



Why an Implant Treatment Coordinator Is Critical to Your Implant Success

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Introduction

Implant dentistry is one of the fastest expanding fields in the dental profession today. A growing implant practice allows for further investment into the practice, excellent income for the doctor and team, and a successful, sustainable career. One person is largely responsible for this to happen—the Implant Treatment Coordinator.

By freeing up the surgeon's time, the Implant Treatment Coordinator (ITC) increases implant surgeon doctor production time by at least 20% per year, which can translate into a profitability increase of more than 30%. Without an ITC in place, the majority of specialty practices will place less than 200 implants per year, per doctor (with the large group practices far below this number on a per doctor basis).¹

The Qualities of an ITC

It takes an outgoing person with the right skills to be an effective ITC. I recommend that this individual possess the following abilities:

- **Excellent interpersonal and verbal skills.** An ITC develops strong patient relationships, which are critical for implant case acceptance. Patients are more likely to agree to have implant treatment when they are speaking with someone they trust. Practices with inconsistent customer service will have difficulty building trust and increasing case acceptance. Good patient relations are critical in today's competitive implant marketplace.
- **Talent for promoting implant dentistry.** Levin Group teaches that implants should be viewed as the new standard of care for patients. The ITC should be able to help patients feel they are receiving a service that will dramatically improve their quality of life. Patients must be educated that the long-lasting, functional and esthetic benefits far exceed any of the alternatives and are worth the fee involved.

¹ The Levin Group Data Center

- **Excellent organization.** The ITC will be working with different groups of “customers”—referring practices, the surgical practice team and patients. The ITC must be flexible, adept at staying focused and organized so patient treatment can move forward as scheduled. The ITC is the “face” of the implant practice to patients and restorative offices. When this person excels, so does the implant practice.

Responsibilities of the ITC

1. Scheduling implant patients. All new implant patients should be scheduled within seven to 10 days. A convincing case presentation can lose its persuasive power if the surgical appointment is not made within that 10-day window. Scheduling delays may result in a patient having second thoughts. Once a patient is properly motivated to receive implants, it is the job of the ITC to ensure the patient is on track to undergo treatment in a timely manner.

2. Enhancing referral relationships. The ITC maintains ongoing communication with the referring doctors through every step of each case. Consistent communication is critical to the development and sustainability of long-term referral relationships. Miscommunication with referring doctors and their teams can undermine the referring relationship and ultimately the patient’s confidence in the recommended treatment.

3. Educating and motivating patients. During the initial implant visit, the ITC uses excellent interpersonal skills to establish a supportive and trusting relationship with patients, educating them about the benefits of implants so that there is motivation to accept treatment when the doctor presents the case. With proper motivation, a high rate of case acceptance can be achieved. The surgeon needs less case presentation time when the ITC does an effective job.

4. Providing patients with financial options. Responsibility for implant patient financial arrangements rests with the ITC (although some practices may have financial coordinators). Surgical and restorative practices have discovered that offering patient financing options significantly increases the number of implants placed on an annual basis. Patients frequently do not realize that financing may be available from a surgical or restorative dental practice. They more readily agree to treatment when practices routinely provide financial options that make the process more affordable.

5. Tracking implant data. The ITC tracks all practice statistics associated with implants, including consultations, case acceptance and production. For example, which restorative doctors are referring in large numbers and which aren’t. This data can be used to improve case presentation and set targets for future success. Without this compiled data, implant practices tend to rely on hunches—not the best way to operate!

The Team Approach

For surgical and restorative practices to achieve a significant increase in implant production, a strong team approach is required to communicate effectively and educate patients. As part of the team approach, the ITC and the surgeon should work with restorative practices to streamline the implant process. Once the restorative doctors and their staff are educated on the surgical practice's implant process and enthusiastically referring implant cases, the ITC continues to build that relationship. The best way to keep a restorative dentist as a referring partner is to provide implant education that enhances the relationship, and that is one of the main duties of the ITC.

Conclusion

The ITC serves many vital functions for both the surgical and restorative practices. This individual not only provides superior customer service but also eliminates miscommunication and potential bottlenecks. An ITC allows both surgeons and restorative doctors to spend less time dealing with administrative work and more time chair-side providing patient care, which is exactly where they are supposed to be.

An ITC is no longer a luxury. This individual is now vital to all implant practices. A properly trained ITC can close over 90% of all implant cases, which means they are *major* contributors to the future of the implant practice.

To learn how to run a more profitable, efficient and satisfying practice, visit the Levin Group Implant Resource Center at www.levingroupimplant.com—a free online resource with tips, videos and other valuable information. You can also connect with Levin Group on Facebook and Twitter (Levin_Group) for learning strategies and sharing ideas.