

Cardinal Rules of Implant Case Presentation

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Something *doesn't* make sense. Dental implants are the best treatment option for edentulous patients. Success rates for implants are extremely high. Implants *should* be challenging crowns and bridges as *the* standard of care. Yet, it is not happening. Why?

In its 21-year experience consulting to hundreds of implant practices, Levin group has identified several common denominators to explain implants' slow growth. While insufficient patient and referral doctor education are contributing factors, ineffective case presentations are perhaps the most important cause.

Many doctors go into far too much detail regarding the technical and clinical aspects of dental implants when presenting a case. In these instances, practitioners mistakenly believe their own knowledge base can be instantly transferred to patients, which will enable them to absorb every detail of implant dentistry. Unfortunately, overwhelming individuals with excessive details often renders them incapable of making a decision. Their thought processes shut down, and then patients flatly refuse the procedure. Their refusal to accept implant treatment is all the more frustrating because they have not been able to internalize the information that you have given them. Their rejection was simply a gut reaction born out of frustration.

ENHANCING YOUR IMPLANT CASE PRESENTATIONS

There are several ways that implant practices can avoid the aforementioned scenario. The following steps will help create a higher level of interest and motivation to accept implants:

1. Emphasize benefits.

Simply describing implants does not motivate patients to say "yes" during case presentation. Patients are naturally going to ask, "What are implants going to do for me?" As mentioned, overemphasizing the clinical details of recommended treatment is a common issue for doctors. Avoid it. Patients want to know how they will ultimately benefit from having implants placed, and it is up to the doctor and dental team to highlight all the benefits provided by treatment. Benefit statements might include the following:

- "With implants, you won't have to worry about food restrictions."
- "Implants are easy to maintain—you will be able to treat them just like natural teeth."
- "Implants have a very high success rate—higher than most surgical procedures."

2. Educate patients without overwhelming them.

Most patients are not fully aware of the numerous benefits of implants. The dentist and the dental team should educate patients. As with any other patient communication, conversations about implants should be scripted to deliver concise, clear, and consistent messages.

3. Use internal marketing.

Have supporting educational materials, such as brochures, available to reinforce what has been discussed about implants. Levin Group believes that brochures alone do not motivate or influence patients. Brochures reinforce what has been discussed and can increase the patients' level of motivation. Patient testimonials as well as "before and after" photos are very powerful, particularly with unfamiliar procedures such as implants.

4. Offer financial options.

The cost of implants is always a sticking point. To help make implants more affordable, practices should offer patients a variety of financial options. Levin Group recommends these options:

- 5% discount for payment in full
- Half up front and the balance before treatment is completed
- Credit cards
- Third-party financing

This last option allows the patient to accept implants without the practice having to play "banker." The practice receives payment for its services upfront while the patient has the implants placed. A variety of treatment options should be offered to all patients, regardless of their perceived financial status. This strategy will significantly increase the level of case acceptance and practice production.

SUMMARY

Implant case presentation involves more than simply educating patients about their dental condition and explaining the technical aspects. Persuading patients during case presentation requires a comprehensive strategy. To motivate patients to accept implant treatment, practices should use the 4-step approach mentioned previously.

For a complimentary sample of a patient education brochure, e-mail your contact information to "customerservice@levingroup.com" with "patient education brochure" in the subject line.

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