



## WHAT DOES YOUR PRACTICE SAY ABOUT YOU WITHOUT EVEN SAYING A WORD? 40 TIPS IN 40 MINUTES

Webinar with Laura Hatch and Andrea Greer



1. First understand how big an impact this has on our patients! First impressions are everything – 7 seconds! They cannot possibly judge how technically skilled our dentist is. They are 100% judging us on how they feel when they are in the practice. This is the heart of the patient experience.
2. Your team needs to understand this importance and be involved in making sure every experience is amazing and that the office always looks great.
3. What does the parking lot look like? Is there trash or dead landscaping? How about bugs in the lights or dirty windows?
4. Avoid showcasing the name DENTIST on the building with the logo of a tooth, this just looks like everyone else! What do you do to stand out?
5. What can you control about the entry? Perhaps the landlord would be willing to contribute to the upkeep or updating of the entry.
6. Are pictures or signs in your front window faded, outdated and 'old' looking? People walking by and even before patients walk in, they are judging you on this!
7. Walk through the practice with patient eyes. Look up, look down, look left and right. Sit in every chair – what do they see, how comfortable is it? Stains, old magazines, dusty picture frames.
8. What does your team do when they make eye contact with a patient or walks into a room with a patient? Smile and acknowledge – don't ignore.
9. Signs – Do you have sign-u-sitis?? Signs, as a means of communication, are not a good thing! Patients might see them as rude, lazy, or that you don't like to talk to them.
10. Body language. Our body language is 60% of a message – what is your non-verbal communication saying to your patients?
11. What are the sounds like? Sound creates stress – the din of multiple TVs (which are sending a terrible message anyway) or a loud radio station. The drill is bad enough!
12. Is there a television in the lobby – is it necessary? What is playing? Be mindful of this as it sets the mood for those in the room.
13. Smell – dental offices have a unique smell! Try a diffuser with a LIGHT scent – not too perfumy!!
14. Be professional about conversations – even though you can't see the patients, they are always in ear shot and potentially listening.
15. THINK "Company is always coming"!
16. #StoptheWhisper! No matter what you are talking about – whispering always is a bad idea. Patients will always feel you are either whispering about them or each other.
17. Refresh the paint every couple of years (3-5). Make sure to choose the right color, not just what is trendy. Consider hiring a color consultant to help you choose the right undertone.
18. Furniture – does your furniture look like it has been there since the 80's? Is it comfortable? Does your front office look like a hospital waiting room?
19. Clean up the clutter! Horizontal surfaces read as dirty and disorganized. Counters in operatories should 90-100% clear of everything! No photos, disinfectant wipes, paper towels, gloves, samples, brochures, etc. Only what is pertinent to today's appointment.
20. Phones ringing and not being answered! Not only is this annoying it shows a lack of importance to those patients calling your office.

21. Clean up the clutter – part 2! In the front office – stacks of papers, charts, sticky notes everywhere, taped up signs behind the monitor with the NPI and Tax ID numbers. All need to go!
22. What can be seen from the reception area? If the doctor’s office, break room or kitchen areas are visible from your reception area, make sure it always stays clean.
23. Clean up the clutter – part 3! Everywhere in the office – if you must have it at your fingertips, it goes in a drawer or go vertical! Nice (not plastic) file folder holders, brochure holders, shelves for photos and samples.
24. Tile and Carpets – it does not cost much to have these floor spaced cleaned regularly – not only does it look good for patients but the team will be more proud of the environment too.
25. Limit plants in the office – bugs, smell, look dead, etc.
26. Stop trying to sell everything! Similar to signs, it can be overwhelming and too much for patients to comprehend. We get so used to our environment that we often don’t even see it.
27. Do consider fresh flowers in the office – this is a great marketing tool! You can also give these away to patients at the end of the day or the week.
28. Coffee area or water at a minimum. Just like when someone comes to your house, offer them something to drink and make them feel at home!
29. Mirrors are a great way to bounce light around a room and give patients an opportunity to check to make sure there is no alginate on their face!
30. Yes, the bathroom is a way that many judge a business!! Make sure yours is clean, stocked on a regular basis throughout the day and be sure to have things available that might be needed.
31. Lightbulbs! Make sure they are of the same temperature! Warm light vs cool. There are two measurements on bulbs to watch for: Kelvin the lower the number, the warmer the light. Somewhere between 2000–4000 is ideal. The other measure is the Color Rendering Index (CRI) and is a measurement of how color is reflected. Scale of 1- 100, the higher the better. Lower rating presents as washed out and blah. Fluorescent lights do this, and they have a rating of 80 or so. The goal is to be 85 CRI or higher, above 90 is ideal for the dental office because we are really dealing with color with our patients. The good news is that there are now bulbs that are LED but meant to be used in a fluorescent bulb fixture. Win-win!
32. Cell phones cause distractions and patients feel like they are an interruption. Have a cell phone policy that does not allow a distraction to patient care.
33. Update the artwork. Either rearrange or buy new (maybe offer to find some pieces at art.com). Cartoons are not décor – please don’t cut them out and tape them up in operatories or at the front. Keep this type of material in the staff area.
34. Magazines. Make sure they are current, light hearted and do not look like they were brought in from the doctor’s home. Use items like a magazine ladder to organize and reduce clutter on the tables.
35. Shifting gears - IRON YOUR CLOTHES! PUT ON MAKEUP (if you wear makeup)! PULL YOUR HAIR BACK (if you are working on patients)!
36. Kids areas and toys – Yuck. Have things to offer kids to keep them entertained, but make sure that it is clean, looks nice and is obviously germ free.
37. Matching or coordinating scrubs with OSHA approved shoes and arm length shirts.
38. Don’t wait for the end of the day to clean areas. The vacuum can be pulled out when needed, wipe down counters as needed and pick up the reception area throughout the day.
39. Front office team should wear black slacks with a coordinating top or sweater, Front Office teams should not be in scrubs.
40. Keep the team-only spaces picked up and clutter free. Keep them nice – they should not be the catch-all space for the “we don’t know where to put this” things. That does nothing to honor the team members and the hard work they do. Update the décor in these rooms also. This will boost morale and keeps them LOVING where they work!