Seven Ways to Propel Your Practice with Cosmetic Dentistry

In today's over-communicated society, it's important that your practice stands for something remarkable, for noticeability, publicity, word-of-mouth exposure, and ultimately, to receive new patients and create loyal fans. Prospects must understand your business by its reputation alone, to pass that message on to others and turn prospects into patients and patients into evangelists.

Being known in your community for excellence in cosmetic dentistry can be a powerful way for your practice to put the pedal to the metal.

Here are seven other ways you can propel your practice with cosmetic dentistry.
Every patient should receive a complimentary cosmetic exam. It is important to provide this valuable service to both new and existing patients. Consistent attention to cosmetic examinations, supported by strong patient educational scripts for the entire team, is the key for success.

For example, a dentist could say to a patient, “Mrs. Jones, we are now going to begin your esthetic exam.” This should be followed with an evaluation of each tooth, calling out findings to a dental assistant or hygienist. The patient hears that several teeth are cracked, grayed, rotated, stained, and chipped, or there is a diastema between teeth. Simply hearing this information is part of the patient’s educational process. After recording your findings, explain to the patient the treatment options and the cosmetic care benefits.

Following the evaluation, consider offering whitening as a “gateway” treatment. Whitening is an important entry point into cosmetic dentistry because it produces positive results that are noticed immediately by the patient’s friends and family. When patients have a newfound appreciation for their smiles, they will be open to other improvements, as well.

**PROVIDED BY ROGER P. LEVIN, DDS**
Just because your community is aware of your practice, you may not have achieved the necessary level of credibility as a dental professional, for you and your practice to be considered. To build credibility—your reputation within the community—consider these four attributes:

Knowledge (10%) While it represents only 10 percent toward credibility, knowledge is the foundation on which to build your credibility. That’s why dental continuing education is so important. Members of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD) have already demonstrated their commitment to responsible esthetics through membership, and Accredited members—and those in the process of Accreditation—are on a continual quest for excellence and knowledge.

Focus (15%) – In building marketplace credibility, focus is the next level laid onto your foundation of knowledge. Your focus on cosmetic dentistry is one way into the prospect’s mind because, in some instances, it’s possible to give prospects too much information, overwhelm them, and chip away at your credibility. That’s why the “elevator pitch” is so popular in business: if you have just two minutes to present your information to a prospective patient, what are the most relevant points to convey? Focus brings clarity to a consumers’ decision-making.

Enthusiasm (25%) – Layered on top of focus is your passion. It’s human nature to believe that enthusiastic professionals are far more credible than those who are not. Again, your commitment to excellence in cosmetic dentistry will put you in the rarified air of dentistry’s most passionate and committed practitioners. Now, make an extra effort to exude enthusiasm when describing a procedure to a prospective patient or get authentically excited about the results of a successful smile design.

Care & Concern (50%) – Sitting atop your knowledge, focus, and enthusiasm is care and concern, and it’s fully half of what makes up marketplace credibility. If you show genuine care for the long-term well-being of your patients, show interest in their interests, and express that concern appropriately, you’ll begin to build strong credibility. This care and concern will also help you to develop positive word-of-mouth exposure in your community, since it’s an attribute people enjoy talking about.

PROVIDED BY MICHAEL DIFRISCO, Aacd
Did you know that 30 to 40 percent of new patients are lost due to a mishandled first phone call? You may never know how much revenue is lost, how many opportunities came in that day, or how they were handled. Your team only counts the “wins” walking through the door. What can you do to convert more calls into cash?

Establish a protocol and guidelines for your team members so they understand exactly what to do, how to follow-through, and determine an established timeline for patient results. Here are some ALWAYS RULES:

1. Always answer calls “live;” no answering machines.
2. Always answer by the second ring.
3. Always follow-up at the end of the day with a patient thank you call for trusting you and your dental team to exceed his/her oral health expectations.
4. Always place a video camera at the front, allowing team members to assess their results, every two weeks.

You’re in the people business; your product is the smile, your brand is the practice. Your team must demonstrate this before being seen by your potential customer. Choosing the right words, using the right tone, and asking the right questions will make a memorable first impression.

PROVIDED BY RHONDA MULLINS, CDT
The American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD) offers the opportunity to earn the most prestigious credential available in cosmetic dentistry. However, some clinicians and laboratory technicians say they don’t feel a need to become Accredited. Reasons vary. Some feel it’s too hard and aren’t sure it’s worth the time and the effort. Some say they’re already practicing at the Accreditation level and earning the credential won’t change anything.

