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## *Strategy in Action— Equip Patients to Explain What You Offer to Their Friends!*

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### **Tell Your Patients the Stories You Want Them to Tell Others**

As dentists, we too often “hide our light under the bushel”—we’re just not good at telling others what types of dentistry we like to do.

What I’ve found and what I teach is that if I tell my patients about the types of dentistry I like to do and then ask them to tell their friends, they do!

Here’s how it works.

As part of my full exam, I ask my patients about the usual things—teeth, gums, cancer, bite, smile—and I usually get some interaction with them on these topics. If this reveals, or if I find, an issue, I deal with it. But perhaps nothing applies, or the patient isn’t ready for treatment. I’ll follow-up on one or more of the items we’ve discussed with a comment like:

*“That’s an area in which I like to help people” or*

*“That’s one of the topics I teach to other dentists” or*

*"Treating that (whatever it is) is one of the strengths of our practice"*

or

*"We like to deal with occlusal issues,"*

followed by:

*"If you have any friends or colleagues with this problem, you might suggest that they visit us because we'd love to help them."*

You'll be surprised at how often the patients do just that. I'm amazed at how often it comes back word-for-word what I told the patient.

My patient, Nick, is a great example of this. It was clear that Nick's smile needed some work, so I brought it up with him while chatting about the results of my exam and asked if he'd like to do something about it. Nick, however, was quite happy with his smile, so he didn't want to do anything. That's his choice, which I always respect.

As usual I said, *"No problem Nick, but I do enjoy giving people great smiles—it's one of the strengths of our practice—so if you have any friends or colleagues who are looking to give themselves a better smile, you might tell them that we're the place to go."*

Two weeks later Mark comes in. He tells us that he and his wife were having dinner with Nick and his wife a couple of days after I'd seen Nick. Get this! The wives were talking to each other and Mark's wife makes a comment about wishing Mark had a better smile. Nick's wife responded, *"He ought to go see Nick's dentist as he likes to do that stuff!"* Nick had actually told his wife that I liked doing smiles, and she had given the referral!

Mark needed some lower ortho work and 10 veneers—about 10,000 pounds (\$13,000) worth of dentistry. Not a bad result from a simple request that took me a few seconds to say to Nick!

Remember—tell your patients the stories you want them to tell others!