

## 3 POSITIVE RESPONSE RULE

Read the following examples and decide which Dental Assistant is expressing dental value to the patient.

### First example

Example A

Patient: Do you offer Invisalign?

Dental Assistant: Yes.

Example B

Patient: Do you offer Invisalign?

Dental Assistant: Yes! We do a lot of Invisalign. Patients love it because we can **scan digitally without taking messy impressions**, the **trays are removable**, and your **smile can be transformed in about a year**.

*When a patient asks about a procedure, respond with 3 positive things about that procedure. Do not just give a yes or no answer. Make sure that your answer satisfies the question, "What's good about it?" Do you see how by following the 3 Positive Response Rule you are expressing value to that patient?*

### Here's another example

Example A

Patient: Do you do teeth whitening?

Dental Assistant: Yes.

Example B

Patient: Do do teeth whitening?

Dental Assistant: Yes! We use a great take home teeth whitening system that is **easy to use**, you can start to **see results in a few days**, and you can **do it all in the comfort of your own home**.

Do you see the difference in the examples? By offering three positive responses, you are leaving your patient with positive feelings about what your practice can do for them. You are planting seeds of value.

### One final example

Example A

Patient: Does the doctor do crowns?

Dental Assistant: Yes

Example B

Patient: Does the doctor do crowns?

Dental Assistant: Yes! We have the technology to do same day crowns so you **only have to get numb once**, you can **watch your crown being made** right here in the office, and you can **leave with the final crown** on the day we get started.

Do you see how much BETTER the second responses are in each example? By responding with a 3 Positive Response Rule, you are increasing your practice's value for that patient.

## 3 POSITIVE RESPONSE RULE ASSIGNMENT

**GOAL:** To learn how to express value to a patient using the 3 Positive Rule

**LOGISTICS:** Create 3 examples of an assistant responding WITHOUT and WITH with the 3 Positive Rule. Also, consider having a 3 Positive Response prepared for inquiries about every type of service your practice offers. This is a great exercise to practice at your morning meeting.

Example A:  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Example B  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Example A:  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Example B  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Example A:  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Example B  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Date of completion:  
Reviewed with doctor/manager:  
Initial after satisfactory completion:

## FOLLOW UP QUESTIONING

Let's take the 3 Positive Response Rule one step further.

When a patient asks a question, keep in mind that he/she might not be communicating an exact need to you. It is up to the dental team to recognize that the patient may have more on his/her mind than he/she is actually saying. Draw it out from them, and then guide them to the next step.

### First example

Example A

Patient: Do you offer Invisalign?

Dental Assistant: Yes.

Example B

Patient: Do you offer Invisalign?

Dental Assistant: Yes! We do a lot of Invisalign. Patients love it because we can scan digitally without taking messy impressions, the trays are removable, and your smile can be transformed in about a year. **How long have you been interested in changing your smile?**

***Do you see the difference in the two responses?***

***The dental assistant's response in Example A is pretty terrible. It does nothing to express the value that your practice can bring to that patient's life. By simply answering yes, the conversation comes to a halt. The patient isn't asking about Invisalign to just know if you offer that service, the patient is asking because he/she is INTERESTED in that service. Responding with additional questions can help guide the patients into a conversation that they may have had trouble communicating on their own. The response in Example B is starting up a dialogue between the patient and the assistant. By following up the 3 Positive Rule with a Follow Up Question, we are keeping the conversation open and moving in a positive and value filled direction.***

### Here's another example

Example A

Patient: Do you see kids?

Dental Assistant: Yes.

Example B

Patient: Do you see kids?

Dental Assistant: Yes! We love seeing kids! We love to help them see that the dentist can be fun, that visits are easy, and of course we love to shower them prizes at the end. **How many little ones can we get scheduled for you today?**

Did you see how the dental assistant responded with 3 positive things and then followed up with a strong follow up question that is guiding the patient towards the next step? A dental assistant should be keenly aware of how he/she is responding to patients. Those responses will directly impact the growth and development, or lack thereof, of a practice.

# FOLLOW UP QUESTIONING ASSIGNMENT

**GOAL:** To learn how to express value to a patient using the Follow Up Questioning

**LOGISTICS:** Create 3 examples of an assistant responding WITHOUT and WITH with Follow Up Questioning.

Example A:  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Example B  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Example A:  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Example B  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Example A:  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Example B  
Patient:  
Dental Assistant:

Date of completion:  
Reviewed with doctor/manager:  
Initial after satisfactory completion:

## SUPERSTAR DENTAL ASSISTANT DEFINED

Working WITH a solid team can be the greatest feeling out there. When everyone is working together, supporting one another, the day can be really fun. However, when someone on the team is not working WITH, but instead AGAINST the other team members, it can make for a difficult situation. These toxic team members are not only bringing down their other team members, they are also bringing down the business.

