Gain power at your laser clinics!

Physical evidence and place

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_Today, as a sequel of our previous articles we will teach the next P's of our 7P's of Marketing Mix. My ultimate goal with these series of articles is to give all dentists and dental professionals a basic guideline of the marketing options available. Starting with this easy strategy, I will teach you how you can directly implement these methods to your own clinic as well as understand their value and power and thus change your professional life! The next P's of the 7P's of the marketing mix are physical evidence and place.

"Quality can be effectively communicated to patients by the appearance of your clinic."

_Place

The place represents the environment of your clinic where your services are delivered. Based on Bitner, your clinic must include the following 3 elements:

Ambient conditions

This means for example music! Martin Lindstrom the author of "Buyology" and "Brainwashed" tested how consumers react to different kind of music in an urban retail store. Check out the results! The impact that kind of music and tempo have on consumers are amazing.

Spatial layout

How is the setup of your clinic? Here are some more detailed tips that you can implement right away:

Reception Area: Create a reception area that enables the receptionist to turn 90 degrees to welcome the patient, and 90 degrees away from the patient to conduct other business. This ensures that patient conversations and payment transactions remain private. Treatment Areas: Position treatment areas so that they are not visible from the public areas such as the greeting and reception areas. Designate private office and break room space away from the patient activity areas.

Signs and symbols

How is the appearance of your business cards or furnishing? Signs and symbols of your clinics such as your business cards, logo, furnishing etc. have proven to be very important for patients. For example, our logo needs to be symmetrical as companies with symmetrical logos are conceived by consumers as more ethical. Every symbol and sign must not come into conflict with the rest of your clinic's profile. For example, your decoration or furnishing have to provide a feeling of unity and continuation—every aspect of your place completes the image of your clinic and passes the message that you want to your patients.

_Physical evidence

Let's continue with physical evidence. This is very important since patients have little evidence upon what to base their perception of service quality. This is because the dental service provided is intangible and cannot be materialised. If your clinic is worn, tattered, cluttered, and poorly organised, patients may transfer that perception to the quality of the services provided and prejudge the outcome. For example: How does a patient perceive a dentist whose waiting room is dirty and worn? Does he start to correlate the appearance of the room with the service level provided? Does he question the quality and safety standards of the clinic?

Quality can be effectively communicated to patients by the appearance of your clinic. The design should match your philosophy and your core values. Some of the questions you should ask yourself when looking at your clinic in order to see if you communicate the right message to your patients are:

- Is your environment compatible with your new technology?
- Does your clinic represent your high-tech laser equipment?
- What are your main items of capital equipment?
- How have they changed in recent years?
- How does your deployed equipment score in comparison with that of your competitors?
- How do the facilities, equipment and processes you deploy for providing your service score in comparison with those of your competitors?
- What are your plans for staying ahead, keeping apace or catching up?

_Choosing location and size of your clinic

Last but not least: How do you choose the location and the size of your clinic? Let's have a look on some very essential parameters:

1. Demographics of patients
2. Cost (rent/purchase)
3. Neighbourhood image
4. Proximity to market
5. Transportation
6. Parking facilities
7. Accessibility for pedestrians
8. Pollution
9. Traffic patterns
10. Types of businesses around
11. Future value of the area
12. Expansion capabilities
13. Square metre needed

All above aspects and parameters must be considered and often re-evaluated in order to keep up to date and preserve a high standard level of services. They can be implemented and considered to be more than the subjects stated. For example during a keynote speech while you are thinking of how you can make an impressive introduction you can start with the right music. You can use all the above knowledge as guideline in many ways and design the effective marketing of your clinic that will boost your sales and recognition in the market. I am sure you will use these information to transform your clinic's marketing campaign as well as other aspects of your professional life and not only. In the next part of these series, we will discuss the last P of the 7P's, which is process.

Till then, you can send me your questions and request information at dba@yiannikosdental.com or via our Facebook Account www.facebook.com/anna-maria.yiannikos. Looking forward to our next discussion!

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Eine erfolgreiche Praxis erfordert ein erfolgreiches Management! Orientierung für ein gelungenes Praxismanagement geben die 7 Ps des Marketing Mix. Zwei wichtige Ps sind dabei Praxisgestaltung („physical evidence") und Ort („place"). Der Ort repräsentiert die Umgebung der Praxis, die wiederum folgende drei Elemente enthalten sollte: Umgebungsbedingungen wie eine musikalische Untermalung der Räume, die räumliche Anordnung der Praxis, was z.B. den Empfangsbereich und die Behandlungsräume betrifft, sowie Zeichen und Symbole beispielsweise auf Visitenkarten und Einrichtungsgegenständen.

Auch die Praxisgestaltung ist von großer Bedeutung. Patienten haben zunächst wenig Anhaltspunkte, was die Servicequalität der Praxis anbelangt und stützen ihre Wahrnehmung in der Regel auf die äußere Erscheinung. Ein unaufgeräumter, unsauberer Warteraum kann erstmal ein negatives Licht auf die Behandlungsqualität werfen. Diese lässt sich also auch über das äußere Erscheinungsbild der Praxis kommunizieren: Ist die Praxis kompatibel mit neuen Technologien? Was sind die Hauptinvestitionsgüter? Gibt es einen Plan, um weiter fortschrittlich zu sein und mit Wettbewerbern Schritt zu halten?

Dies sind nur einige Fragen, die man sich in diesem Zusammenhang stellen sollte. Auch die Wahl des Praxisortes ist von Bedeutung: Wie ist die Patientendemografie in der Gegend? Wie das Nachbarschaftsimage? Gibt es Parkmöglichkeiten? Anbindungen zum öffentlichen Nahverkehr? Bei Beachtung und stetiger Evaluierung der genannten Aspekte steht einem erfolgreichen Praxismanagement nichts im Wege.