Who Else Is Disappointed in their Implant Marketing Results and Returns?

By: Dr. James R. McAnally

A common refrain heard, “I wish my implant marketing performed better.”

Like an onion, there are invariably many layers involved with figuring out what is being asked to perform better or where the real issues lie. In reality, even those with the best performing marketing always want better results for the money as it’s simply human nature as business owners.

Beyond that common trait, then there are specific reasons that are often at the root of less than expected results. Here are four of the most common.

Reason #1: Bad Marketing

Yes, it may simply be bad marketing in that the message being sent to the public doesn’t really mean anything to the viewer. It can also be how it’s being sent as well as how widely geographically it’s being sent (or not).

Every practice in the profession that invests in marketing would automatically get better results if they would make the very first step in their thinking to asking the question “what problem does this patient I’m looking for have AND what solution in the patient’s terms are they looking to find?” In every case, those problems and solutions are discussed from the patient's perspective in the marketing.

Reason #2: Poor Marketing Prioritization

There are many practices where it’s not necessarily bad marketing but it’s bad prioritizing of what comes first, what comes second, etc. It can also be attempting to be the go-to expert in too many niches since there is limited time, energy, and funds available for advertising; even in the biggest group practice.

It’s also a matter of prioritizing what niche is your main focus since each niche pursued requires marketing time, energy, and dollars. For most niches, 4-6 ongoing activities from The McAnally Hierarchy of Niche Marketing is what’s required to have an abundance of cases all of the time in a given niche. Double the niches one wants to
pursue cases in and the number of specific activities needed to find patients interested in those services goes up.

**Reason #3: Marketing without Real Selling**

Next, there can be great marketing with tons of phone calls/interest but from the phone call forward not much is happening. Like it or not everything that happens from the phone ringing the first time until the check is written is sales. Implant dentists who cringe the least upon hearing this do the best and help the most patients over all those who denigrate sales as “unprofessional.” Yes, those who are selling, and doing it ethically, help more patients.

This can mean lack of a selling process on the phone (specifically a written phone slip plus written scripts) or a lack of in-person selling steps in the office where everyone is “winging it.” In many cases, it’s both.

Just how important is the selling issue? A few years back, I gave out a number from the podium at one of the AAID’s annual meetings which was that once an implant treatment plan went over $10,000 statistically fewer than 9.5% of patients calling the practice were going to buy.

If you really want to do larger implant cases, one must realize the reality of this number and do something about sales process to find the 9.5%. The 9.5% is also revealing in how many potential patients will need to see your message to find enough wanting to pursue treatment to make this worth your time. The good news is that it can be done ethically, humanely, and professionally.

To further drive #3 home in practical terms, this analogy may help. Marketing without a real sales process attached (both on the phone and in office once the patient is front and center) is like deciding to intentionally drive your car without two of its wheels. It sort of works but it’s far easier, more comfortable, and a heck of a lot more enjoyable for everyone involved to be rolling with four tires.

**Reason #4: Bad or Average Reviews Blowing Up Marketing Results**

Five years ago there were only three things on this list. Now we need another one - dentist online reviews. Yes, dentist reviews are a new and powerful practice differentiator. A practice can have great marketing but if the in-office experience and treatment results don’t meet expectations or what’s promised, patients are going to tell the world via reviews. Bad reviews will damage ALL future marketing. Bad reviews will damage even fantastic marketing. For the biggest cases, even average reviews are going to give the other guy or gal the advantage no matter how great your marketing.
On the converse, good and great reviews will plus all marketing and put you ahead of everyone else pursuing cases in a given niche.

The good news is that a very basic in-office system to manage and foster good reviews is simpler than anything learned in dental school and is easily set-up by someone and managed by someone with a high-school education.

Now back to the original refrain, “I wish it (my marketing) performed better.” Some powerful diagnostic tools have been provided above to help. Time to rank these four honestly for your situation and decide exactly what it is you want from the dollars you put towards your marketing as well as setting realistic expectations based on what you know.

Dr. James McAnally is the founder of Big Case Marketing, a consulting firm focusing on clinician’s with advanced clinical skills, and developer of the McAnally Selling System, a check-list system for achieving case acceptance backed by persuasion science from major universities. The firm’s educational wings – The Master Dentists Academy and The Painless Dental Alliance deliver management tools and training programs allowing clinicians to find the cases they enjoy and to help more patients with their advanced skills. He’s been involved with clinical dentistry for more than 20 years and is routinely named a global leader in dental consulting and advisor to the top 5% of clinicians in the profession. Clients and Academy members successfully using Academy Programs reside on 3 continents. His highly regarded guidebook series ‘The Dentists Unfair Advantage’ can be found at Amazon.com. Free information is available at www.TheMcAnallySellingSystem.com Limited private discussion times are available at www.meetme.so/jamesmcanally