

Earn what you deserve

Ask questions to learn about your patients and to create bigger opportunities, says **Ashley Latter**.



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When you go out and buy something is your decision made on logic or emotion? Let me give you an example. When someone buys a new Jaguar car, for example, it may be because they want to feel important, or to prove to people they have got on in the world or because they like owning nice things. There is always a reason and that goes for when patients are deciding whether to take up a significant treatment plan from you. If you can find this out, it will help improve take up rates and achieve those prices your services deserve.

Look at the reason why people buy:

1. There is always the main reason. For example, people don't buy teeth whitening, they buy the benefits of teeth whitening which is a nice smile.
2. There will always be some things that are important when they are buying. For example, implants may need to be hard wearing, natural looking and built to last. These are absolutes.
3. The most important reason is emotional. For example if someone is buying teeth whitening it may be because of their relationships (they want to look good and it will enhance their appearance and improve their opportunities for developing a relationship); survival (the person who has white teeth might feel more confident and therefore enhance the chance of improving their performance at work); importance (the person might want white teeth so they feel important, or because their friends have had it done and it looks great).

So the key to the exercise is to find out what the emotional reasons are. These are the key to successful selling.

Key questions

I have collated the following questions which were developed by participants on my critical sales courses and which work well.

- 1 How long since you visited the dentist?
- 2 How did you hear about us?
- 3 Are you happy with your appearance at the moment?
- 4 What changes would you like to make?
- 5 If there was a magic wand, what would you like your appearance to look like?
- 6 What image would you like to project?
- 7 If you could rate your appearance 1-10 what would it be?
- 8 What impact is that having on you at the moment?
- 9 How often do you feel like this?
- 10 If you were to achieve these goals, what impact would it have?
- 11 What would it mean to you?

These are just a few questions to ask your patient. You have to become genuinely interested in learning about your patient and you have to listen sensitively to their agenda. You must not have any pre-conceived ideas.

What are the benefits of asking questions? One dentist who has done the ethical sales course several times says one of his best examples is the following: 'I had a woman who came to visit me. She was having a check up and after questioning her, she told me that was not happy with a gap



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she had between her front two teeth. Her daughter was getting married shortly and she had spoken to a few friends about it and they had turned her off the idea of getting it fixed. However, through deep questioning, she went on to say that she would feel awkward for the photographs. Through questioning and really listening, she convinced herself how important it was to get her front teeth sorted and she went ahead with the treatment. In the past, she probably would have walked out of my practice, without having the treatment done.'

In addition to the above there are many advantages to asking questions.

1. To understand patients' goals.
2. To help sell treatment plans on the patient's agenda and not the dentist's.
3. Not make the mistake of selling something, without first finding out what the other person needs.
4. Help have a higher treatment plan take up.
5. Help overcome price as an issue, because you understand how important the treatment is to the patient.
6. It should open up bigger opportunities.
7. People will convince themselves, without anyone having to hard sell.

The key to asking the right questions is to listen attentively. ■

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