

# ExecTech Management Consulting

To: Practice Owner

**Tips and Ideas**

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## **Seven Steps for Turning Acquaintances into New Patients**

You can build your practice by introducing yourself to local healthcare providers, business owners and other professionals. You can drop by to give them coupons for their customers or invitations to their employees, and then steer the conversation to their personal needs. If they then become your patients, and are delighted with your practice, they will refer new patients to you.

If you follow these seven steps, you can get anyone into your office as a new patient. You do not use pressure or tricks to get them in. Just care about them and follow these steps.

To keep it simple, I'm using dental examples, but the steps work with all professions and businesses.

### **1. Chat**

Start a conversation with the person. "Nice weather we're having!" "How's your week going for you?"

Talk about anything that gets the person into a good mood. Pay a compliment, tell a funny story, give a gift or talk about something that interests the person.

### **2. Bring up Your Practice**

If it has not yet come up, lead the conversation to dentistry.

"Did you know my dental office is just down the road?" "I work for a dentist on Main Street and we're getting tired of all the road construction, too." "Things are going well for the dental profession, as well!"

### **3. See if the Person Currently Needs Your Services**

"Do you see your dentist like you're supposed to?" "So are you happy with your dentist?" "Are your teeth in good shape?" "How do you like your smile?" Ask follow-up questions, as well.

If the person is happy with his or her dentist, change the subject. You have planted the seed.

### **4. Ask More Questions**

Most people like talking about themselves and their conditions. Once they know you are a professional who cares, they will open up to you. Avoid discussing fees, appointments or insurance until they give you an in-depth description of their conditions.

### **5. Promote Your Practice**

If you are the doctor, sharing success stories is an excellent way to promote yourself. "I had a patient with a problem just like yours and he . . ."

Staff members can say things like, "My mother had the same problems as you. She said she tried two other offices without results. But then she saw Dr. Jones and has never felt better!"

Also, describe the benefits. What's in it for the patient? "You'll be able to eat without pain." "Your gums will stop bleeding." "Your smile will look fantastic!"

### **6. Schedule an Appointment**

Get the person in as soon as possible. Immediate appointments are important for new patients, people in fear and everyone who wants fast service. "Do you prefer mornings or afternoons?"

If the person wants to wait, offer to send a package of information.

### **7. Exchange Contact Information**

"Here's my card. You can call me at anytime."

There are many more ways these seven steps can be used, and role playing is usually required before staff members or new doctors will succeed with these steps. However, for the most part, that's all there is to it!

Mike Chatelain, Managing Partner

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