Look, I've been doing this for a long time—over 20 years. I've seen my share of dental assistants—some who showed up every day with a smile and were ready to participate and others who were frequently late and had bad attitudes. There's a reason the ones with bad attitudes don't work in our practice anymore, if you catch my drift.

It's amazing how one bad assistant apple can infect the rest of the team. Don't be that person. Don't be the person that stresses out everybody else. Be the person that brings joy to the team. Create your own personal brand as someone who is helpful, calm, humble, and knowledgeable. Don't be the know it all who really knows nothing.

Do you see what we're saying here?  
Be the teammate you would want to work WITH!



***We are going to further explore how you can become the best type of dental assistant—one who contributes positively to the team and isn't a drain on everyone. As you dive into this section, keep in mind that no one wants to work with someone who is holding him/her back or slowing down the team. Doctors want teams filled with the most active and helpful assistants. Think of it this way. A baseball manager is always trying to build the strongest roster, right? In order to do that, he is going to find the best players for the available positions. Sometimes that means giving additional training or lessons. Sometimes that means moving people to different positions that better suit them. Sometimes it means taking them off the roster. As a business owner, I am CONSTANTLY evaluating my team to see if what I need to do to improve them. Sometimes that means giving additional training or lessons. Sometimes it means promoting people to different positions. Sometimes it means taking them off of our roster. In order for our practice to keep giving the HIGHEST level of quality we possibly can, we only keep the players who are not only good with technical skills, but who also work well with others, and continue to grow as professionals.***

Be the ALL STAR dental assistant that the team can't win without!

## PASSIVE VS ACTIVE DENTAL ASSISTANT

There is a clear difference between a passive and an active dental assistant. A passive assistant is not actively engaged in his/her job. An active assistant takes charge of his/her own learning and does whatever it takes to get the job done. Take a look at the following behaviors. Decide what you would do in a situation. If you find that you are more passive than active, then it's time to change your behaviors or realize that dental assisting may not be the best career choice for you.

Situation	Passive Assistant	Active Assistant
Autoclave stops functioning and gives an error code.	Tells a coworker that the autoclave has an error.	Sees the error code, gets the autoclave manual, finds the error code listed in the troubleshooting section, determines what part may have to be ordered, and then goes to the manager/doctor with the problem AND solution.
While assisting for a filling, the doctor reminds the patient that the decay may be more extensive than what appears on the radiograph. The pulp then becomes exposed and the filling procedure now turns into a root canal.	Does not recognize what is happening and must have the doctor tell the assistant to get out the root canal materials and instruments.	Recognizes that the pulp has been exposed and since this was a possibility from the onset, already has some of the root canal materials and instruments nearby.
Assisting for a crown and the gum tissue starts bleeding around the prep.	Does not recognize what is happening and/or does not understand the procedure enough to know that this requires attention.	Understands that any bleeding can interfere with the next steps of the procedure and so he/she gets out a hemostatic agent without being told.
Low on impression material.	Sees that the practice is low on impression material or doesn't even notice it at all.	Keeps an eye on all stocked materials and doesn't let materials get low enough so as to interfere with a patient's treatment.
Doctor introduces a new service.	Half listens to the information given by the doctor regarding the new service.	Listens intently to the information given by the doctor regarding the new service. Asks questions. Writes down notes. Finds additional resources available to educate him/herself on the service. Learns as much as possible, which may occur on his/her own time, to be as prepared as possible to educate patients and to assist for this service.
Lab case has not arrived for patient coming in today.	Did not know the case had not arrived until setting up for that patient moments before patient is due to arrive.	Follows a clear system of lab tracking to ensure that cases are in office, and that they have been correctly fabricated by the lab BEFORE a patient is called for his/her appointment.

# PASSIVE VS ACTIVE DENTAL ASSISTANT ASSIGNMENT

**GOAL:** To understand Passive vs Active Dental Assistants

**LOGISTICS:** Create two scenarios. Do not use the same examples from the previous page.

Think of a situation and describe how a passive assistant would handle the situation and then how an active assistant would handle the situation.

Situation:

Passive:

Active:

Think of a situation and describe how a passive assistant would handle the situation and then how an active assistant would handle the situation.

Situation:

Passive:

Active:

Date of completion:

Reviewed with doctor/manager:

Initial after satisfactory completion:

## PRACTICE PROMOTION DEFINED

Most private dental practices are independently owned and operated. Every single business decision has to be made by the owner, usually the doctor.

Just for a second, let's think about what that means. The doctor not only has to work IN his/her business (by seeing patients), he/she also has to spend time working ON his/her business (to stay in business). That's pretty much like having TWO full time jobs. Take a look.

