

DENTAL PRACTICE SUCCESS: 4 TIPS TO CLOSE OUT THE YEAR STRONG

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It's crazy to think this whirlwind of a year is now coming to a close, but with that brings new lists, goals and ways to creatively end the year on a high note. Connecting with patients who have unfinished treatment, getting ready for the mad rush between Christmas and New Year's and finding ways to celebrate your staff will help close this year out on a positive note. Here are four tips to help ensure a successful end to 2020 and to set your dental practice up for success in the new year.

Tip 1: Remind patients of benefits set to expire at the end of the year

The end of a year brings the end of dental benefits for many families. Now is the time to really reach out to those patients who have unfinished treatment plans and check their benefits and eligibility. Reach out to those patients and fill your last-minute openings or lulls in your day. Remind those patients of any benefits they will lose if they don't take advantage of them before the year ends. Many patients aren't aware of the benefits they have left to use, so communication during this time will show your patients that you care, and they will be more likely schedule any outstanding appointments. Here are a few items to consider:

- Check benefits and eligibility
- Go through your unfinished treatment list
- Communicate with your patients
- Fill lulls in your schedule or last-minute openings
- Create a last-minute opening list of patients who want to get their treatment done before the end of the year

If your office uses Eaglesoft, some of these items will be revealed during End of Year processing. For a complete guide to End of Year processing in Eaglesoft, [read this comprehensive guide](#).

As you reach out to patients, [remind them of the changes your office has made to the check-in process in light of COVID-19 and the extra precautions your office is taking to mitigate risk of infection](#).

Tip 2: Prepare for the end-of-year rush

Historically, the week between Christmas and New Year's tends to be a busy one for Dental Practices. Students are home from college or on break from school, and many people take this

week off work to create time for appointments. Planning your schedule accordingly for this week will help with the rush of patients and possibilities for emergency treatments.

Depending on demand, you may want to open a morning of all school-aged cleaning appointments to fit in those visits home from college and grade schools being on holiday break. Post to your social media account announcing this day so that parents are aware that they can easily get their child in for their annual checkup. Below are important patient populations to consider:

- College students will be home for the Holidays
- All students will be on holiday break
- Many people take this week off work and are available for last-minute appointment option; use your ASAP-list within your office to contact these patients if an opening becomes available

Tip 3: Celebrate your staff

With this crazy year ending, we must find workarounds to almost everything, and celebrating our staff is no exception. In-person holiday parties are nonexistent this year, but with that brings new and creative ways to make your staff feel appreciated. A surprise walkthrough treat day, social media shout outs and sending staff virtual gifts are all great ways to show your staff they're appreciated. Here are some ideas for celebrating your staff:

- Set up a walkthrough station with prewrapped cookies and a premade coffee holiday drink to go after a long shift
- Share online and social media shout outs to recognize your staff
- Send virtual gift cards to your staff while also supporting small businesses

Tip 4: Plan your office holiday break

Now it's time to relax, almost. Make sure your office is prepared to be closed for a long weekend. Create a task list from the front of the office to the back.

- Reach out to patients via email and/or social media to alert them of your holiday hours
- Update your Google My Business site to reflect holiday hours
- Create office phone messages for when you're out of the office and set your emergency number
- Make sure to turn off equipment in the back of the office
 - Turn off chairs, compressor, nitrous and oxygen tanks
 - See our [Office Closing Patterson Recommended Protocol](#) for a more comprehensive office-closure checklist
- As always, the [Patterson Technology Center and our TechEdge staff](#) are available for any service or support your office may need

Make sure your office is set up to rest, so you can relax during your holiday, creating a task list will help ensure nothing is forgotten.

The holiday season can be a busy time for a dental practice so it's important to plan ahead and prepare your staff for the rush between Christmas and New Year's. With these tips in mind, your office will be sure to end the year strong and be set up for a successful start to the new year.

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From Patterson Dental's blog, Off the Cusp. View and share the original blog post: <https://www.offthecusp.com/dental-practice-success-4-tips-to-close-out-the-year-strong/>