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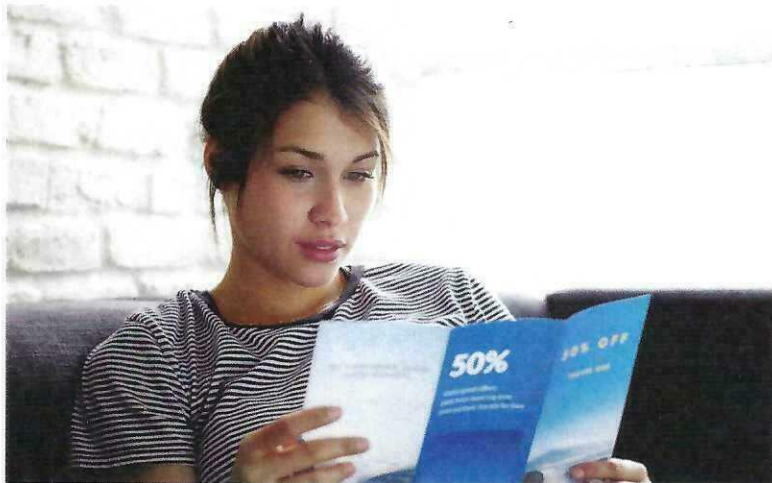
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A BROCHURE THAT SELLS



MOST PRACTICE BROCHURES ARE DESIGNED TO INFORM THE PATIENT ABOUT THE PRACTICE AND THEIR POLICIES AND ARE PROBABLY NOT WORTH THE PAPER THEY ARE PRINTED ON. AN IMPROPERLY DESIGNED PIECE MAY ACTUALLY HURT YOUR IMAGE. HOWEVER, A PROPERLY DESIGNED PRACTICE BROCHURE CAN BECOME BOTH AN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MARKETING TOOL TO INCREASE YOUR NEW PATIENT FLOW AND CASE ACCEPTANCE.

by Dr. Craig Callen¹

What are the necessary components of an effective dental practice brochure that will help to boost your bottom line? First you should probably ask yourself a couple of questions:

Is this brochure going to be passed out to your patient base, new patients, mailed as a stand alone marketing piece, or all of the above?

What is your target market? Are you trying to appeal to women, bleaching candidates, denture patients?

Is this a long or short-term effort?

Are you trying to simply attract new patients, increase the quality of care accepted by your patients, or both?

Will there be an offer?

What is your budget?

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SELLING YOUR PRACTICE? CHECK THAT LEASE CAREFULLY!



By George Vaill[®]

In a previous article I told prospective buyers about Dr. Bob in Atlanta who was bitten by an incompetent lease review. He had purchased a practice with what he thought was long-term occupancy security guaranteed by multiple lease renewal options. As it turned out, there was a provision in the lease stating that the renewal options were personal to the original tenant and, therefore, not transferable to him.

Neither Bob nor his attorney had caught that stipulation.

As he was ready to start the next five year term, the landlord informed Bob that he had no options to renew and forced him to accept a new lease with more stringent rental terms. Since Bob's only alternative was to relocate and incur a huge expense

to build out a new facility, he had little choice but to agree to the new lease terms. He was extremely lucky that the landlord didn't force him out the door.

As a seller, what lease issues should you review to insure that there are no provisions that may impede the sale of your practice? Here are just a few:

- **ASSIGNABILITY:** *Is the lease, in fact, transferable? The lease may state that you do not have the right to pass your lease on to another party. Or, it may say that the landlord agrees not to unreasonably withhold consent to an assignment of the lease - with one specific exception that may be revealed upon careful reading: upon requesting consent, the landlord has the right to terminate the lease. Each of those scenarios results with a significantly devalued because you can't guaranty your buyer a readymade location within which to operate the practice.*
- **LENGTH OF TERM:** *How much time remains in the current term? Are there renewal options? How many and of what length? Are they transferable to your buyer? Even if the lease is assignable, without the ability to guaranty the buyer long-term occupancy through multiple renewal options, the investment you hope they will make in your practice is at great risk. It would be foolhardy for anyone to purchase your practice without some guaranty that they can remain in your already improved and established facility long enough to achieve a good return on that investment.*
- **CHANGE OF CONDITIONS:** *Does the landlord have the right to impose changes in the rental terms as a condition to granting you the right to assign your lease? Where your buyer may find the rental terms attractive, if the landlord has the right to raise the rent, or take away some parking privileges or reduce the number of future options or even the future right to (re)assign the lease to another party then, again, the practice you hope to sell is significantly devalued because you can't guaranty your buyer that he or she will have the benefit of the current lease terms.*

If you find that one or more of these conditions exist, you can attempt to renegotiate the lease in the hope of eliminating these obstacles. The landlord may or may not cooperate. He or she has no obligation to even discuss changes with you. The degree to which he may cooperate will be a function of supply and demand at that time and whether or not he perceives it to be in his interest.

Make sure that whoever you engage to review your lease has the necessary experience to accomplish this most important task in order to prevent your practice sale plans from being derailed by unattractive lease terms.

