

Ethical Sales & Communication Programme for Dentists & their teams



Mistake Number Five

Imagine a scenario where you and your partner are having a disagreement over something trivial. Do you often find that a small disagreement can often escalate into a major row that lasts for hours or even days?

Why does this happen?

I often find this happens because neither of the parties can see each others point of view, in other words we get defensive about our own situation. The more defensive we become, the more defensive our partner becomes and that is why major rows can often break out.

One of the biggest mistakes dentists make is that when they get an objection from a patient they can become quite defensive and handle the objection badly, which then has a knock on effect on the relationship between the dentist and the patient and thus the sale does not proceed.

When a patient raises an objection it is because he or she has not been convinced, is uncertain or has worries about the treatment. In other words, it has not been sold properly. Poor selling raises objections and you need to work on preventing objections rather than a cure. However, I often hear dentists reply to a price concern with comments such as

No it is not expensive,
What are you comparing it to
No it is not expensive, it is an investment
Not really

The price of the treatment is the same price as a short holiday.

When you use these statements, then you will only get your clients back up and they will think that you are not seeing things from their point of view and that you are not acting in their best interests. When this happens the relationship can breakdown.

Mistake Number Six

A bunny rabbit is walking through the forest one day and he bumps into a snake. He says to the snake 'I am blind I cannot see, who are you?' The snake replies 'I cannot see either, who are you?' The snake touches the bunny rabbit and tells him that he has floppy ears, a bushy tail and fur and proclaims 'You are a bunny rabbit'. The bunny rabbit is excited and is hopping around and then he starts touching the snake and tells him that he has beady eyes, sharp fangs and he is all slippery he must be a sales person. Now, there used to be a misconception that sales people were all snakes and were pushy and maybe in the past salespeople didn't have a great reputation. One of the reasons this may have happened is because they didn't spend enough time investing in the relationship and that is another mistake I find dentists make, that they don't spend enough time getting to know and build relationships with their patients.

I once heard a dentist on one of my courses tell me that we put the patient on the chair and we sometimes forget they have a heart beat and that we are more interested in looking at the clock on the wall to ensure that we are not running late.

A few weeks after every programme I follow up with the dentist, I often hear the dentist telling me that by spending time building rapport, getting to know the patient and becoming genuinely interested in some of their patient's personal details that they have learnt more about the patients than they have in the previous 20 years. They also tell me that because of this different type of conversation, new opportunities have been created and patients start telling the dentist of treatment they would like to have done.

Mistake Number Seven.

The good Lord gave us two ears and one mouth, but do we ever use them in this proportion? And that is another mistake I find dentists make is that they listen to respond, rather than to understand.

Listening to respond is when you are listening to the patient, but you are actually thinking of what you are going to reply to them and what you are doing is waiting for a gap in the conversation to say your piece. If you are thinking what you are going to say back, it is impossible to really listen to your patients.

You cannot do both at the same time.

Listening to understand is when you are listening attentively to your patient, you are genuinely interested and you have no pre-conceived ideas. In other words 100% of your whole focus is on the patient.

When you listen to respond, what things may happen? You can make assumptions, offer the wrong solutions and invariably leads to the breakdown in the relationship.

We must become genuinely interested in our patients and they will more likely become genuinely interested in what we have got to offer.

There you have it seven common mistakes that I find Dentists make in their communication with their patients. There are a lot more, but these are the seven most common.

I strongly suggest that you go through the list and ask your nurse or an other member of your team if you make these mistakes. Listen carefully to their feedback and ask for examples. It is only then, will you start to make some changes. If you want to achieve better results, then you need to change behaviour.

Good luck



The Seven Biggest Mistakes

There are 7 big mistakes dentists and orthodontists make when selling dental treatment. These mistakes cost their businesses thousands of pounds every year in lost opportunities and the chance to deliver the dentistry they have only dreamed of.

Ashley Latter specializes in coaching Dentists, Orthodontists and their teams to develop their Ethical sales & Communication Skills, Customer Care and developing High Performance Teams. Over the last 10 years, over 4250 delegates have taken his Two Day Ethical Sales & Communication Programme. To learn more about his programmes and also to sign up for his FREE email newsletter please visit www.ashleylatter.com

www.ashleylatter.com

 **Ashley Latter**
coaching you and your team to achieve

The Seven Biggest Mistakes

Over the last 11 years, I have personally trained over 4250 dentists, orthodontists and their team members on my "Two Day Ethical Sales & Communication Programme". During this time I have probably presented to twice as many delegates at various conferences and local BDA Meetings. I socialise more with dentists than I do my own family, so I feel I know a lot about how dentists communicate with their patients.

When I deliver a presentation I will often ask the audience this question:

"Hands up if you are in sales?"

It is surprising how few hands actually go up. Think of a time when you knew a patient would have benefited by having a course of treatment that you were suggesting, but for some reason they did not proceed. You know hand on heart it would have been right for them and they would have definitely benefited by having the work done.

Why does it happen?

The major reason why patients do not take up what you have got to offer is that the treatment was not explained well - in other words, there was a lack of communication between yourself and the patient.

Everyone in your Practice is a salesperson. Every person, every day is selling an idea or concept to another human being and whether the other person takes on board the idea or not, will depend on how well the idea is being communicated. The most important person in your Practice are your receptionists. A receptionist can make the difference of whether a patient even visits your Practice, simply by the way they answer the telephone. If you have answering machine on at lunch time, then you are definitely closed. How many patients actually leave a message?

