

Successful communication in your daily practice

Part XI: Attracting prospective patients from abroad

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This series covers the most common and challenging scenarios that might arise in your dental practice and presents successful ways to deal with them in order for you to enjoy greater peace of mind. Each article of this series teaches you a new, easy-to-use specialised protocol which can easily be adapted to your own dental clinic's requirements from the outset.

Today's challenging topic deals with how you can attract patients from abroad and expand your client base as a result. Personally, I find the topic of medical tourism extremely exciting. In the following article, I will provide seven essential steps towards attaining your goals. You may have tried several companies and websites already, but not had the desired return on your investment and not attracted the number of patients you had expected to. Today, I promise that, by following the seven steps below, you will attract patients from abroad at very low cost easily and effectively.

7 essential steps

1. Accredit your clinic to international standards

Patients feel more comfortable visiting a practice that has its credentials of safety and quality accredited by independent international organisations—and correctly so. Prospective patients are more likely to travel to your country and visit your practice if they are certain that they will receive proper treatment in a safe and professional practice environment. For instance, accredit your practice to international standards, such as ISO 9001 or ISO 45001. The former comprises a variety of widely accepted quality standards and the latter is the globally recognised occupational health and safety management system.

2. Use your website to clearly show that which distinguishes your practice

Prospective patients will only take note if you tell them something useful, something that not only addresses

their needs but also satisfies their desires. If you are the expert, show them. You could, for instance, inform them on the benefits to themselves of your unique dental equipment, or demonstrate your difference through the processes that you and your team employ. Show them that you offer not only a treatment but also a great experience.

3. Use before and after photographs in your promotional online channels

People are usually rather cautious about spending a great deal of money travelling abroad for treatment that they do not know the outcome of beforehand. Distributing contrastive before and after photographs and making them publicly available via online promotional tools, such as Google Ads, social media, blogs or your homepage, can be a great way to assure prospective patients that you deliver on your promises with regard to treatment outcomes.

4. Highlight your credentials

Highlighting your credentials encourages patients from abroad to visit you. When they come to you, they must feel that they already know you and that you are well educated—you need to accomplish that via your online presence.

5. Make use of your media resources

Use all your promotional media resources wisely to make your clinic visible and known. Draw up a promotional plan for every month and keep to it.

6. Ask loyal patients to submit testimonials

Video testimonials or testimonials in written form from patients who have visited you before can be a vital promotional tool for you and can greatly influence prospective patients' decisions.

7. Be prompt in your response

Do not delay in answering prospective patients' e-mails. You could have set templates for different treatments that they may ask about. Consider setting up preprogrammed e-mail responses on veneers or implants in which you explain the materials that you use, the associated price and the benefits for them. This will certainly save you time.

Isn't that easy?

Use the above-mentioned steps as a protocol in your daily practice and you will soon notice an influx of new patients from abroad and—most importantly—feel in control of this new situation. You now know the exact steps required to attract and engage with patients from other countries. Moreover, I am confident that you will most likely experience an increase in income as a consequence too. Just try it and let me know what you think!

I am sure that you are looking forward to the next issue of the laser magazine, in which I will present the 12th part of this unique series on communication protocols and consider further interesting and useful topics. Are you curious about what's next? We will talk about how to retain your newly won patients from abroad and turn them into loyal advocates, who will promote your practice in their respective home countries. As you can see—we are still not done with the topic of medical tourism, as there are many more interesting aspects to explore that you, as your clinic's leader, can capitalise on. I will continue the discussion of the topic and provide five crucial points necessary to meet your goals.

Until then, remember that you are not only the dentist at your clinic but also its manager and leader. For questions and further information and guidance, don't hesitate to reach out by e-mailing me at dba@yiannikosdental.com or see our website, www.dbamastership.com. I look forward to our next step towards business growth and educational development. Let's keep in touch!

about the author



Dr Anna Maria Yiannikos (DDS, LSO, MSc, MBA) is one of the first two women worldwide to have obtained a master's degree in laser dentistry. She has owned a dental clinic for 23 years now and leads the innovative Dental Business Administration Mastership Course at RWTH Aachen University in Germany. She is an adjunct faculty member of the Aachen Center for Laser Dentistry.

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