



5-Star Patient Communication:

*Aligning Teams to Build Trust, Increase Appointments,
and Elevate the Patient Experience*



Presented by:

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5-Star Communication

It's not what you say, but...



A _____



A _____



A _____



A _____



A _____

Create Your *Customer Service* Personality

1. We're **glad** you called!

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

2. Why did you **really** call?

- a. _____
- _____

3. I **understand** what you need.

- a. _____
- _____

4. Get excited. **Promote** the practice and the doctor.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

5. Save the **boring details** until the end

- a. _____
- _____

Now What Do I say?!

1. Looking for a dentist?

New Patient (COE) vs. Emergency vs. Shopper...

New Patient: _____

New (Insurance) Patient: _____

Emergency: _____

Pain? _____

No Pain? _____

Shopper: _____

Handoff: _____

Communication Formation: _____

Equal Treatment: _____

2. Don't make tentative appointments.

Confirm vs. Remind vs. Looking forward ...

Confirm: _____

Remind: _____

Looking forward: _____

3. What do you mean you can't make your appointment?

Hygiene vs. Restorative

The system must teach, not punish: _____

BA or CA? _____

Changed appointments: _____

Can the patient hear how you feel? _____

Hygiene 1st BA: _____

Hygiene 2nd BA: _____

Restorative 1st BA: _____

V.I.P. Slip

Date: _____

Doctor: _____

“Welcome to our Practice! We’re so glad you called!”

Name: _____

Pronunciation: _____

Adult: Child: Age: _____

“Whom may we thank for telling you about our office?” _____

“To save you time, I would like to send you some information about our practice which includes a medical history information sheet for you to complete and bring with you on your first visit. Are you near your computer?”

Address: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____ (Cell) _____

(E-mail) _____@_____

“To make this appointment just right for you, let me find out a little more information . . .”

When was your last dental visit? _____

Records Required? Yes No

Are you having any dental concerns at this time?

Lost Filling:	Broken Tooth:	Ache:
Where:	Swelling:	Mobility:
Hot:	Cold:	Pressure: _____ On/Off/Consistent
Pain Med.:	Allergies:	

Premedicate: Yes No Rx: _____ Pharmacy: _____

“So that you may be prepared for your first visit, let me tell you a little about what will take place.”

Describe each part of the Doctor examination giving high value.

Appointment: Date: _____ Time: _____

Directions given: Yes No

Insurance: Yes No

Employer: _____

Benefits book: Yes No

Form: Yes No Website: _____

Fees for complete examination, treatment planning and any consultation appointment you may need \$ _____

Present fee as a range between the exam fee alone and the exam fee with a FMX: **“Ms. Jones so that you will be prepared, the fee for this first visit will between \$75 and depending on what x-rays you and the doctor determine are necessary, \$165. Our office accepts credit cards, checks, and cash.”**

“What questions may I answer for you about our office or about your first visit?”

Comments and/or patient motivators:

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THE V.I.P. Conversation *Transition*

OBJECTIVES OF THE V.I.P. Conversation:

All of our patients are "very important!" And, the V.I.P. slip, designed to guide us in creating a "WOW!" experience, is one way of letting the patient know how "very important" they are to us. Along with making a first impression of excellence, the V.I.P. slip is designed to:

1. *Welcome*
2. *Reward and appreciation for referral*
3. *Permission to ask questions*
4. *Prepare patient for complete doctor examination*
5. *Inquiry for any further patient questions or concerns.*

The V.I.P. Conversation is completed for:

- A. All new patients visiting the practice for the first time.
- B. Every emergency patient regardless if this is their first visit.

Gathering this information during the telephone conversation expedites documentation, ensures completion of all details and provides consistency in how patient information is related to the rest of the staff.

Example Outline:

The following outlines all the steps to be followed during the initial conversation with the new patient. Although your conversations with new patients may not always follow this order, it is important to include each step somewhere within your conversation.

These five statements say "We care" and should be included when all new patients call, except those with an acute emergency that we intend to see as soon as possible.

