

The 30-Second Test for Prosthodontists

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You will always struggle to build your Prosthodontic practice if you are not focused on the most important 30 seconds of your career. We call it the 30-second test.

One thing that has always surprised me about Prosthodontists is the lack of care that some of them give to the life-blood of their practice...THE PHONE.

I don't know if it's because I'm just more disturbed by some of the conversations I'm having lately, or if it's just the state of what is happening in the world of dentistry. Either way, it makes me want to scream.

I can't tell you how many times I have called the office of a well-trained Prosthodontist (one that takes hundreds of CE hours per year) and hear the words, "Doctor's office." That's it...no pleasantries...no introductions...no nothing! Are you kidding me? Most of the time I have to ask, "With whom am I speaking?" and then continue asking questions to find out if I have even called the right number in the first place.

About 95% of the time, I receive a warmer response from the girl behind the counter at Starbucks than I get from a person who sits at the front desk of a professional practice.

It's very scary when you think about it.

Patients usually see VERY LITTLE difference in the logical aspects of your practice when they compare your practice with a general practice down the street. They do see HUGE differences in the emotional transactions they experience with your practice. Some professionals feel that by just labeling themselves as Prosthodontists should be enough to clearly discriminate them in a quality sense from other practices. This won't do it, not by a long shot. In short, patients only feel huge differences in people. How your practice anticipates and nurtures these transactions will greatly determine your success. You will



always struggle to build your practice if you are not focused on the most important 30 seconds of your career. We call it the 30-second test.

The 30-second test is the mental picture I paint about you during the first 30 seconds of my phone call with your business. For some Prosthodontists, it couldn't be a more boring and unattractive picture.

All of us use this test when we call any business. For example, I recently had my carpets cleaned. I made the decision on what company to use based on a series of short phone calls. Each call lasted less than 3 minutes in length. I chose the one that didn't even talk about their service until the end of the call. When I told my wife I found someone to clean the carpets, she asked me the same question that she always asks, "Were they nice?"

Transitioning from GOOD to EXTREMELY RARE is the key to fantastic customer service. No one raves about a GOOD restaurant. We only talk about EXTREMELY RARE places. When was the last time you sent all of your friends to just a GOOD restaurant or movie? We don't want to risk our relationships by referring good

things. We want to knock our friends' socks off when they try one of our recommendations. Rare experiences occur when people FEEL great about doing business with you. Your 30-second test is one of the most important elements in creating that marketplace perception.

Here are five major points in optimizing your 30-second test:

- **You must have a “Director of First Impressions.”** Whoever you have answering your phones and greeting your patients must understand that this is their ultimate responsibility and real title. Make me “melt” when I call. I love calling our practices in North Carolina, because they make me feel so relaxed and comfortable when I call. I catch myself using words like “Y’all” after I get off the phone with them.
- **Have a system, but don’t be too guided in a mechanical way to process through it.** It’s OK to gather the information you need, but try a more spontaneous approach in getting to know every person that calls. I realize that people are often busy and don’t want to do too much chatting at times. Get patients to engage in something emotional about them, and then navigate your way through your telephone-information slip.
- **Build more value for the appointment.** Don’t ever leave a patient with the notion that they are going through a process. A thorough exam doesn’t have to be this mandatory protocol for getting into your practice. Make your experience an incredible one and then describe it as such. Make them feel as though they are going to have a fantastic experience getting to know the doctor. Don’t explain it as a “we-we” type of experience. Explain it more of a “you-

you” type of experience. You have to realize that people purchase your services for their reasons and not yours.

- **Build more value for the doctor.** Leave callers with the notion that, “DR. JONES IS THE BEST...YOU WILL ABSOLUTELY LOVE HER! I WOULDN’T WORK FOR ANYONE BUT THE BEST!” This can’t be faked in any way. Your team has to feel this way...and that is not asked for...it is EARNED through your leadership. Transferring this trust to your callers is incredibly important in a high-quality Prosthodontic practice.
- **Build more value for the relationship with your office.** Help me look forward to seeing the faces behind the voices on the phone. I know when I have an EXTREMELY RARE conversation that makes me feel good about doing business with someone...I can’t wait to see them. Your superstar should say, “I am looking forward to meeting you when you come in on the 18th. Now, if you have any questions, I want you to ask for me, OK. You have a great week, Judy.”

Backing this talk with action is the hard part. You must DESCRIBE a great experience and DELIVER something greater than you described...two very challenging things to do.

Remember, people expect good and very rarely do they get it. What will make you the EXTREMELY RARE PROSTHODONTIC PRACTICE will start with how you score on the 30-second test.

Enjoy the ride!

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