

Getting Dialed In

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Have you ever launched a pay-per-click campaign and received emails and calls, but for some reason the conversion rate was lower than expected? If you answered yes, then there may be room for improvement in your team's phone skills. I've noticed that even the most skilled front office associate sometimes tends to miss an email or forgets to ask for the patient's name and phone number on a call. I know these actions seem rather simple, but you'd be surprised at how many times they're overlooked.

At least quarterly, practices should "mystery shop" their own practice, by calling and pretending to be a patient, to learn first-hand what their patients experience and to identify areas for improvement. You can use the following "Perfect Phone Call" checklist when evaluating your practice.

The Perfect Phone Call

Superior Communication Skills - Enunciation, tone of voice and demeanor reflects positively on the practice.

Takes the Lead - Who's the expert here? The trained office associate, or the patient? Letting the patient lead the conversation may not be the best tactic.

Key Questions Asked - Asks the right questions: Name, phone number, how they heard about you, main concern, special event coming up, etc.

Credentialing - Every team member should have each provider's CV down, backwards and forward. Why would the patient want to choose a certain practice if they don't

understand the value behind it?

Procedure and Product Knowledge Shared - When a patient is calling in with specific questions, sometimes they can only be answered in a consultation with the provider. However, each team member should have a good amount of knowledge about the products and services sold in the practice and know how to explain them in a way as to not provide medical advice and pricing.

Books the Appointment - After the above steps are completed, booking the appointment should be a breeze, right? But how do we know they'll show?

Completes Follow Up - Personally emailing the patient to confirm before the end of the day is very important, as well as a confirmation phone call the day before the scheduled appointment. I'm sure this is happening most of the time, but what exactly is being emailed to these leads? Text message confirmations and automated emails are super convenient, but then the personalization is left adrift.

The checklist above is definitely something to consider when spending your marketing dollars into paid advertisements. Is your team ready? Do they know what campaign you just launched? How will you keep track of who may need training or a refresher course for phone etiquette?

About the Author: Lacy J. Banks is the owner and CEO of Aesthetic Practice Concepts providing phone and consultation trainings for board-certified plastic surgeons and their staff. If you'd like a complimentary assessment of your team's phone skills please feel free to contact her at (760) 747-1111 or at lacy@apc.management. She'd love to hear from you.

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