

Gain **power** at your **laser** clinics!

Process

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_Today, as a sequel of our previous articles we will introduce you to the last P of our 7 P's of Marketing Mix. With these series of articles my ultimate goal is to give dentists and dental professionals a basic guideline of the marketing options available which they can directly implement to their clinical routine. Starting with this easy strategy, I will teach you how you can implement these methods at your own clinic as well as understand their value and power and thus change your professional life.

The last P of the 7P's of Marketing Mix is Process. Actually, this refers to the process that our patients undergo before, during and after the treatment. Our ultimate goal is to add value to all the above three stages.

_Five factors

The above mentioned three stages are influenced by five crucial factors. The first factor is the culture of our patients. For example, Americans are more convinced about aesthetic dentistry than Cypriots and thus are more likely to undergo an aes-

thetic treatment. The second factor refers to our patients' social class. A patient from an upper social class might be more interested in a whitening treatment than a patient from a lower social class.

The third factor is the reference group. This means that our patients' decision to accept a treatment is influenced not only by psychological factors, personality and lifestyle, but also by the people around them, with whom they are interacting, and the various social groups to which they belong. The groups with whom they interact directly or indirectly influence our patients' decisions. If a patient for example knows a friend or a relative who has been treated with laser, he or she would be more attracted to do such kind of treatment than a patient who has no previous reference group.

The fourth factor refers to opinion leaders. There are three types of opinion leaders that are most commonly used: celebrities, experts and the 'common man'. For example, a patient might visit us because a famous star is one of our patients (celebrity), his GP referred him or her to us (expert) or he or she saw a testimonial from one of our pa-

services or products based on the need or on emotions—the so called internal motivation. On the other hand, we have the external motivation that we as dentists can offer to our patients by openly communicating the benefits of the laser treatment, for instance.

Decision making process

As I mentioned above, there are three stages that our patients go through during their decision making process to accept the treatment.

The first phase is the pre-purchase stage. In this phase, the patients are aware of their needs, they start to search for more information, through the internet, by asking friends or relatives and possibly visiting other colleagues of us. In this phase, our external marketing plays a very important role.

The next stage is the service-encounter stage. This second stage represents the moment when we are in direct contact with the patient; this has been termed as the 'moment of truth', which is our opportunity to influence the patient's perception of the service quality through our internal mar-



tients on our website / testimonial book ('common man'). Last but not least, there are psychological factors that determine our patients' behaviours. If they need the treatment, we have to ask ourselves: What is their perception, their attitude towards the treatment and finally, what are the patients' motives? Based on the Freudian theory, there is an existence of unconscious motives in the selection of

keting. The third and final stage is the post-purchase stage. It is the stage when the patients go to their houses, think about their treatment and evaluate us. In this stage, the patients' loyalty and intentions for referrals are created. They decide whether they are going to continue visiting us or not, whether we have met their expectations. They are either satisfied or we have not succeeded and

they are dissatisfied. Additionally, in this third stage cognitive dissonance might occur, a very normal situation in people, which is also known as doubt.



[PICTURE: ©MATHEE SAENGKAIEW]

For example, let's assume that Mrs. Smith has made ten veneers. She had chosen us after an extensive pre-purchase search and evaluation of alternatives. When she saw her new smile she was so excited! However, when she went home her next door neighbour said: "What on earth have you done! You have spent so much money just for your smile during this economic crisis!" So, Mrs Smith's level of dissonance could be very substantial indeed.

And then Mrs Smith comes to us full of anxiety about her decision. Some of which we can do in this moment is to reassure her of the success of the method she has chosen and that there are war-

ranties. Furthermore, we can assure her that we would be next to her in the exceptional case of failure. Another possible way to reduce the cognitive dissonance is to remember our patient of the reference groups, e.g. people that have already been treated and are satisfied with us.

In the next issue of this magazine I will introduce a new series named "11 TIPS to gain desirable success in our dental clinics". Till then, you can always send me your questions and request further information and guidance at

dba@yiannikosdental.com or via our Facebook Account. Looking forward to our next trip of business growth and educational development!

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Kurz & bündig

Im finalen Teil dieser Serie wird das letzte P im 7 P's of Marketing Mix vorgestellt: der Prozess. Dieser beschreibt die Entscheidungsfindung des Patienten für oder gegen eine weiterführende Behandlung und umfasst drei Phasen, nämlich vor, während und nach der Behandlung.

Diese Phasen werden von fünf Faktoren beeinflusst. Erstens dem kulturellen Hintergrund des Patienten: Ein Amerikaner ist für eine ästhetische Zahnbehandlung beispielsweise zugänglicher als ein Zypriote. Der zweite Faktor bezieht sich auf den sozialen Status: So interessiert sich ein Patient aus einer höheren sozialen Schicht vielleicht mehr für eine Zahnaufhellung als ein Patient aus einer niedrigeren. Ein dritter Faktor stellt die Referenzgruppe dar: Ein Patient, der bereits auf die Erfahrung von Bekannten oder Freunden zurückgreifen kann, wird sich eher für beispielsweise eine Laserbehandlung entscheiden als jemand, der keine solche Referenzgruppe hat. Der vierte Faktor umfasst die Meinungsbildner. Hier sind drei Gruppen zu nennen, die eine Patientenentscheidung beeinflussen: prominente Persönlichkeiten, Experten und der „Normalbürger“, letzterer trägt zur Meinungsbildung durch Bewertungen auf der Praxiswebsite oder mündliche Empfehlungen bei. Zu guter Letzt bestimmt auch noch die Psychologie über das Patientenverhalten. Hier können unbewusste Motive des Patienten zur Entscheidungsfindung beitragen.

Diese fünf Faktoren spielen eine wichtige Rolle im dreistufigen Entscheidungsprozess. In der ersten Stufe – vor der Behandlung – ist das externe Marketing der Praxis entscheidend; der Patient holt sich Informationen beispielsweise über das Internet oder durch Empfehlungen ein. In der nächsten Stufe entsteht der direkte Kontakt zwischen Patient und Behandler. Hier lässt sich der Entscheidungsprozess des Patienten durch internes Marketing, d.h. Servicequalität, beeinflussen. Die letzte Stufe beschreibt die Zeit nach der Behandlung, wenn der Patient die Praxis verlässt, über die Behandlung nachdenkt und entscheidet, ob er wiederkommt oder nicht. In dieser Stufe können Zweifel aufkommen. Hier kann der Behandler die Ängste des Patienten durch Zusage von Hilfe bei evtl. Problemen nach der Behandlung etc. und durch positive Referenzen beseitigen.

In der nächsten Ausgabe beginnt eine neue Serie. Hier wird die Autorin 11 Tipps geben, wie sich wünschenswerter Erfolg in der Zahnarztpraxis erzielen lässt.



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