

# THE 5-STAR HYGIENIST

How to Develop a 5-Star Hygiene Department to Create Loyal Patients, Raise Your Case Acceptance Rates, and Skyrocket Your Profits



SAMPLE

# Introduction

What's the primary role of your hygienist? What impact does your hygienist have on your patient satisfaction? And how does he or she contribute to the overall functioning and profitability of your practice?

From the early 1900s until just a few short decades ago, any new dentist could hang out a shingle, advertise in the Yellow Pages, and patients would show up. Eventually enough patients referred their friends and relatives, helping the dentist build a stable, predictable practice. Your role as a dentist was secure and predictable. You performed the exams, prescribed the solutions, drilled, filled, and billed.

In those days, if you were an average dentist you hired an average hygienist (usually an independent contractor) to scrape, scale, clean, and polish, freeing you up for the more "important" and "glamorous" work of your profession.

Those days are gone.

Three forces have converged to transform the roles of dentist and hygienist in modern, successful, thriving practices. They are:

1. **Competition**

With over two million dentists in the United States alone, the dental profession has become highly competitive. Hanging out a shingle is not enough to guarantee a stable practice, much less to grow and maintain it. Far from merely providing outstanding dentistry, the primary role of the dentist in a thriving practice has to include building and managing a dental **business**. If your practice can't provide a level of service your patients are thrilled with, they can easily find another dentist who will.

2. **Medical research**

Growing research clearly demonstrates the link between oral health and overall health and wellness. Dentists and hygienists are not just "tooth specialists" any more – they are **medical** specialists.

3. **Advanced technology**

In just the past 20 years there has been a revolution in the way dentists treat patients. Intra-oral cameras, digital imagery, laser treatments, implants, invisible braces, veneers, whitening, one-day crowns (just to name a few advances) – all this new technology requires continuing education and training, and increasingly, reliance on "four-handed dentistry."

If you want your practice to thrive -- not just survive -- it's time to take a good, hard look at how **your hygienist can help you create a 5-Star Practice.**

## Why We Wrote this Booklet

We want to help you **create that 5-Star Practice by developing and collaborating with a 5-Star Hygienist.**

In this booklet, we'll explore and share the best practices of the 5-Star Hygiene departments we've helped create, by working with dentists just like you, with practices just like yours. Here's what you'll discover:

- ✓ **How to Provide 5-Star Preventative Therapy**
  - ✓ How to measure your effectiveness at providing preventative therapy
  - ✓ Three simple treatments to provide during every hygienist visit
  - ✓ How to train your patients to say "yes" to your recommendations, and have them thank you for it!
  
- ✓ **How to Provide 5-Star Periodontal Therapy**
  - ✓ How to measure your effectiveness at providing periodontal therapy
  - ✓ How to keep your perio schedule full and reduce your no-shows or cancellations by using current scheduling technology
  - ✓ How to make sure your patients never miss their scheduled perio appointments
  
- ✓ **How to Provide 5-Star Patient Health Advocacy**
  - ✓ How to make sure you understand -- and speak to -- your patients most important needs
  - ✓ How to show your patients the crucial links between their dental health and their overall health and wellbeing
  - ✓ How to "speak their language" and communicate so your patients experience the value of the service you provide

- ✓ **How to Develop a 5-Star Dentist/Hygienist Partnership**
  - ✓ How to work with your team to perfect your patient hand-offs
  - ✓ How to communicate in front of your patients to reinforce the value you provide
  - ✓ How to improve your treatment plan acceptance rates
  
- ✓ **How to Produce 5-Star Hygiene Profitability**
  - ✓ “Know Your Numbers” – how to measure and track the right numbers to show your progress
  - ✓ How to keep your schedule full with “The 3 Rs” – recall, recovery, and reactivation
  - ✓ How to set and re-evaluate your production/profitability goals

## How to Use this Booklet

As you go through the ideas in this booklet, you might discover you're already doing some of what we recommend. If so, that's fantastic! Keep it up.

But we expect you'll find ideas you'd like to implement in your own practice. When you do, take notes, and take action!

1. Discuss these ideas with your hygienist and key staff.
2. Measure everything! Look at your own numbers in terms of scheduling, productivity, no-shows and cancellations, hourly billing, case acceptance rates, and so forth.
3. Once you know your numbers, set goals for improvement.
4. Set up a tracking system so you can measure daily, weekly, and monthly numbers to see the trends.
5. When you reach or exceed your goals, celebrate! Reward yourself, your hygienist, and your staff for their progress.
6. When you don't reach your goals, determine the obstacles that might be in the way, and work with your team to find ways to overcome them.
7. Communicate, communicate, communicate.
8. Enjoy the process.

Ready?

Let's get started.