Make the most of technology investments by communicating their value to patients with total confidence.

Over the years, clinicians have asked how to explain the value of technology investments to their patients. From cone beam units to CAD/CAM equipment, everyone seems to know these tools are important, but the real job is in communicating this value. When patients are educated and have meaningful conversations with clinicians, studies have shown they are more likely to accept your treatment plan. This means there’s a great opportunity to prepare for these inevitable experiences.

To get you started, we spoke with internal Patterson experts – a series of business leaders and clinicians – who have either advised doctors and office staff, or had successful communication with patients over a number of years. For your convenience, we’ve organized suggested talking points by equipment category.

Feeling chatty? Keep reading, friend.
Your 3D imaging unit provides unrivaled insight. Here’s how we suggest you approach your patients with this groundbreaking technology.

YOUR APPROACH

“We want to be as precise as possible.”
Our panel called 3D scans a vital roadmap to understanding the full picture of what’s happening inside the entire maxillofacial region. Use this tool to communicate your care for the patient – your goal is to see if the current treatment plan is in fact the best way forward.

Keep it simple.
Patients are looking for the path of least resistance. They want to get in, and then get out of the office as quickly as possible while taking care of whatever ails them. With this in mind, there’s no need to dive too deeply into detail. When you’re describing your cone beam solution, it’s fine to say something like, “It’s an X-ray that shows us more than we can see with any other tool – it shows where your bone is and where the nerves are so we can build the best possible plan for you.”

“It’s noninvasive.”
Ease your patient’s mind by letting them know these scans can be completed without placing anything inside the mouth. Sometimes, when a patient is experiencing pain, this sort of news can alleviate much of the concern. Simply telling them that “all you need to do is sit or stand right here” to receive an incredible 3D scan can help you clear the hurdle.

Determines the optimal treatment plan.
A doctor might have a plan in mind, but 3D imaging helps detect issues that simply cannot be seen by traditional imaging solutions. At times, cone beam can confirm what the doctor may suspect. Regardless, patients will have a greater level of education and understanding when you can point on a screen to exactly what the problem is, where it is, and what needs to be done to fix it. With a rock-solid diagnosis, patients will not only accept your treatment, they will be motivated to get it done more quickly.

Low radiation exposure.
Patients are rightly concerned about being exposed to radiation in a clinical setting. But the truth is, cone beam radiation is typically lower than traditional CT scans. You might say, “This kind of scan is built to use the lowest possible radiation to achieve the image quality we want.”
YOUR APPROACH

Fewer appointments.
Our panel of contributors was unanimous about CAD/CAM dentistry – one of the biggest benefits is that patients only need one visit, and they leave with a finished product in their mouth. Because traditional restorations take multiple visits, making the most of each appointment is key.

Less invasive.
If a patient restoration would traditionally require multiple visits, they will love the news that they only need to make space in their lives for one appointment. Another benefit is that the patient will only be numbed one time. Plus, if there are issues with the shape or color of the crown, adjustments can be completed quickly and easily in the office.

Don’t say “CAD/CAM.”
Our panel has learned over the course of many patient conversations that you’ll confuse patients with industry acronyms. Instead, describing the speed and accuracy of the solution, or talking more about the restoration in general is going to be a better way forward.

“No more ‘goop’ in your mouth.”
With computer-aided design, one of the biggest benefits to communicate is that because of digital scanning, impression trays can be a thing of the past. Our panel of experts knew that there is no love lost between patients and alginate. One clinician remembered saying this to patients: “Instead of having that mouthful of goop, we’re just going to use this little wand to scan your teeth, and then we’ll send the image so we can make your crown right away.” Simple and effective.
YOUR APPROACH

Show, then tell.
According to our experts, one of the greatest barriers to treatment acceptance is that when patients aren’t experiencing pain or discomfort, they are skeptical of their need for care. With caries detection, you can show them exactly what you’re seeing. One panel member mentioned that patients who brush often and floss exhibit some form of disbelief or denial until images are shown.

Talk about cavities, not “caries” or “decay.”
Our panel was very clear about speaking the language of the patient as often as possible, so sticking to the word “cavities” is truly enough when you’re describing what you see. The word “decay” can alienate or even degrade a sensitive patient, and the term “caries” – while universally accepted in the dental community – can be confusing for uninitiated patients.

It’s the best way to see cavities.
One of our experts said that cavities don’t show up like they have in the past because of a number of factors, including fluoridated water. There can be calcification on teeth so some cavities may not even show up on X-ray. So, a caries detection system can give the most accurate picture. At the end of the day, it’s about preventing problems down the road, and using caries detection equipment sheds light on every existing problem.
TECH TALK: SOLEA LASER

As a discipline, laser dentistry is growing in popularity, yet many patients may not have any experience with this method of treatment. Here’s how our experts suggest you talk about this tool:

YOUR APPROACH

“This isn’t going to hurt.”
One of our experts wanted to communicate that one of the biggest patient benefits is that laser dentistry with Solea is pain free and anesthesia free. He said, “For someone like me – and many patients are like this – I don’t like needles. Here, there are no needles, which leads to less anxiety.” Don’t be shy about building up the fact that the laser does not hurt – it’s been tested and proven, and both doctors and patients all over the country are enjoying the benefits.

“We’ll get it right in one visit.”
One of the biggest concerns that most patients have is that they’re going to have to shift their busy schedules around for dental procedures. With advanced laser dentistry, the adjustments happen immediately. Patients have full feeling the whole time, so they’ll know right away if there is proper occlusion.

Super-fast cavity filling.
Because of how long it can take to complete fillings, dentists have for years worked in quadrants. And multiple quadrants mean multiple appointments. With laser dentistry, avoiding anesthesia means a single filling can take 15 minutes, meaning patients can receive the care they need in a fraction of the time.
TECH TALK: 3D PRINTING

As a newer-to-market solution, the biggest hurdle to patients accepting this form of treatment is education. Beyond that, your 3D printer is a tool you can highlight as a way your practice uses advanced technology to its advantage.

YOUR APPROACH

Explain the process.
When patients see a 3D printing unit, they’ll probably be interested in hearing a little about how it works. In short, using the accompanying software, 3D printers use a digital file to print a three-dimensional object, layer by layer. To date, 3D printers are being used in dentistry to create surgical guides, splints, night guards, oral appliances and dental models. As newer printing materials become available, the range of solutions will expand.

More efficient appointments.
Another big advantage is the speed of doing your own in-house production with high-resolution, high-speed printing – for many applications in a matter of minutes. Patients spend less time in your chair and get the same level of care.

Cost-effectiveness.
In general, patients aren’t going to shy away from paying less for an equally effective treatment. But they might wonder about quality vs. cost. A great way to explain the lower cost to patients is to say, “Because we are able to create this in-house, we can pass the savings on to you.”

We hope you found our tech talk guide useful, and that you’ll use it to better serve the patients you see every day. Building greater efficiency starts with the right equipment – if you want to explore the possibilities, our expanded portfolio is the perfect place to start.

Visit new.pattersondental.com/new-portfolio/ to start your journey today.