

Everything you need to market your plan!

Sam Brice, marketing manager at DPAS, outlines how payment plans can benefit your practice



Most dentists recognise that to some extent marketing now plays a key role in running a successful dental practice. But at a time when practices continue to report increased numbers of FTAs, a reduction in the uptake of treatment plans and continued pressure due to the bureaucracy of targets and compliance, you could be forgiven for throwing your hands up in horror at yet more practice marketing advice.

Marketing

Some practitioners quake when the subject of 'marketing' is raised, viewing it as an unobtainable nirvana, awash with jargon and filled with mystery designed to make those who are not part of it feel that they need help from those who are. But at DPAS, the approach to practice marketing is like everything we do; honest, straightforward and delivered in a common sense way with the ultimate goal of building a long-lasting, mutually beneficial relationship.

Practices often turn to dental plan providers for help with marketing because of the central role that dental plans play in the way in which treatment is financially delivered to patients. The challenge, particularly in today's testing economic climate where cost remains a sensitive issue, is to maintain a price for your private work that ensures you are operating at

a profit but also to provide your patients with a financial solution should they require one.

Service

When choosing a plan provider you should choose one who shares your goals and will help you grow patient numbers while offering an outstanding level of service. Some dentists recognise that the strength of their brand is a key investment priority and understand that anything that adds 'value' to the brand will ultimately add value to the practice. They take a positive decision to enhance their brand through a practice-branded dental plan rather than dilute it in favour of a patient-facing consumer brand that has the potential to overwhelm their own marketing efforts and reduce their opportunity to strengthen patient loyalty.

DPAS has been offering 'practice branded' dental plans for over 15 years and provides an efficient cost-effective administration service delivered by a team of experts. Key members of our team were instrumental in developing the original concept of conversion from the NHS to independent practice and we continue to help dental practices with this transition.

Our focus has always been on the core business of administering practice-branded dental plans, providing dentists with everything they need to implement and effectively promote their own plans. But our support goes much deeper than this and we assist all types of practice, offering marketing help while maintaining a 'backstage' position that allows principals and practice managers to stay in control.

We remain one of the lowest cost providers





of dental plan administration services and many of our marketing initiatives are part of an overall support package to our client practices. We provide marketing help by assigning each customer a practice consultant who works pre- and post-launch to ensure the plan is delivered to patients in the most effective way possible.

Training

In-practice training is an important part of this initial support and practices welcome the involvement of someone who has previously experienced a plan launch or provider conversion. Practice consultants are an invaluable source of knowledge for principals and practice managers and will assist with every aspect of introducing a plan, from what's included in the plan itself to how letters of explanation are worded and distributed.

Design

The plan itself must be designed to be an attractive proposition to patients and the practice team need to be not only aware of the structure and function of the plan, but

also have to believe in its inherent value to the patient. Our consultants will guide the practice team through this important stage, answering queries and helping to build momentum even before the plan is launched.

The practical elements of marketing such as brochure design, copywriting and distribution can be daunting and time consuming for a practice team which has not tackled these issues before. At DPAS, we have an in-house printing and distribution facility at our Headquarters in Wiltshire that provides practices with practice-branded marketing communications that introduce the plan, clearly explain how it works and the benefits to patients of budgeting for dental care.

Support

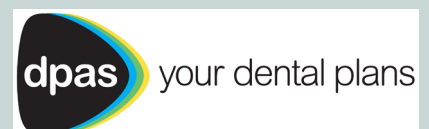
Further support via our web-based marketing toolbox is available exclusively for use by practices with DPAS administered dental plans. This interactive website aims to help practice teams understand and embrace marketing and importantly provides ready-to-use practical tips and tools including resources

on marketing, PR and advertising.

So what does all this support cost? Well, at a time when costs are being scrutinised it is right that practices must examine whether they are receiving value for money in terms of the additional 'extras' they are receiving from a variety of suppliers. Statistics show that DPAS client practices can save an average of £10,000 per year for every 1,000 patients on plan, in charges alone when compared to another provider. We think £10,000 can buy a lot and our view is that practices should be at liberty to invest this money as they see fit, so whilst we are committed to doing everything required to support the launch and maintenance of dental plans, we are also committed to maintaining the low charges for which we are renowned.

So before you close your ears to marketing, why not talk to DPAS and discover exactly how much help we can offer.

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If you would like to discuss how a practice-branded dental plan can help you market your practice please call 01747 870910 or visit www.dpas.co.uk.