

Evidence based selling

Ashley Latter advises on how to sell more treatment plans and achieve prices you deserve.



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How many times have you had a situation when the patient has walked out of the surgery and he, or she didn't take up your treatment plan?

Why was it? Was it down to price – they thought it was too expensive – or was it because maybe they weren't convinced that they needed the treatment. Patients are only interested in what is in it for them. So we have to use language that excites them and forces them to take immediate action. We can do this by following a simple structure so that when explaining the treatment you can convince them to take action.

Feature – this is just a simple fact about the product.

Benefit – this is when we explain to the patient how he, or she will benefit.

Advantages – this statement tells the patient what it will really mean to them, once they experience the benefit.

Say, for example, you have a patient who has a busy lifestyle and finds it a challenge to get to the practice during office hours. The structure will go like this:

Mr Patient we are open on Thursday until 9pm (feature) this means that you will not miss any work time (benefit). This means that you will be able complete that project that you were talking about before and look good in the presentation you will be doing shortly (advantages).

Another example:

Mrs Patient, we can do the teeth whitening early next week (feature) so this will mean that you will have white teeth for your daughter's forthcoming wedding (benefit). This will mean that you will be able to smile properly on the wedding photos and you will not be aware of your stained teeth(advantages).

If it seems challenging at first, that is okay. By following this structure, we talk on their agenda, not ours.

Sometimes, however, people need reassuring especially if they are spending a lot of money. They need some evidence. In my classes, we recommend several forms. The first and possibly the most beneficial is:

1. Testimonial letters

They have immediate advantages: it is someone else stating how good the treatment was and how they are now benefiting; it builds credibility with the patient; it is especially powerful when overcoming price as an objection; it will help the patient to make a decision quicker. Ask your patients to share their experiences with you in a letter. If they want to leave out the address out, that is okay. Collect these and keep them in a folder where patients can see them. You may feel awkward at first, but once you have a few, they will significantly help you overcome the doubters.

2. Success story

All you do here is explain to the patient about someone who has benefited by using your treatment. You can perhaps share what they were feeling like before and



● Something new...people of all ages like to touch, feel and sample.

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how things are now. Again for ethical reasons, you don't need to mention names.

3. Exhibit

Sometimes people like to touch, feel and sample what they are buying. It could be a bridge, or simply before and after pictures, if they are buying teeth whitening.

4. Demonstration

This is where the dentist demonstrates how to use a particular item such as an electric toothbrush.

5. Facts and figures

Sometimes it is worth sharing with the patient some facts that back up what you say. For example, if they have a concern about your credentials, you can tell them that you may have done this application many times. When I am selling the *Ethical dentists programme*, I tell people that I have trained more than 850 in the past three years. It helps to build credibility with a potential client.

You can use all the above, but you must have the most important tool which is ENTHUSIASM. It is the key to successful selling. If you are enthusiastic, your patient will more likely be enthusiastic. ■

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