



Assume what your clients  
know at your peril

# Business coach Ashley Latter explains why assuming that your clients know what you can offer them can be disastrous for your business

I was having an interesting conversation with my sister-in-law last month about the hairdressing salon she owns in a working class area of east Manchester. She has spent thousands of pounds doing the salon up and it would not look out of place in a modern city centre.

During this chat, I was aware that the person sitting next to me was having hair extensions. For the people like me who don't know what hair extensions are, it is when women can literally have hair added onto their existing hair to make it longer than it is now. The hair is imported from the Far East. What came as a shock to me is that women pay from £500 upwards to have this four-hour procedure carried out on them.

I told my sister-in-law that this pricey procedure surely would not take off in this area, as I thought that people would not be able to afford to pay £500 or more. How wrong I was! Last Sunday she informed me that she has now taken 15 bookings in one month and has had to extend her opening times to accommodate all these bookings.

What made me chuckle is that I coach dentists not to assume what patients are prepared to pay, and here I was assuming that her new service would not work because of the location.

Only last week one of my dentist clients was recounting to me that he recently fitted two implants for a new patient who came to him because he had been informed that his present dentist was only offering bridges, even though in reality he



also could do implants – another worthy tale about assuming.

It also reminded me of a story that Neal Sampson, a dentist from Stafford who treated a local traveller, told me. The traveller was over six feet tall, dressed very scruffily, had long hair and looked like he didn't have five pence to his name. He came in and wanted some implant treatments that ran into many thousands of pounds. Neal went onto treat this man's wife for many thousands of pounds' worth of dentistry as well. He managed to build a super relationship, gave the patient what he wanted and he did this by not assuming what he could afford by the way he was dressed.

There is a really important lesson here. Do all your clients know about all the services that you provide? Or are you presuming that they do? Only recently we did an exercise with a dental laboratory technician where he listed his top 10 clients and all the services that he provided to them. He put a tick if they were purchasing the service and cross if they weren't, and he was shocked to discover that there were many crosses that amounted to thousands of pounds' worth of new opportunities within these accounts.

He made contact with a few of his clients to find out why they never sent this work to him and he was surprised to hear that the dentists did not know that the laboratory provided this service. What was even more startling was that this work was going to another laboratory.

From doing this exercise, the technician discovered that he needed to spend time communicating with his clients. He had thought that by just sending price lists to his clients, he was informing his clients of all his services. He was wrong and his presumption had resulted in him missing out on work worth thousands of pounds.

So my final message and coaching is:

- Don't presume your clients know about all of the services that you provide
- Undertake an exercise where you list all of your clients and then the services that you provide. After that do some analyses to ascertain if you have any missed out on any opportunities
- If you are missing out, act proactively and either visit your clients or speak with them on the telephone.

Don't just think that by sending out literature to your clients, they will read it and take it all in. I promise you, it could be the most important exercise you undertake in your business.

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Ashley Latter is a business coach and has delivered his Ethical Sales and Communication Programme to over 4,000 dental professionals. During this time, over 35 laboratory technicians have taken this course and received coaching from Ashley. He is the author of 'Helping Patients to say YES'. To find out more about his courses and to register for his FREE email newsletter, please visit his website at [www.thesellingcoach.com](http://www.thesellingcoach.com) or email [ashley@thesellingcoach.com](mailto:ashley@thesellingcoach.com).