Most dentists do not get this concept. They feel that the more they spend on technical skills, the more patients will believe them and buy from them. This is a common mistake.

Patients do not care how much you know, until you first demonstrate to the patient on how much you care. You need to become a Doctor of selling.

A good doctor will

Build a relationship with you
Find out what your problems is (diagnosis)
Present a solution(prescription)

Everyone in your Practice sells.

Here are some common mistakes I find dentists, orthodontists and their teams make that cost them thousands of pounds worth of lost opportunities and the chance to deliver the dentistry they dream of.



Mistake Number One

One of the biggest mistakes dentists and orthodontists make is that they tend to talk too technically when presenting solutions to their patients. Everyday you are immersed in Dentistry and the vast majority of the courses you go on are technical, particularly if you are a Specialist. If you tell a patient that an implant is a titanium screw that gets surgically screwed in your jaw bone under anaesthetic, then don't be too surprised if your patient loses interest. If you are an orthodontist and you tell your patient that you have a bracket that is self ligating, which have low frictional forces and uses heat activated niti wires containing 6% copper, then don't be surprised if they look confused.

You see your patients do not go on the same courses as you and they do not live and breathe dentistry like you do. If you talk this language to them, they are most likely going to switch off and be put off having treatment. On most occasions patients do not actually care.

In 1937 Dale Carnegie wrote a book called 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' and one of the principles in the book is **'Try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view.'** In other words, take your shoes off and put your patient's shoes on and talk to them in their language, a language that they understand. Once you do this, then more patients will say yes to what you are suggesting.

Mistake Number Two

One of the toughest things about sales, in fact one of the toughest things in life in general, is we often forget others don't necessarily share our passion about things.

So for example if you have an absolute burning passion for fishing and you live and breathe fishing everyday, then it can often come to you as a shock when people do not share the same passion as you and actually could not care less. This is the same for dentistry. You are treating patients for 4-5 days a week, 44 weeks a year and then going on many courses learning the technical side of your profession, you are immersed in dentistry all your life.

See, no one, including your patients, cares anywhere nearly as much about your business or your particular skill-set, the way you do.

So when you're out there trying to sell patients on something, you need to sell them on end results and solutions, not "how good you are" at delivering dentistry.

And it's sometimes hard to do this because you're so completely immersed in being the best at what you do -- it's hard to imagine anyone, especially your patients, not sharing or appreciating the pride of ownership you have, or how skilled you are and how competent your work is. Rest assured, they don't appreciate it, because it's not their problem.

Patients will buy from you, because of the results you can deliver and nothing more. My clients do not care that I have delivered over 3500 workshops and coached over 40,000 delegates in the last 18 years, they want to know the benefits and the results they will achieve by working with me. People buy results. A person does not buy a drill, he buys a hole. He buys what the drill will do for him.

When selling dentistry, sell results, solutions and end benefits, and your patients will hear you loud and clear. They are not interested in features.

Mistake Number Three

Imagine you were going to a restaurant and as you walked to the Front Desk there are two choices on where you can eat. You could eat in the bar and have a snack, or in the A La Carte Restaurant where you can have a five course meal. The head waiter starts to look you up and down and judging by the way you are dressed and look, offers you the bar snack menu.

How would you feel?

You might feel annoyed, insulted and you might have felt as if you had been pre-judged and were not given the opportunity to decide for yourself where you wanted to eat. This is very similar to what some dentists do, although not as bad. One of the biggest mistakes dentists make is 'That they try and offer a solution to their patients, without first fully understanding their wants and needs. In other words they assume what they think the clients requires.



I have had literally hundreds of dentists openly admit in my workshops that they have in their lives pre-judged a client when they were presenting treatment options, often by what the patient is wearing, what job they have, or even the post code where they live. When you do this, then it is nearly as bad as the Head Waiter pre-judging and deciding where you should eat. You will miss out on opportunities.

If you split the word assume up like this ass u me. If you assume, you will make an ass out of you and me. Never make assumptions or pre-judge your patients, you will be missing out on many thousands of pounds worth of opportunities and also the chance to deliver the dentistry that you spent many hours studying.

Mistake Number Four

There are several elements to the sales process. These include, building rapport, asking questions to find out what your patients requires, providing a solution and then you talk money. So far you have invested a lot of time and effort into the relationship. If you then hand a treatment plan to your patients and then tell your patient to go away and think about it, that is probably what they will do - think about it. All that time invested into the relationship may have been wasted. Mistake number four is not asking the patient if they want to proceed with the treatment, in other words mistake number four is not closing.

There are many reasons why dentists do not close. These include

1. You don't like rejection.
2. You don't want to sound pushy.
3. It is uncomfortable.
4. You were not taught these skills at Dental School.
5. You don't know how to ask.

However, if you don't get the patient to commit, it doesn't matter how good your clinical skills are, you will never get a chance to use them. Even more upsetting is that your patients will never have the major benefits you provide in their lives. Patients don't know what they don't know.

Take the c out of close, you are left with lose. That's what happens when you don't close. You lose because you don't get to deliver the treatment and the patient loses because they do not receive the benefits your services can provide.