1. *"Welcome to our Practice! We're so glad you called!"*
2. *"Whom may we thank for telling you about our office?"*
3. *"To save you time, I would like to send you some information about our practice which includes a medical history information sheet for you to complete and bring with you on your first visit. Are you near your computer?"*
4. *"To make this appointment just right for you, let me find out a little more information . . ."*
"So that you may be prepared for your first visit, let me tell you what will take place." (Don't forget fees.)
5. *"What questions may I answer for you about our office or your first visit?"*

THE V.I.P. Conversation *Transition*

CREATE A SMOOTH TRANSITION INTO THE V.I.P. Conversation:

The individual who answers the phone has the responsibility to create a smooth transition into the V.I.P. conversation so we do not fall into the trap where we give patients what they *say* they want and never even get close to what they *really* want.

I know patients say “*I just want my teeth cleaned*”, when what they really want is to be healthy and well cared for. We have to recognize a patient just does not know how to ask for what they really want. For this to happen we have to create a comfortable environment, a relaxed environment, which they choose, so patients will know they are free to express themselves. This is not something patients will ever ask for. They don’t expect or think they have to. They assume you already know how they want to be treated and it is not necessary for them to tell you. We learn that patients are looking for something more by watching their behavior: not keeping appointments, referring friends, or returning phone calls, etc. And they will not know what that is until they experience it.

Remember, you want to create the opportunity to be able to impress potential new patients with what we will do so they will forget about what we will not do.

You take control of every conversation by initially holding off on answering their question and asking questions of your own first! Patients quickly learn by the questions you ask that you know what they want and that they have called the right office.

Patient: *Hello, do you take my insurance?*

Treatment Coordinator: ***We can work with any insurance carrier and since you are asking me this question, it seems as if you may have never been to our office before?***

Patient: *No, I have not been there before; I’m looking for a new dentist.*

Treatment Coordinator: ***WELCOME to our office. We’re really glad you called. We enjoy working with new patients...*** (now follow the V.I.P. outline).

Another Example: (Do not get caught up on what they ask you. Patients easily forget when they like what they are hearing. You can address their issue later in the conversation.)

Patient: *Hello, I’d like to get an appointment with the dentist to get my teeth cleaned.*

Treatment Coordinator: ***We would love to clean your teeth. When was the last time you were here?***

Patient: *I have not been there before; I’m looking for a new dentist.*

Treatment Coordinator: ***WELCOME to our office. We’re really glad you called. We enjoy working with new patients...*** (Now follow the V.I.P. outline).



Larry M. Guzzardo

Larry began his 25-year career as a training specialist, where he delivered in-house training programs such as **active listening**, **customer service**, **stress management**, and **career development**. Since turning to full-time dental consulting years ago, he has focused his talents and experience exclusively on dental practice management, business systems, and leadership development. He conducts in-office practice management consultations designed to enhance trust, create organization, increase profits, and build patient relationships that last.

Larry has co-authored two books, “Powerful Practice” and “Getting Things Done”. He has also presented numerous workshops including, “*Winning Patient Acceptance*,” “*Business Communication Systems*,” and “*The Leadership Challenge*.”

Larry has spoken to professionals across the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and even Europe and the Middle East on Practice Management, having received the Speaker’s Appreciation Award from several organizations, including the **Hinman Dental Meeting**, **American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry**, **Florida Dental Convention**, **California Dental Association**, **Chicago Dental Society-Midwinter Meeting**, **Yankee Dental Meeting**, **Greater New York Dental Meeting**, and the **National University of Mexico**, as well as a Certificate of Appreciation from the **Georgia Dental Association** and has earned a Certificate of Recognition from the **American Dental Association** for his table clinic lectures.

He also serves as a member of the visiting faculty at the **Dawson Academy**, where he teaches patient communication and practice management techniques. He is also the Head Instructor for the **All-Star Dental Academy**. Larry is certified to administer the **DiSC Personality Profile** and is certified as a **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP’s) Consultant**. He is a member and past secretary of the **Academy of Dental Management Consultants** and has contributed articles for various publications. Larry actively promotes adult literacy in the community by volunteering to serve on the Board of Directors for Project READ as chairman of the program development committee.