### WORKING IN YOUR BUSINESS

- Treating patients
- Performing dentistry
- Writing treatment notes
- Overseeing team members
- Returning/making patient calls
- Speaking with specialists
- Completing continuing education
- Repairing equipment
- Dealing with sales meetings
- Communicating with labs
- Meeting with the team
- Reviewing reports

### WORKING ON YOUR BUSINESS

- Dealing with accounting/banking
- Implementing marketing strategies
- Arranging for various insurances
- Negotiating with landlord
- Paying bills
- Networking with other professionals
- Learning about new developments
- Participating in dental associations
- Reviewing reports
- Creating efficient systems

As you can see, there are many things to take care of in a dental practice. Truthfully, there are probably 100 more things to add to each list. But let's move on.

Let's now put this into context.

Now, most dental offices aren't like the store, Target. Target has corporate offices that handle things like marketing. The employees who work at your local Target store don't have to worry about creating Target ads or commercials. They don't have to even THINK about promoting their business. They have a department that takes care of all of that. Most dental offices don't have a corporate office (unless of course, they ARE a corporate dental office) that takes care of advertising and promotion.

***Most dental offices have to promote themselves for business. With all that the doctor/owner already has on his/her plate, practice promotion becomes the responsibility of EVERY team member.***

The doctor should not be the only one supporting marketing efforts.  
 The doctor should not be the only one asking for referrals or reviews.  
 The doctor should not be the only one seeking out opportunities.  
 The doctor should not be the only one to participate in community events.

On the following pages, we will discuss different aspects of practice promotion and help the assistant to understand how he/she should contribute to promoting the practice.

## PRACTICE PROMOTION DEFINED

Before we go any further, I want to put this section into context for you.

I visited a local bakery once. The shop was clean and smelled like all kinds of deliciousness.

I scanned the menu quickly and then got in line. There was one undecided customer in front of me and a bored looking female behind the counter. The customer was talking with his friend about his choices, but was clearly having a hard time making up his mind. After a minute or two, he gave the employee his order.

She took a cookie out of the case, boxed it up, and finished the transaction with very few words. I placed my order, shoved my cupcake in my mouth before I even got to my car, and started thinking about the service the female employee had just demonstrated. It didn't sit well with me and, in fact, I thought about it for many days afterwards. That sweet bakery had left a sour taste in my mouth.

Here's the thing. That counter employee did NOT realize what she REALLY should be doing for that business. Yes, she should have smiled more. Yes, she could have been friendlier. But there's more. Her job REALLY should be MUCH more than just handing over orders and collecting the payments. So much more. She missed out on SO much opportunity for that bakery. In other words, when the customer was not sure of what to order, she should have been making suggestions or offering samples. She could have mentioned specialty items or best selling items. She could have ended the transaction by mentioning that the bakery also bakes special order items for parties and events. She should have been a true advocate for that business-promoting the brand, the product, and the amazing baker.

Speaking of the baker. Let's talk about her for a minute. The baker of this particular bakery was also the owner of that bakery. Where was the baker during that transaction with the undecided customer? She was in the kitchen of course, baking additional goods! It is not

practical for the baker/owner to be baking all day AND promoting the products to the customers out front. Do you see how it would be impossible to be in two places at once all day long?

Have you read the book, The E-Myth? This real life experience reminded me of that book. The E-Myth discusses working on verses in a business.

That bakery closed about six months after I visited. It made me kind of sad because they had quality products, and it was a nice little shop. But those things aren't enough. I can't help but wonder if they would still be open if they had a team full of people who were promoting their products to every customer who walked in.

So what does this mean for dentistry? A dentist/owner is often in the back ~~making cookies~~ doing crowns and it is impossible for the doctor to be in two places at once. A dental practice cannot survive unless the whole team is supporting the business by expressing value to patients and promoting services.

All this talk of baking is making me hungry for cake. Will you make a recommendation for me?



# PRACTICE PROMOTION ASSIGNMENT

**GOAL:** To understand this practice's brand

**LOGISTICS:** Answer the following questions.

Now that we know how important it is for dental practice survival to participate in marketing efforts, let's discuss different types of marketing. Marketing is not just things like TV and radio commercials—it's so much more.

But let's keep it simple for now.

Marketing is any opportunity we have to get our brand in front of a patient's eyes and/or ears. In order to do this, it is important to know a few things about this practice. No two private practices are the same. Some have a focus on technology. Some only do extractions and dentures. Some practices only see kids. Every practice has a different feel to it. Most practices can be summed up in one sentence. To better understand how to help promote this practice, it is a good idea to first get an understanding of the practice.

If this practice had to be summed up in one sentence, what would it be?

What is the practice mission statement?

Describe the practice's brand/philosophies/value system.

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