



# Implant Game Changers

***A Whitepaper Series By Roger P. Levin, DDS***

Implant Game Changers is a monthly whitepaper on an important implant practice management topic. It provides you with a quick and easy way to understand a specific business challenge and how to translate the solution into higher production and profit, greater efficiency, more implant patients, lower stress and greater personal satisfaction.

# 4 Characteristics You Want in Your Implant Treatment Coordinator

The implant treatment coordinator (ITC) has a critical position in the surgical practice. The quality of his or her work with patients will often determine the case acceptance level and even play a role in the satisfaction of patients who undergo implant surgery or other specialty practice services. There are four key characteristics that you want to see in your ITC that will often determine how successful he or she will be. Keep in mind that a good ITC can also present other practice services, saving a tremendous amount of time for the surgeon by meeting with new patients, explaining and presenting cases, and closing the cases with minimal surgeon time.

## The 4 characteristics you want in your ITC

### 1. A Positive Attitude

The concept of a positive attitude is so overused by motivational speakers that some people's reaction to hearing it is: "Enough already, I've heard this so many times." This is unfortunate because a positive attitude may be the single most important determining factor in the success of an ITC.

The ITC position is based on relationships and depends heavily on the ITC's personality and understanding of how to build relationships. There are a few people who are "naturals" at this, but they are few and far between. For most people, building outstanding relationships is a skill that they develop over time. They learn essentials like asking questions, developing an interest and curiosity in other people, and looking for things they have in common. Building relationships is a powerful skill set and anyone who excels at building relationships will be successful in any service business. This is certainly a requirement for the ITC.

The ITC who brings a positive attitude every day contributes in many ways. They contribute to the attitude of the rest of the surgical team, which becomes the foundation for Five-Star

Customer Service. They contribute to the feeling of energy and enthusiasm in the practice when patients come in as well as the trust level of the implant patient.

You might be wondering: How can a positive attitude generate trust on the part of the patient? Positive attitudes are contagious, they create an interpersonal energy between people that helps the patient become predisposed to like you. A simple formula that we teach at Levin Group is when people like you, they trust you, and when they trust you, they buy from you. A positive attitude is the starting point to generate positive relationships which then generates trust, which then generates case acceptance. It may be hard to believe at first that a positive attitude is the simple pathway to case acceptance, but it's definitely part of the story. An ITC without a positive attitude will never achieve high-level close rates for dental implants or any other service.

### 2. Deep Relationship building

Relationship building is a skill set that anyone can learn. When it is combined with a positive attitude, you are well on your way to developing a strong and powerful relationship with every patient.

The starting point of building a relationship is getting to know another person and the easiest entry into that pathway is asking questions. Every ITC should have a standard set of introductory questions that allow them to get to know the patient that is in front of them. An excellent analogy would be to think of a National Football League team. Even if you don't follow sports, this analogy will apply. In the NFL, each team has a first series of plays on offense to start the game. They have already prepared for what those first plays will be. After that, there is no exact order of plays as they must begin to react to the other team as the game moves forward.

The same is true for the ITC. By having an enthusiastic greeting, welcoming the new patient to the practice, escorting the new patient to a consult or treatment room, and opening

with the same series of questions, the ITC is following the same concept as a football team. The ITC should have prepared in advance with any information garnered from the first phone call. This should have been communicated to them in the morning meeting, so they can then move toward building a powerful relationship by looking for things they might have in common with the patient (i.e., living/working/practicing in the same community, charity work, spouses and children, work, hobbies, favorite restaurants, interests, travel, and so on). Once they find commonality, the relationship will advance exponentially. The better the relationship is built in this first consult appointment, the more likely it is for the patient is to follow through with treatment. Why? Because the ITC is creating likability through relationship building that automatically generates trust and trust leads to case acceptance.

### 3. Tenacious Follow-up

Follow-up is a fairly new area for most specialty practices when it comes to the ITC position. In most practices, all the focus goes on the consult while the patient is in the practice; however, an increasing number of patients aren't going to decide at their first visit. Most patients must check on personal issues such as finances, work schedules, and planned vacations. While these patients will leave with the intention of having dental implant treatment, once they leave the practice, other life factors emerge and they often lose their motivation or simply become paralyzed in working it all out.

Using the established relationship as a springboard, the ITC should let the patient know that they will go out of their way to eliminate any challenges or barriers that the patient may have regarding treatment. The ITC should have clear scripting to let the patient know that there will be follow-up so that they can offer help and provide high-level customer service. In fact, the ITC should have a firm and specific process that is followed each time in order to maximize follow-up potential. For example, Levin Group recommends the first follow up phone call at one week and a second phone call at two weeks followed by text messages. These messages are always positive and let the patient know the ITC is available to help with any challenges or scheduling factors that may benefit the patient.

As one ITC said to a Levin Group consultant: "I am amazed at how many people respond to phone calls and text messages that I believe would never have followed through with treatment otherwise." That is a ringing endorsement as to the benefit of follow-up regarding specialty practice production.

### 4. Ability to answer questions and counter objections

Many implant patients attend the consult without knowing much about dental implants. They've heard a little bit from the referring doctor and maybe from viewing television ads. They may have even scoured the internet receiving good and bad information. Now it's time for the ITC.

After the ITC presents each step of the implant process, the patient will develop questions and objections. Some ITCs would rather not have questions or objections, but we believe that an inquisitive patient is working toward having treatment. They have a sense that implant treatment would be excellent for them, but they're not quite there yet. Answering their questions and overcoming their objections will make them comfortable.

The ITC should have already developed a list of frequently asked questions and scripted answers. They can start by thanking the patient for the question or saying to the patient: "I appreciate that question and it is asked by many patients." Make the patient feel comfortable asking questions, because questions are how a patient becomes comfortable enough to say yes to treatment.

Always answer honestly, but positively. A positive, enthusiastic answer demonstrates that the ITC is customizing this consult specifically for the patient and it will be appreciated. Some patients may seem a bit combative by verbalizing objections; however, objections are just questions that are asked in a slightly confrontational manner. Maybe the patient read something on the Internet that contradicted what they think they just heard. Maybe they have preconceived notions and ideas about implant treatment. Once again, the ITC should always remain calm and polite and answer the objections in a positive and enthusiastic manner.

It's also important to be prepared for different patient responses. We have one true, but funny story, about a fairly

new ITC who was presenting an overview of dental implants to a patient. After a couple minutes into the consult, the patient said: "I'm sorry to interrupt you, but can you just tell me how much it's going to cost?" At that moment the ITC went speechless and had to leave the room and find the office manager to find out what to do. She had her routine but had no idea how to customize it and pivot when necessary. By the way, the patient did end up accepting the treatment.

## Summary

The ITC needs to train like an elite athlete. They must learn and master concepts; design each step of the ITC process; bring a positive, enthusiastic attitude every day; and tenaciously follow up with patients as their new friend to help them work through any barriers in the way of implant treatment. Barriers can come in the form of finances or time constraints, which

are the two most prevalent issues that prevent patients from following through with implant treatment.

Also, like an elite athlete, ITCs must practice. Each presentation, each patient, and each day brings new opportunities to review performance and improve. One suggestion is to periodically have another team member sit in to critique the ITC. Rather than a cause for anxiety, this should be a positive experience where the team member is working to help the ITC improve performance in the same way a coach helps an elite athlete. An open-minded ITC will embrace the idea of being critiqued and look forward to every opportunity to improve.

The ITC is one of the most critical positions in a surgical practice. Why? The reason is simple, they create patients, patients create production, and production creates ongoing success.

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