outstanding Service”
- “Service and Quality”

Professionalism

- “Professionalism in every sense of the word”
- “Professional Behavior”
- “The professional attitude of the entire staff”
- “High professional standards of the staff”
- “Professionals who compliment their profession”
- “Highly professional office”
- “The professional manner in which I am treated”

Quality Specifics

Quality of Care/Quality of Product

- “Receiving proper care”
- “Top quality dental work”
- “Quality Workmanship”
- “Willingness to do the job right no matter what it takes”
- “Having it done right the first time”
- “Knowing quality work is being done”
- “Knowing that the work will be perfect”
- “Quality of Care”
- “Total Quality”
- “Quality Dental Work”

Excellence

- “Excellent Dentistry”
- “Skilled crown work”
- “Expert Treatment”
- “Excellent work no matter what”
- “Superior Dental Care”
- “Dedication to Excellence”
- “The most excellent dental care that can be given”
- “Above expectations”
- “Excellent results”
- “Will not stop until they are satisfied with the results”
Communication Specifics

Helping patients understand problems

- “Be straight with what actually has to be done”
- “Explain all the possibilities despite the cost”
- “Fully understanding everything that is done or needs to be done to my teeth”
- “No question marks in my head when I leave the office”
- “Helping me to understand my dental problems”
- “Ask questions freely without fear of being stupid”
- “Explanation of what treatment is necessary and what is involved”
- “Lets you make the decision, not pushy”
- “Having the Dentists explain exactly what is needed and why”
- “Explain in detail using pictures of teeth to prepare client”
- “Informed of the proper path to take in order to keep my teeth”
- “Understanding why procedures need to be done”

Explanation of procedures

- “More explanation of what is happening during treatment”
- “Explain procedures nicely and respectfully”
- “Every procedure is explained in detail”
- “So busy that they can’t take time to explain things before they are done”
- “More explanation of what is happening in treatment”
- “Takes time to explain things to me”
- “Not fully explained before initiating treatment”
- “Suggestions for improvement”
- “Offer suggestions of how I can improve my oral health”
- “Non-pressured approach to “new ideas in dental care”
- “Advice”
- “Making me aware of my part when it comes to gum care”
- “Knowing what is available for improvement in my smile”

Listening Skills to Understand

- “Ability of the entire staff to listen”
- “Listening to my concerns and questions”
- “Patient is always wrong and the dentist is always right - Does not listen”
- “Better communication between doctor and assistant”
- “Listening skills both by the hygienist and the dentist”
- “Actively listening to hear patients input”
- “Too many dentist operations give you the feeling you are only one of a money making heard”
Personalized Communication

- “Treating me as a person, a person they know”
- “I want to feel like the team and doctor know me”
- “Appreciation that you could go somewhere else and they are glad you chose them”
- “Inquisitive about your life”
- “Remembering what I told them six months ago”
- “Treated as a patient should be”
- “Making me feel I am important”
- “Feeling that services offered were just for you”
- “Desire to work with me as a patient individually to meet my needs”
- ‘It is so pleasant when they know my name”
- ‘That the dentist makes me feel like a patient not a meal ticket”
- “Interest shown to patient degree to please”

Scheduling Specifics

Seen On Time

- “Being seen in a timely fashion”
- “Appointment time is set for you and not shared with other patients simultaneously”
- “Appointment times are accurate”
- “Being taken at appointed time”
- ‘Punctuality of doctor and hygienist”
- ‘Kept waiting beyond appointment time”
- “I detest always having to wait at least 20 minutes or more for teeth cleaning”
- “Appointment start and end on time”
- “I get impatient if I wait - hypertension”
- “Honoring appointment time”

Quicker Time Getting In

- “Ease of making and changing appointments”
- “Ease of securing appointments”
- “Wish it was easier to obtain appointment”
- “Difficult to find suitable time for cleaning without a significant amount of notice”
- “Reschedules it takes way to long to get back in”
- “Very hard to get an appointment”
- “An appointment within a shorter period of time”
- “Quicker scheduling for appointment”
- “If you have to cancel it is months to get another appointment”

Length of Treatment

- “To long to Complete Work”
- “To long from beginning of procedure for a crown till the end”
- “Appointment seem to go on forever”
- “Took forever to complete work”
- “Office visit much to long”
Emergency Care

- “Quick care in an emergency”
- “Understanding, especially at time of dental work”
- “Appointment for emergency visits”
- “Be there for me when I really need you”
- “Always work you in for emergencies”
- “The ability to get quick care for emergencies”
- “Being able to call the dentist night or day and get a response”

Professional Ethics Specifics

Integrity

- “Integrity both professionally and personally”
- “Can rely and depend on them”
- “High integrity in all areas”

Honesty/Trust

- “Honesty regarding my dental care”
- “Trust that my best interest are being upheld”
- “Trust in Doctor and Hygienist”
- “Trust in advice and abilities”
- “Belief that I am in the best hands possible”
- “Totally trustworthy”

Thoroughness/Competency

- “Thorough and efficient with their work”
- “Thoroughness of treatment”
- “Meticulousness used by the entire staff in every phase of my dental care”
- “Attention to detail”
- “Competent Hands”
- “Competence”
- “Professional Competency”

Knowledgeable / Education

- “Skill of the dentist”
- “Knowledge of the job”
- “Knowledge and Expertise”
- “Knowledgeable Dentist”