



# 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.

# Customer Service Support for the Implant Patient

One of the most crucial factors in the decision-making process of a patient revolves around how well they feel they will be supported. This falls into the unique customer service category of “The customer doesn’t know what they want.” You are not going to have patients asking about customer service concerns such as how they will be supported, what level of customer service they can expect, whether the specialist will be calling them that evening to see how they are feeling, or if the staff will be calling on day three to check in.

Let’s compare this to a Ritz-Carlton hotel visit. Imagine you’re going to the Ritz-Carlton in Laguna Niguel, California. It is a beautiful resort, and you’re going to spend seven days and spend a lot of money. If the Ritz-Carlton contacted you in advance and asked what you are expecting from a customer service standpoint, you would be able to answer the question confidently. You would most certainly want a clean room, friendly staff, a beautiful pool facility, excellent food, valet parking, direct access to the beach, a well-furnished room, and a pleasant view. This question is easily answered because you have a sense of perspective in comparison. You’ve probably visited many hotels. Conversely, most consumers don’t know enough about dental implants to know how they want to be treated.

In further comparison, dental implant patients do know what to ask for regarding the clinical and financial aspects of treatment:

- How many implants will I need?
- What is an implant?
- How long will they last?
- Will it hurt?
- What is the recovery time?
- How long will I be out of work?

- When will I be able to take care of my kids?
- How much does it cost?
- How does it have to be paid for?
- Are there other financial options?

In general, these questions are referred to as FAQs or frequently asked questions.

When it comes to implant customer service and support, patients don’t know what questions to ask. These are called SAQS or should have asked questions. Patients generally aren’t going to ask them, so it needs to be incorporated in the scripting to tell them.

“Mrs. Jones, we take exquisite care of our implant patients. Although you’ll need a day or two before you go back to work, our doctor typically calls you the evening after your implants are placed to see how you’re doing, and our staff checks in with you on the third day. We will also provide you with a daytime emergency number if you have any questions, concerns, or problems, which are relatively rare. Our goal is for you to have the best results with the easiest level of treatment, and we will do everything possible to keep you comfortable. Most patients do extremely well with dental implant treatment.”

You can also add key benefits to the script such as the many years of experience that the implant team has, the high quality of implants, and practice’s use of the most leading-edge implant technology. These are the answers to the “should-have-asked” questions that will increase patient case acceptance as well as patient satisfaction. Sometimes people simply don’t know how well they are being treated if they are not given an explanation. If you have ever stayed at a Motel 6 and a Ritz-Carlton, you don’t need anyone to explain the difference. With implants that is simply not the case.

The best way to approach developing your script is to hold a think-tank meeting with your team. Your team gets a lot of the questions and complaints that doctors never hear about. By holding a think-tank meeting, you are engaging in a team-building activity where team members will feel appreciated and listened to while you solicit their best ideas. It is impossible to leave a good think-tank meeting without fresh ideas and a better perspective on the should-have-asked questions.

You must also be engaged. Going into autopilot and following a robotic implant treatment presentation every time a patient comes in won't work. The treatment coordinator and doctor should engage patients in discussions that encourage questions. Questions often reveal what patients are thinking, what they are concerned about, and what they don't know.

Keep in mind that a certain percentage of your patients will be predictable. They are the easy ones that usually end up either accepting or rejecting treatment. Hopefully, the vast majority are accepting treatment, but rather than thinking that they agree to treatment because your process is phenomenal, there are things you need to investigate. For

example, are patients accepting treatment only because your best referring doctors are typically sending you the best implant cases and those patients are already pre-selected? Were you aware that 35% of implant patients referred from a general practice to a specialty practice for surgical consultation never make an appointment? Before we assume that our process is so good that there is little room for improvement, we might want to question where those referrals come from to begin with and how they are qualified.

## Summary

You should always have a very well-planned, step-by-step, and highly scripted implant treatment coordinator process. This requires training treatment coordinators and doctors to ask questions along the way to fully understand the patient's unique interests and concerns. You must also uncover what is referred to as "should-have-asked" questions and then answer them appropriately with benefits statements and positive insights. When you reach this level, your implant success rate in terms of case acceptance will go even higher.

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