

# Efficiency of Management and Marketing Strategies within The Dental Office

Oprea Valentin **BUȘU**, Assistant, PhD,  
University of Craiova, Teaching Staff Training  
Department,  
Craiova, Romania  
Elena Cristina **ANDREI**, Student  
University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova,  
Craiova, Romania

**Abstract.** This article is based on research about the management and marketing strategies within the dental office and how we can better understand its importance. One of the major problems faced by dentists today is the management of the dental office. Certainly, from the outside, individuals perceive the dentist's office as a simple medical unit in which medical staff operate. However, people living in the field face each day multiple problems of both medical and bureaucratic nature. For the dentist/manager, the dental office is perceived as a dual-purpose unit: providing oro-dental care and earning profit.

Keywords: management, dental office, marketing

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Unlike managers in other fields, the dentist manager has many additional responsibilities:

- dental care;
- good professional training in both managerial and health care;
- providing sterile sanitary equipment, as well as periodical checking of the medical personnel dealing with the disinfection and sterilization of in
- signing contracts with companies specialized the handling of clinical waste (Pătroi, 2016, p. 67);
- verification of purchased dental materials to have the approval of special commissions: ADA - American Dental Association, ASRO - Romanian Standardization Association (Manolea, 2011, pp. 9-10).

## 2. OBJECTIVES

Our objectives is to find the result of the experiments cased on marketing and manager's psychology and to use them in the interest of a better management in the dental office.

Our purpose is to inform every dentist to understand the importance of management and marketing strategies to apply them on their dental office. There is a series of benefits in the management plan and if they are applied in the dental office. The dentist cannot express his or her opinion on the diagnosis of a non-oral disorder and the doctor does not have the right to discriminate: he must provide medical assistance regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation etc.

For the proper functioning of the dental office, it must comply with the existing managerial attitude and motivation of employees.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This article is based on a meta-analytic method in which we manage to create our research from the perspective of some important authors from management and marketing field. In our research, we find that for the proper functioning of the dental office, it must comply with the existing managerial attitude and motivation of employees. A dental office with a good manager will be a successful one.

We can say that the management of a dental practice requires effective economic management, the economic-financial system of the dental office, recruitment and selection of human resources, managerial attitude and motivation of employees, marketing strategies, the dental office supply system, legislation of the dental office.

## 4. MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING STRATEGIES WITHIN THE DENTAL OFFICE

### 4.1 The economic-financial system of the dental office

By economic-financial system we mean the total income, receipts, profit, investments made over a certain period of time, usually one year, in a service unit. In respect to the classification of the health sector as a component of the public services, it is placed at the level of the economic sector. (Vulcu, 2006, p. 101).

For a dental office to be economically successful, it must be profitable. The manager must ensure that the amounts invested in equipment can be covered in a relatively short time.

In a dental office there are several forms of payment for services:

- payment per treatment act: is the simplest and most used;
- payment per case: based on the case diagnosed and treated and includes several therapeutic acts;
- payment per day of hospitalization: only if the dental unit has a section of oro-maxillo-facial surgery;
- pay by salary: through an employment contract with the medical institution;
- capital payment: is done through a database containing the list of patients assigned to the dentist.

Of all forms of payment, the most used and most effective now is the payment per therapeutic act. Unlike the others, this type has many advantages such as:

- correct payment for the treatment;
- premium treatment for patients;
- increased competitiveness between doctors; As a disadvantage of payment per therapeutic act, it's the increase in administrative costs. (Pătru, 2010, p. 23). All receipts from oro-dental services must also be recorded. Therefore, at the end of each treatment session, the physician is required to issue financial-accounting documents under which the operation is entered in the accounts. By financial-accounting documents is meant: receipt (often used by IMC-Individual Medical Practices) or fiscal receipt (used by companies).

### 4.2 Recruitment and selection of human resources

The process of recruiting staff for the dental office is a complex process that should not be altered by illegal means (eg nepotism, traffic of influence) that may endanger the life of the patient.

The means of recruiting staff can be internal or external. As an internal recruitment tool, the job ad is most used. (S. Stanciu, M. Ionescu, C. Leovaridis, D. Stanescu, 2003, p. 174). Through the ad, the employer publishes the job offer indicating: the type of job offer, the job offer, the description of the job, the description of the medical cabinet, responsibilities, remuneration (optional), requirements (experience, level of studies, etc.).

An excellent way to recruit employees can also be publicity. This is a means of external recruiting (S. Stanciu, M. Ionescu, C. Leovaridis, D. Stănescu, 2003, pp. 174-175). Advertisers must choose the ideal means of promoting the offer: television, internet, written press. A good method of recruiting individuals interested in working in a medical unit can also be done through internships. The dental unit can organize internships for a period of 1-3 months in order to select those who have demonstrated professionalism during the internship. Thus, the persons working in the cabinet during the traineeship are kept under constant observation and are trained according to the cabinet's working policy. Those who engage, learn, show seriousness and good training can be selected by the manager and hired.

