

## The Sheet of Paper that Saved 1500 Lives... *continued*

Their argument was that doctors and nurses were too pressed for time and overwhelmed with patient procedures to do a checklist.

They said that there simply wasn't time to fill out another useless piece of paper that wouldn't have any real effect (in their opinion) on the patient or the treatment.

Dr. Pronovost didn't give up that easily. He believed his little piece of paper could do great things if implemented with every single patient setup. He persuaded and persuaded. Finally his pestering won out and the hospital agreed to test it out.

The results were amazing and almost beyond belief. The infection rates at the hospital went to virtually zero. The hospital estimated that during the test phase, they had saved millions of dollars, not to mention the lives saved.

Next the whole state of Michigan wanted in. They hired Dr. Pronovost to come and implement his checklist system in all their state run hospitals. These hospitals had some of the worst infection rates in the country at the time.

These were the conditions he faced.

- **Morale in those hospitals was low**
- **Lots of poor patients with short staffing**
- **Lots of stressed out doctors and nurses**
- **Auxiliaries being paid too little and asked to do too much**

This posed a true challenge for sure.

He dug in and went to work anyway. Before long all the hospitals in their fold had fully implemented his checklists. Now, they just had to figure out if his simple little piece of paper would work there as well as it had at Johns Hopkins.

Well, it did. When all the dust cleared, the state of Michigan estimated that it had saved over one hundred million dollars and at least 1500 lives. All this because of a "stupid" little piece of paper.

How can we apply all of this to dentistry? Even though we don't face situations in which our patients' lives are daily endangered because of our procedures, we do face similar situations. Our dental auxiliaries are often asked to remember too many little details. Even our most common procedures have an amazing amount of detail that didn't exist in the good old amalgam and extraction days. We ask and expect a lot.

We also think that we don't need another piece of paper lying around to add to our mountain of paperwork. I don't want to add to our paperwork dilemma any more than the next dentist, but the value that is derived from using checklists has to be considered. The benefits far outweigh the downside.

Just think about it. How many times have you gone into the operatory as the doctor, sat down, picked up the drill, gone to work, and had to pause or stop a procedure, awkwardly, because a particular supply or piece of equipment was either missing or not working properly? I'll wager it's happened more than you would like to admit. I know it used to happen to me quite frequently.

A checklist takes all the guesswork out of the equation. I often say in my seminars that the checklist "glues the assistant to her seat" during the procedures. No running down the hall or calling for another paid employee to fetch an instrument that was erroneously left off the setup. No doctor sitting there chairside with a motionless drill in their hand while the patient gags on a cotton roll while the assistant is off retrieving something that shouldn't have been forgotten in the first place.

The checklist for each procedure is now an integral part of everyday life at Griffin Dental. I wouldn't know how to practice without them. They give me the confidence that I can swiftly and easily move from room to room without delay. I can also trust that my superstar staff has gotten everything precisely right each time.

Do we still occasionally mess up? Sure, human nature will sometimes lead to even overlooking an item on the checklist, but 99.9% of the time we get the setup exact and perfect. That makes me happy.

Checklists are one of the 4 backbones of our clinical efficiency protocol that allow us to completely maximize our production and our time at the office.

Whether quality, efficiency, decreased stress, increased production or something else is your primary motivator: checklists should be part of your practice today.

If you would like to see exactly how we develop and implement checklists in our office we have created a video to help you with all the little tips and tricks that will help you get these little miracles into your office right now. Just go to <http://thecapacityacademy.com/checklist> to watch the video.

*Dr. Griffin can be reached for questions at [Chris@3daydentist.com](mailto:Chris@3daydentist.com).*

## The Five Most Overlooked Ways Receptionists Lose Patients And How You Can Help Them by Chris Mullins<sup>2</sup>



patient. If your business depends on scheduling appointments, you're one step closer to the next appointment.

### **Lost Sales Opportunity #4 – NOT ASKING "HOW DID YOU FIND US?"**

You've no doubt spent thousands of dollars on lead generation to get your phone to ring. Now it rings. But no one is asking the question, "**How did you find us?**" You might as well take half the money in your bank account and flush it down the toilet.

You need to track (call measurement recording) whether your new prospects came from your Yellow Pages ad, that new ad, radio, word of mouth, or whatever. You don't need to interrogate them up front. Just somewhere in the conversation say, "By the way, where did you hear about us?" You should be looking for a report every day that lists the sources of that day's callers.

### **Lost Sales Opportunity #5 – NOT REPEATING THE PROBLEM.**

This is a big deal, because in today's world, many people aren't really listening to what others are saying. When you repeat the problem, you've not only given the prospective patient a chance to correct any misunderstanding; but you're also showing a rare courtesy.

Are any of these "earth shattering" revelations to you? Of course not. But how many times in the last month - or even the last decade - were you blown away by the quality of a receptionist you reached? I bet you can count them on the fingers of one hand, with room to spare.

Let others slice away their profits by competing on ever lower prices. You should compete on something that's not only free, but also extremely valuable in this fast-paced world: Great Wow Customer Service... starting with your receptionist... "The Front Desk Expert" also known as "The Dental Concierge Specialist."

