



**EFFECTIVE
METHODS
TO REDUCE
SCHEDULING GAPS**

Article By:

PracticeSense

INTRODUCTION

IT'S EVERY DENTIST'S WORST NIGHTMARE: A SCHEDULE THAT HAS MORE HOLES IN IT THAN A MOLAR THAT'S SEEN TOO MANY SWEETS AND NOT ENOUGH BRUSHING.

An empty schedule represents a breakdown in the overall working of the dentist's office and results in a significant loss of revenue if it persists. Practice Sense can help dentists increase patient retention and reduce cancellations. It allows patients to fill out forms online before they arrive at the office, which makes visits faster and allows you to book more appointments per day.



Strategically placed gaps in the schedule can be useful. Dental emergencies are very common in the United States, and can represent a large percentage of a practice's overall business. Because of this, it's highly advisable to keep a certain amount of flexibility built into the office schedule. But too many gaps – or days with only one or two patients – can create a level of inefficiency that can overwhelm a new or struggling practice's ability to stay afloat.



Sometimes, gaps in the schedule are unavoidable: patients will inevitably cancel routine appointments at the last minute. Certain days and times will predictably be slower than others. But by implementing a few simple office policies that allow staff to be flexible and proactive, a practice can be prepared to adapt to scheduling changes as they come up.

THERE ARE A FEW SIMPLE, PROVEN METHODS FOR REACTING TO SCHEDULING GAPS AND FILLING THEM.

These kinds of scheduling problems can often be mitigated with the solutions Practice Sense offers dentists. Our software allows patients to fill out paperwork before they ever set foot in the office, which can dramatically reduce patient no-shows. That's because it has been shown to improve a patient's sense of commitment to their appointment, reduce office visit times and facilitate easier visits

Let's Begin:

- 1. Maintain a short call/reactivation list.** This is a list of patients who are due to be scheduled for routine appointments on short notice. When a patient cancels, the receptionist should immediately reschedule them and then check for potential fillers. Our software can display patients by last appointment, giving you patients who may be up for a routine appointment. Reactivating patients is as easy as sending out a new form in our system.
- 2. Maintain an overdue reappointment list.** This includes all patients who are overdue for a hygienic appointment. Because they're overdue, they will often be more willing to come in on short notice. Practice Sense can help. If their forms are in our system you can simply request an update and your patients will receive their forms and only need to update information that has changed.
- 3. Look for family members to schedule.** If a patient who is scheduled on the same day as the scheduling gap has a family member who is also due for a checkup or hygienic appointment, they may be willing to come in together. Our customizable software can make this kind of information available in a few keystrokes.
- 4. Keep a list of patients with incomplete treatments.** Did a patient get a restorative treatment but not follow-up on a hygienic appointment? See if they can be slotted into scheduling gaps. Practice Sense can automatically send them reminders to schedule appointments.
- 5. Move up later appointments.** Finally, attempt to call patients who have appointments later in the day and see if they are willing to come in earlier. This doesn't erase the scheduling gap altogether, but it does allow for contiguous scheduling and a shorter overall day, which will save costs.

WANT TO TAKE YOUR PRACTICE TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

Along with implementing the customizable software we offer, one of the easiest ways to reduce scheduling gaps is to make sure staff members understand how to quickly and easily fill gaps in the schedule. There are a few simple, proven methods for reacting to scheduling gaps and filling them.

If your staff understands how to go through a basic checklist when a patient cancels, this can dramatically reduce gaps.

Practice Sense can help make your practice more effective, efficient, and adaptable.

Contact us today to learn how we can help you.

1-800-619-2955

hello@practicesense.com