The selection of human resources is based on: the resume, the letter of intent and the interview. It is worth mentioning that in the case of a dental office the interview will also include a practical test in which the future employee will have the opportunity to demonstrate his / her skills, communication skills with the team and patients and working technique. The interview will be conceived as a test that will give the employer the opportunity to make the right decision and to select the right employee.

#### 4.3 Managerial attitude and motivation of employees

Regardless of the type of activity performed within a company, its employees have the obligation to obey the policy and promoting its objectives. Human resource management involves both recruiting and hiring individuals according to the needs of the company and within their field of expertise, as well as providing continuous education, increasing motivation and improving employees. (Stanciu S, Ionescu M., p. 43).

In order to motivate the employee, it is necessary to apply techniques that will lead him to advance gradually but surely while gaining confidence in the work he is doing. One of the methods is the "Foot in the Door" technique. It aims to increase the employee's efficiency by manipulating it. (Ficeac, 1997, p. 17) Specifically, in the first instance, the employee is required to perform a task of reduced difficulty, and the solution will increase the confidence in his / her own forces, being then prepared to cope with a request involving a higher degree of difficulty. Thus, moving from an early stage to a medium or advanced is made easier, without the employee feeling pressure on him.

Also, the manager is the person who comes in direct contact with all members of the medical staff. His attitude and the way individuals perceive it is extremely important, because in many situations his actions can have a negative impact on the company.

In the manager-employee relationship, the Pygmalion effect may appear. For example, if a possible employee is interviewed, his having an image of his or her employer already has an influence on the chances of getting the job. If the possible entrant perceives the employer as a rigid, authoritarian person then the possible employee will also adopt a distant, uncooperative attitude, unable to express their opinions freely or to capitalize on

their skills. We all know what the Pygmalion effect is, but it is important to understand that the self realized prophecy is sending the person in a way which it can be transformed or changed according to the expectations.

The effect of Pygmalion may also be the opposite: if the manager starts from the idea that the subordinates are not well trained, they are not obedient and do not carry out the company's objectives, then there can be noticed a decrease in the efficiency of human resources and the absence of the desire to evolve and to perform in the chosen field.

#### 4.4 Marketing strategies

Today, an extraordinary diversity of marketing strategies can be seen. Through these strategies, entrepreneurs are looking to promote their business in an efficient way to profit, but also take into account the needs of patients. In the field of health is also promoted the idea of social marketing. Social marketing is based on two major concepts: the patient's needs and the desires of individuals or groups (Vulcu, 2006, p. 175). Basically, this kind of marketing does not focus on profit, but on the medical deficiencies of the patient.

In the dental sector, it is advisable for the manager to make a work schedule that meets the patient's demands to:

- know precisely the needs and preferences of the patient;
- the patient's knowledge on various diseases and dental treatments. (Luchian, 2005, p. 211).

In terms of general marketing, it can be done in two ways: either in the real world or online.

Real-time marketing often builds on dentistry by recommending a doctor or clinic from one patient to another. If a patient was treated according to the standards, but also his / her own wishes and the pathology was solved in a minimally invasive way, he / she will recommend the cabinet where he / she was treated to other friends / acquaintances / relatives. Thus, the number of patients will increase.

Another way is to divide flyers, advertisements or printed offers from different people employed by the medical unit. For the design of the offer to be the one that draws attention and points out the essentials, it is advisable for the manager to turn to specialized advertising firms. Of course, the manager is the one who decides which offer really characterizes the service he wants to promote.

In the virtual environment we can talk about the public communication channels through the media. Depending on the type of communication, channels can be:

- direct: blog, sites, social networks, mails; is a method that avoids the interference of an obstacle in communication between the transmitter and receiver;
- indirect: newspapers, magazines, TV, radio. (D. Cojocaru, C. Gavrilovici, L. Oprea, 2015, p. 207).

Some of the main elements that are needed in the dental office's online promotion strategy are:

- A well-optimized search engine website. A dental office site should be designed in such a way that the patient can easily access the data he desires: the cabinet address, cabinet services (pedodontics, surgery, periodontics, dental aesthetics, etc.) to be able to make an online appointment, pictures with cabinet and team, offers / promotions to various dental work.

- Active use of social networks. Through the social networks a close relationship is created between the patient's dental office. Thus, the patient can ask various questions to the

medical staff, get offers etc. At the same time, health promotion articles or advice from the specialist on maintaining oral health may be posted on the cabinet promotion page;

- Blog - where there will be regularly posted articles that explain the various oral cavity affairs to patients, as well as many tips. (Radbata A., 2012, p.27)

- Online ads - for publishing job offers for your dental office or rentals.

At present, we can see that there is an increased demand for aesthetic interventions. Many people, especially women, are present in the dental office for interventions such as teeth whitening, dental facets, wrinkle correction, contouring with botulinum toxin or hyaluronic acid. For all these marketing strategies to achieve their goal, there is a need for involvement not only from the manager but from the entire team. Each individual team member must contribute to promoting the services of the cabinet in which he works, so that it reaches a wide audience.