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### **Lost Sales Opportunity #1 – NO GREETING, OR A BAD ONE.**

In most businesses, greetings are somewhere between lousy and nonexistent. Receptionists usually sound like they just woke up, are bored to death, or are trying to get the patient (customer) off the phone just as fast as possible. One thing is for sure: They don't sound like they're ready to welcome your established patients or your prospective patients.

For countless thousands of years, humans have been conditioned to make instant judgments. It used to be a survival thing. Instead, now you should think of it as a business survival thing. Someone is going to form a "buy it or forget it" conclusion instantly.

Try this: "**Thank you for calling Dr. X's office This is Chris speaking How can I help you?**" This should be done with a smile that says, "We're here for you!"

### **Lost Sales Opportunity #2 – NOT ASKING FOR THE CALLER'S NAME.**

Many receptionists don't ask for the caller's name. This usually comes off as being rude, or at least not welcoming.

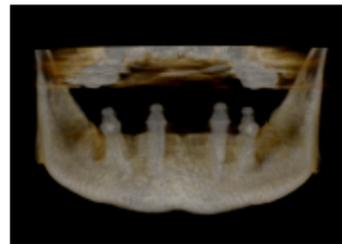
Consider the upside, though: most people regard their names as the sweetest-sounding words in the English language. Asking for the name is a great way to begin building rapport and showing the caller what kind of business you really are: a friendly one. Insist that your receptionist asks for the caller's name.

### **Lost Sales Opportunity #3 – NOT USING THE CALLER'S NAME.**

"**Mrs. Smith, welcome!**" This is a brilliant move, because what you're doing is telling her that she's now a

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**ZYGOMATIC IMPLANTS AND "ALL-ON-FOUR" FIXED, IMMEDIATE LOADED TREATMENT OPTIONS**



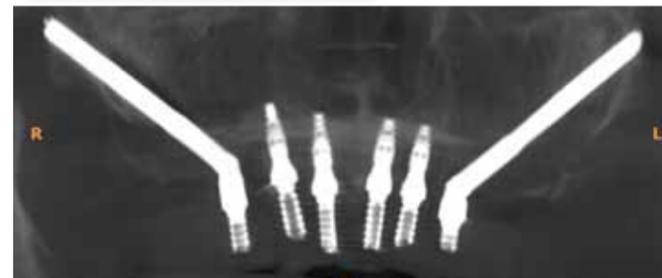
AN "ALL-ON-FOUR" CASE COMPLETED BY DR. HART

2/27/2014



ZYGOMATIC IMPLANT CASE COMPLETED BY DR. HART

6/18/2014



For your patients with severe bone loss, or low tolerance for dentures, please contact Dr. Hart to discuss if a fixed, immediate loaded treatment option may be right for your patient.

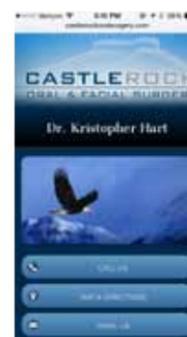
**CROMFS \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**



The most recent Scholarship Award was awarded to Dylan P. of Castle Rock! He was extremely excited to receive his award. Thank you to all of our referrals who had patients enter to win. Our fourth scholarship award is now open for applicants. Students must be 14 years or older and a wisdom teeth patient of CROMFS. Let your students know!

**MOBILE WEBSITE**

Our mobile website is now up and running! Patients can register online from their mobile devices, get directions to our office, and more. Check it out!



**The Sheet of Paper That Saved 1500 Lives**

had grown. It seemed to him that all the complex procedural requirements had led to staff members at the hospital neglecting or forgetting even simple steps in the prevention of infections.

He wanted to fix the problem, but how could he? Could he go back to the dark ages when medicine wasn't so darn difficult? No. Could he magically make all the doctors and nurses remember the hundreds of steps required in many procedures without ever making a mistake? No, not humanly possible. However, the good doctor had a simple idea that would rock the foundations of organized medicine throughout the country.

That idea was so simple that it would even fit on one sheet of paper. In fact it was a single sheet of paper. A simple checklist.

Why did he think a checklist would solve his problems and save lives that shouldn't have been in peril?

- **Medicine is complex**
- **Human memory is naturally flawed in stressful, complex environments**
- **Distractions add to the mix and make mistakes even worse**

If you miss one key thing, you are just as bad off as if you didn't even do any thing to begin with.

Now to the uphill battle. He faced criticism from his friends and colleagues who were offended that he would even suggest that they needed checklists to do their jobs.

*by Dr. Chris Griffin!*

I often lecture on the need for dentists to make the lives of their dental assistants easier, thus making their own lives easier in the process. Surely we can all agree that the job of performing dentistry, just as performing medical procedures, has gotten more and more complex.

Medical advancements have gotten so complex with so many different steps that must be performed precisely that relying on simple human memory to get the steps right 100 percent of the time is really asking too much. This was proven true recently in the world of medicine and dentistry is not far behind.

In his book The Checklist Manifesto, Dr. Atul Gawande recounts the story of Dr. Peter Pronovost, a physician at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Dr. Pronovost had observed that the infection rate for his department was far higher than what he deemed acceptable. The infection problem had gradually gotten worse as the sheer amount of information that doctors and nurses were expected to remember

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