A BROCHURE THAT SELLS

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Once you have set some goals, then let's look at the nuts and bolts of an effective brochure:

1. *Use high quality paper as well as a high quality printing company. This may be the patient's first impression of your practice and you don't want them to think you are cheap. This is not the time to try and print your own brochures on your office printer.*
2. *Just like a print advertisement, there should be a headline that gets your attention, such as, "Beautiful Smiles to Change Your Life," or "Crowns in an Hour!" The headline should entice the reader to continue reading.*
3. *You, the doctor, are NOT the primary focus of the brochure. This is not a doctor biography. Which brings us to the 4th point.*
4. *Talk benefits! What are you doing for them? Why should they pick you over all the other dentists in your community? How will having their teeth restored change their life? Some benefits for the patients might be: convenient hours, easy financing, sedation available, crowns in an hour, look younger, feel better, live longer You get the idea.*
5. *Cater to your market. A high-end, low-volume cosmetic practice will have a different patient brochure than a family practice appealing to mom, dad, and their three kids. What appeals to the patient you would like to treat? Don't send mixed messages.*
6. *Testimonials are extremely powerful! I have several before and after pictures of a variety of procedures, combined with a short (sometimes edited) patient testimonial to our treatment. Ask the patient to write how the treatment you provided affected their lives. When possible include their name (if not, use first name and last name initial) and their occupation to personalize their endorsement. This is probably one of the most powerful components of your brochure.*
7. *Pictures draw attention to your piece. Either professional models or high-quality patient pictures help to liven up your brochure. You can have the doctor's picture with a brief biography, but remember that you are not the focus. We often use a picture of our whole staff in our marketing pieces. If you do not have the photography skills, hire a professional to take the pictures for you. Show a variety of cases showing treatment you want to promote. Signed model releases are a must.*
8. *New patient offers can turn a simple brochure into a true marketing tool for your practice. Some offers we have used successfully in the past include, "Free Teeth Bleaching with Adult New Patient Examination, Cleaning, and X-Rays," or "\$50 off New Patient Examination, X-Rays and Cleaning." There needs to be an expiration date to encourage the patient to call now.*
9. *Include a call to action. Simply asking the patient to call today gives your piece a little bit of a boost.*
10. *Incentives to refer can turn your existing patients into powerful referral sources. Check the laws with your state dental board on this one, as some states do not allow this. We offer \$50 credit towards future treatment for each patient referral (as well as \$50 off treatment for the referral). Include a line that they can fill in to get credit for the referral.*
11. *Words that sell matter. Words such as "discover," "results," and "proven" all have a positive effect on patients' buying decisions while other words such as "buy," "contract" and "pain" have an obvious negative effect. Refer to the article on page 8 for "words that sell," and words to avoid in your marketing pieces.*
12. *Distribution methods will effect your return. We send our brochures out with new patient packets and pass them out to our existing patient base. We also mail them to a new resident list we maintain. You may have different offers on each brochure. You can purchase high quality mailing lists based on patient's income and educational backgrounds for your mailing.*
13. *Consider hiring a professional. If you don't have the skill or the time to put together a quality practice brochure, then consider using a professional firm to help you.*

A properly designed brochure can be a great boost to your new patient flow and case acceptance, while an improperly designed piece can be a huge waste of your time and money. Track your results and tweak your piece for the best results. Take some time to consider the aforementioned points before starting this project.

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ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?!

By Dr. Steve Sobel³

I have had and continue to cherish the relationship I have with many Profitable Dentist readers who have not only heard me speak but have taken the time to call to say hello and allow me the honor of “coaching” them. As tribute to these relationships, for those who have requested this article, and out of my loyalty to the mission of the Profitable Dentist, I write this article for all of you!

I have always believed that when a dental practice team is able to have FUN - not only do spirits rise - but profits as well, and the unparalleled benefit of customer retention and loyalty becomes an overwhelming and welcomed familiar “song.” So, how do you inject and practice FUN PRINCIPLES every day? ... a few tested ideas:

1) GUMBY AS A ROLE MODEL:

Remember the loveable character Gumby? Sure you do!

What makes him remarkable is that he is even tempered, very adaptable and flexible to a changing landscape, a loyal friend, and reminds us all that a positive approach to even routine tasks (Know what they are in dentistry?!) can be done with passion, appreciation and with a smile on one’s face. Gumby, if placed in strategic locations in your office, will be an influence on staff, patients and even the office cleaning crew. I recommend Gum bi es of all sizes be inhabitants of your office. Staff can move them to different locations each day - can even dress them in the winter if it is cold, and allow them to sit, stand or lie down. Gumby might give you the feeling that he would like you to get a Pokey, but that is up to the staff.

2) STAFF/TEAM “BOOK CLUB”:

I have led many office retreats for dental practices, I recommended about two years ago to have staff pick

a book to read monthly and to then create the time - perhaps one hour per month - for staff to meet in an enjoyable setting (can be the office!) to discuss the life lessons of the book. This simple activity can have remarkable results - allows all to have input and creates great communication and trust that truly has carryover to the practice. We started that retreat by recommending the book Tuesdays With Morrie. I have a list I have put together that will work wonders with this idea - books of joy, perspective, touching stories that renew spirits. We all need that in large doses! There are more “residuals” to this idea than you can imagine. Creativity in how you involve staff is the key. What other practicing dentist has created a book club like this? Be an initiator. Many laughs will abound at your “book club” meeting as well.

3) HUMOR BULLETIN BOARD:

A bulletin board posted with appropriate humor for the office can be shared with whoever comes in creating smiles for all. I can send you a set of directions on how to set this up! You will be besieged with folks who want to contribute to it and you will be the talk of the town.

4) LENDING CD/DVD LIBRARY FOR STAFF:

There are an abundant number of motivational programs and humorous takes on life that staff can listen to on the way to work and the ride home. DVDs can also be superb and staff can watch them at their leisure. There are many that really gear themselves on the dental profession and reinforce what we do best “take ourselves lightly, so that we can take our careers seriously!” Have MENTAL FLOSS available for every employee, not just dental floss! The “laugh line” absolutely impacts the bottom line!