#### 4.5 The dental office supply system

The supply of the dental office is done by the manager. This can be done either by purchasing the products directly from the company's headquarters or by signing a collaboration agreement with various companies dealing with the marketing of dental products. The ideal option is to have a contract because the administrator only has to call a distributor who will bring the desired products to the cabinet without having to go to their main office. This way the manager could save time. The manager is also required to check the warranty period for each product and its endorsement by special committees dealing with the standardization of dental materials.

Each dental material must come with a leaflet with indications, contraindications, user instructions, and storage conditions. (Manolea, 2011, pp. 9-11).

#### 4.6 Legislation of the dental office

For the proper functioning of the dental office, it must comply with the existing legislation. There are several laws that regulate dental work and protect both the patient and the medical staff.

According to the norm of 31/07/2007 regarding the structure and functioning of medical and dental practices, published in the Official Gazette, Part no. 575 of 22/08/2007 points out the following aspects:

- the dental cabinet has an operating permit, and it is obtained from the county health authorities, respectively the municipality of Bucharest, on the declaration on own responsibility by lawful representative of the cabinet;

- state sanitary inspections will be carried out periodically to ensure that sanitary standards are respected;

- the cabinet must have in its component: waiting room, treatment room, 2 sanitary rooms, sterilization room and storage room;

- the treatment room must be at least 9 square meters in size and in the waiting room each patient should have a space of 1-1,5 square meters to avoid transmission of diseases;

- the walls, ceilings and working surfaces of the cabinet will be: washable, resistant to disinfectants and acids, not to show roughness to avoid the containment of pathogenic microorganisms;

- sterilization of the instruments will be carried out in the sterilization room and will respect the sterilization circuit involving: cleaning (manual or automatic), disinfection and the sterilization itself;

- also, the dental office should be connected to the sewerage network of the locality, to ensure that the noise level is under the accepted norms, both the natural and the artificial illumination is to be carried out in optimal conditions in order to facilitate the dental maneuvers.

At the same time, dental practitioners also have a Deontological Code that includes norms of moral and professional conduct. It aims at: optimizing patient-to-patient relationships, promoting proper behavior and dental training, maintaining professional secrecy, respecting patients' rights. Failure to comply with the rules of medical deontology leads to the application of the appropriate sanctions. (Ghelas, 2009, p. 15).

Malpractice in Romanian medicine is a current, controversial topic and has not benefited from good information. Malpractice is a professional error produced during a medical intervention that damages the patient and implies the civilian liability of the physician. Practically, neither doctors nor patients know exactly where circumstances of malpractice have been committed. Malpractice is a stress-causing factor that affects the doctor, the patient, and the manager of the office. Once a case of malpractice has occurred in a cabinet, the news will rapidly expand, which will lead to a decrease in the number of patients, so practically the decrease of the profit.

To avoid a malpractice, a good manager takes care that the medical team he coordinates is properly informed and well trained. Medical staff can be trained either by recruiting a legal person to provide training or by actively sending physicians, dental assistants and technicians at various courses and seminars on medical malpractice.

There are many instructions that make it possible to carry out a correct medical act that does not make the doctor more prone to committing a malpractice case:

a. Obtain the informed patient consent: in the dental office it is mandatory to have a statement that the patient must sign. This document shows the patient's decision to undertake the treatment. (Nanu, 2012, p. 47). If the patient is a minor, the consent is given by the legal guardian / guardian. (Nanu, 2012, pp. 62-63).

b. Respect for confidentiality regarding the patient's personal information: Patient health information may be provided to others only with the consent of the patient. Also, situations where the patient waives the right to be informed about the diagnosis. (Nanu, 2012, p. 69).

c. The doctor does not have the right to discriminate: he must provide medical assistance regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, etc. (Nanu, 2012, p. 95). If a person suffering from a very serious transmissible disease will be subject to Universal Precautions. (such as: in the case of a person infected with HIV, 3 pairs of gloves will be used).

d. The physician should confine himself to his / her own specialty except for emergency situations in which first aid is to be granted. (Nanu, 2012, p. 107). For example, a dentist cannot express his or her opinion on the diagnosis of a non-oral disorder.

e. The doctor must respect the patient's right to a second opinion.

f. The patient must have access to all information about his or her health. Information can also be accessed indefinitely, only the copy of the document will be available to the patient while the original is kept by the medical unit. (Nanu, 2012, p. 87).

g. Doctors should have malpractice insurance.

## 5. CONCLUSION

So, in a dental clinic, the focus is on the patient care: providing a corresponding dental treatment is the foundation of a relationship between patient-medical staff in which the main goal is to provide psychological support and enhance the patients' confidence.

One of the most effective means of promoting a dental practice in the virtual environment is represented by the Internet.

The dental services market is very competitive in Romania. That is why the manager must carry out a market study with the help of specialized firms regarding both the demand for services and the pricing. The management of a dental practice requires effective economic management, the economic-financial system of the dental office, recruitment and selection of human resources, managerial attitude and motivation of employees, marketing strategies, the dental office supply system, legislation of the dental office.

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