Most Accredited members found that going through the Accreditation process has breathed new life and energy into their labs and dental practices—brought relief from their daily routines. In addition, Accredited members report their journey has provided not only advanced professional education and profitability, but personal inspiration and motivation.

Not a member? Not a problem. The American Board of Cosmetic Dentistry, the credentialing authority of the AACD, recently announced that all dentists and dental laboratory technicians are now eligible to pursue AACD Accreditation regardless of their membership status within the AACD.

Click here to watch a short video on the prestige and honor of achieving AACD Accreditation.

PROVIDED BY JOHN WESTON, DDS AND BRADLEY J. OLSON, DDS
A Pew Research Foundation survey shows that 84 percent of Internet users sought online health care information last year. Fifty-two percent look not only for themselves, but also on behalf of others. Forty-four percent also look to learn more about fellow patient experiences and results.

A simple test can help determine how you fare on the Google visibility scale. Pretend you’re a consumer interested in cosmetic dentistry and conduct a few searches on Google. Most consumers begin searching core procedure terms (”porcelain veneers” or “dental implants”) to learn about the procedure before moving on to specific location searches, such as “veneers Los Angeles” or “cosmetic dentistry Long Island.”

After each search, review your practice information, including testimonials and before and after photos, for easy access from the top Google search results. If you have difficulty finding your information, so will potential patients.

Once your practice information is located online, make sure consumers can easily locate your information, navigate to your practice website, and/or contact your practice via email or phone.

Though Google visibility and the quality of services offered by your practice are completely unrelated, our world connects them.

PROVIDED BY DAVID EVANS, PHD, MBA
The atmosphere of any practice should be attractive and esthetically pleasing. For a cosmetic dental practice, a visually pleasing office environment is even more important. There shouldn't be any doubt this is a practice specializing in cosmetics. Reception areas should be extremely pleasing to the eye—like cosmetic dentistry—to reassure patients they have made the right decision.

A cosmetic practice should be filled with a gallery showing beautiful smiles. All team members should be prepared to answer questions and have professional brochures, handouts, software, and visuals available to explain cosmetic procedures. These strategies help patients realize the benefits of cosmetic dentistry.

PROVIDED BY ROGER P. LEVIN, DDS
Beyond your practice core mission of maintaining the oral, is another aspect not to be ignored: social responsibility. Simply put, corporate citizenship is when your practice becomes associated with a cause or premise, creating a potential win-win situation for both organizations. Engaging in social responsibility and aligning yourself with a cause makes people more willing to do business with you and can influence consumer opinion and behavior, turning patients into brand champions.

For example, many AACD member dentists—and their teams—are committed to volunteering support to the AACD Charitable Foundation’s Give Back a Smile program, whose mission is to assist in rebuilding the lives and dignity of survivors of domestic violence through compassionate cosmetic dental services and support programs.

Volunteer dentists and laboratory technicians agree to restore the survivor’s broken and damaged teeth in the smile-zone caused by intimate partner violence. Survivors know that bruises and scars will fade, but broken and missing teeth will not. Our generous dental professionals help erase the memories of abuse by restoring the smiles—at no cost to the survivor—thereby helping to restore their lives.

In addition to saving smiles—and lives—this type of social responsibility can:

- Strengthen your brand promise, if the connection is aligned with your mission and vision
- Push your message into new, untapped markets
- Contribute to your value proposition
- Help build relationships (emotional ties) with your patients and prospects
- Provide credibility to your practice

PROVIDED BY KEN BANKS, DDS
BONUS PROPELLANT #8:
Join the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry

Well, you knew that was coming, right? For more than 25 years, the AACD has assembled passionate dental professionals to learn from each other, promote credibility, and support one another in the pursuit of excellence in cosmetic dentistry.

When you join the AACD, you become part of a worldwide community of more than 6,000 dentists, laboratory technicians, team members, faculty, and students sharing best practices, improving their skills, staying on the forefront of technology in an ever-changing profession, and having fun making lifelong friendships.

As an AACD member, you’ll gain immediate access to our growing knowledge and such informational resources as our world-class annual scientific session, AACD’s peer-reviewed Journal of Cosmetic Dentistry, eLearning benefits (valued at $490!), and much more.

You’ll have privileged access to the AACD Accreditation process, with the opportunity to join the world’s finest dental professionals at the pinnacle of their vocation.

You’ll enjoy making connections, trading viewpoints, and learning from others through local AACD Affiliate organizations, regional and international conferences, and in our online community.

Please join us. Visit www.AACD.com/join today and propel your practice with excellence in cosmetic dentistry.