



Essential Service Principles for the Optometric Practice

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Why Patients Leave Us STAFF MEETING AGENDA

STAFF MEETING EXERCISE:

How many of the following symptoms can you identify in your own practice organization? Role play a few of them. Which symptoms are most chronic? And which symptoms can be addressed and improved upon first?

1. Lack of genuine concern: If doctor or staff is insincere or unfriendly, that message gets through. Patients immediately sense if you don't take a personal interest in them. People choose to do business with people who are courteous and respectful and who listen well.
2. Excessive delays in getting back to the patient: The patient wants to feel important and cared for. When you are prompt with the information that he or she needs, it shows that you care.
3. Unavailable people or product: Patients don't like to wait but they will--up to a point. Beyond that, it becomes trouble. If the wait is perceived to be too long, they deem the service poor and inept. When people wait more than two minutes, their sense of time distorts. If you can take care of them in under two minutes, it is a success. But doing it in three minutes can be a failure.
4. Hard to do business with: Phone calls with long waits on hold, confusing automated answering machines, staff not knowledgeable about the products they sell, lack of familiarity with their insurance plan...all are traits of companies that are hard to do business with.
5. Over-promising/under-delivering: If you say the glasses will be ready by Thursday but they don't come in until Friday, you have over-promised and under-delivered. Instead, promise them on Friday and if they come in on Thursday you have over-delivered. When you over-promise you put yourself into a situation where it is easy to fail and disappoint the patient. Better to under-promise and delight the patient with an early delivery of new eyewear.
6. Poor professional design, package, or image: Your patients look around the office and make judgments about what they see. How you display your merchandise, the staff uniforms (or lack of them), the décor, an untidy bathroom.... It all adds up to a patient's perception of you.
7. Poor excuses why you "can't." Patients need help with their problems, not excuses. They want to hear the word "YES."
8. Nickel & dimed when buying products or services: In the optical area, offering lens packages, also known as bundling, is a far better way to present lenses than the old a la carte method.
9. Poor service delivery: Many offices can deliver the same products you do. It's your service that sets you apart from the competition. Make your service world class!

