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Is a satisfied customer a loyal customer? By: Suzanne Black

What makes a patient loyal? Is a satisfied patient a loyal one? More importantly, how does a practice build loyalty? Patient satisfaction and patient loyalty, though often interchangeable, differ. Patient satisfaction results from the successful completion of a procedure, usually under ordinary circumstances. For example, the Doctor explains a procedure, the patient understands and schedules an appointment and the desired service is completed when promised and expectations are met. Satisfied patients maintain a positive attitude about the service offered and may purchase another service given no alternative offering of greater convenience or greater value.

A loyal patient has benefited from such things as a team members insight, problem solving abilities or willingness to go the extra mile. Maybe the front desk person took extra time on the phone to ensure the patient received all the information needed (ask us how Dental Boot Kamp can help you do just that without New Patient forms). Whatever the reason, the patient completed the transaction not only with a positive attitude about the procedure, but also with a positive attitude about the practice. Therein lays the difference. A satisfied patient places trust in the service and may feel comfortable buying it from any number of providers. The loyal patient trusts YOU and may feel more comfortable only purchasing services from your office. And what do loyal patients do? They refer your practice to friends and family!!



Suzanne Black
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It is my belief that patients become loyal to a practice for three reasons. First, the practice performs consistently under ordinary circumstances. Second, the practice individualizes its offerings as a result of taking the time to understand specific patient needs and wants. Third, the practice performs under extraordinary circumstances and thereby earns the trust of the patient. Technology cannot provide judgment and care needed in extraordinary circumstances, nor can it deliver added value. So what can? Enthusiastic employees!!

Enthusiastic employees have positive attitudes about their company, its culture and its products. They believe in what they are doing and know their contributions count. They have opportunities to learn and advance, and they're compensated fairly. Plus, enthusiasm is important for customer service personnel and others touching patients.

Employee enthusiasm, which differs from employee loyalty, derives from three things: 1) meaningful recognition; 2) opportunities to learn and grow; and 3) fair competitive compensation. Rocket science? Hardly!!! Yet too few companies invest the time, energy and resources needed to generate employee enthusiasm. Companies receive recognition as great places to work because they invest in people. They celebrate achievement. They invest in training and encourage employees to advance their educations and learn new skills. Finally, they offer a fair, not necessarily the highest wage. For these companies, monies spent on benefits and training aren't expenses, there investments. And what's the return on investment? Ultimately, it's loyal patients!

Given the cost of acquiring a patient, the damage of a disgruntled employee can do and the cost of replacing an employee, doesn't it make sense to invest in people? We do too, and that's why there is Dental Boot Kamp. Let us help you make the investment!

With a Masters Degree in communication, Suzanne began her career helping build one of the largest personal development training company's in the world and later became a protégé of the late Walter Hailey. Today, as President and CEO of The Coaching Center (sponsor of the "original and legendary" Dental Boot Kamp), Suzanne has over 20 years experience consulting and training over 300 different businesses and leads the most qualified case acceptance team in dentistry. Having successfully dealt with every challenge imaginable in the dental office, Suzanne speaks around the country on topics such as Leadership, Case Presentation and Stopping Cancellations and is a keynote speaker at Dental Meetings and Conventions. Her on-stage style, humorous anecdotes and ability to always deliver a relevant and personal message makes her a winning, engaging and unforgettable seminar leader. Suzanne is of the main faculty for the Dental Boot Kamp Continuum, which has proudly been delivered across the United States and Canada for the last 20 years, graduating over 35,000 dental professionals. Suzanne can be reached at suzanne@thecoachingcenter.net