

# COFFEE STAINS & PRACTICE VISION



ANKUR GUPTA, DDS





## WELCOME!

This workbook covers a variety of topics designed to promote wellness for you and your dental practice. You will find practical, implementable, step-by-step strategies to learn how to avoid the failures, achieve the successes and *be better*.

Thank you for your time and participation today. I welcome and encourage you to continue the conversation with me at the contact information below.

Be happy, be healthy, and be better,

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Thank you.

PART 1

# ASSIGNMENT: LIST YOUR COFFEE STAINS

On the next page of this workbook, list out any and all of the “little things” that you encounter in your office, on a regular basis, that create:

**INEFFICIENCY**

**FRUSTRATION**

**RESENTMENT**

**GROSSNESS**

**A BARRIER TO  
YOUR LONG-TERM  
VISION FOR YOUR  
LIFE/PRACTICE**

## THE COFFEE STAIN RULE:

**Every item you list *must* be specific and solution-oriented.**

### FOR EXAMPLE:

#### BEFORE

"We need to have better teamwork with sterilization."

#### AFTER

"Let's create a downtime checklist, where the very first thing listed is 'checking sterilization cassettes.'"

**Below is a sampling of the coffee stains that were compiled in my own office, the last time we did this exercise:**

*The ceiling tile in the employee lounge has water damage.*

*Can we have a stockpile of syringes and basics in every op?*

*Can we have a better system of cleaning out the fridge in the lounge?*

*There are a lot of framed photos that include employees that no longer work here. Can we do another photo shoot?*

*Rooms 5 and 6 have to "share" the intra-oral camera - can't we just get another one?*

*The other two assistants know a lot more about implants than I do. Can I get a crash course?*

*When a patient needs an appointment for crown seat, denture step, or other lab work, can't you just schedule them in the op, rather than sending them up to the front? You all (clinical peeps) have a better idea of the lab turnaround time stuff than we (front desk peeps) do.*



PART 2

# TEAM MEETING: SHARE COFFEE STAINS

Now it is time for everyone on the team to share their coffee stains.

## STEP 1

Elect a recorder who is responsible for taking every coffee stain, and putting it onto a master list.

As a team, you do have the right to exclude a particular coffee stain from the master list if it is:

**UNREALISTIC**

**TOO VAGUE**

**IMPOSSIBLE  
TO SOLVE**

### REMEMBER:

The point of this assignment is to start pro-actively identifying and **eliminating** the small things in the office that create negativity and frustration. It would be counterproductive if this meeting itself creates negativity.

**For this reason, it is up to the leaders of the office to maintain the ground rules.**

## STEP 2

Once everyone has had the chance to share their coffee stains, the next step is to **identify the one to start with**. Here are the rules:

**YOU MUST ONLY  
CHOOSE ONE**

**IT CANNOT BE VERY  
DIFFICULT OR  
EXPENSIVE TO  
SOLVE**

**IF IT ISN'T FUN,  
DON'T DO IT**

## STEP 3

Once the first coffee stain has been identified:

- Choose a point person who will lead its implementation
- Determine what resources will be needed for complete implementation
- Determine the budget needed
- Establish a timeline and a deadline

**ONLY ONCE THIS FIRST COFFEE STAIN HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY AND SUSTAINABLY ELIMINATED CAN YOU MOVE ON TO THE NEXT COFFEE STAINS.**

## PART 3

# BEWARE: MILO THE MONKEY

As time goes on, your team will become excited about the autonomy you will be giving them, along with your commitment towards long-term practice improvement.

### CONGRATULATIONS!

The drawback is that you will be introducing Milo the monkey to your already busy life.

#### HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS:

You are already busy. You're the boss. You have a family, a house, your own commitments, and you also run a dental office. By itself, you already have a lot of small monkeys on your back.

But then, your team members, feeling empowered with your newfound commitment towards practice improvement, might call you over to have a conversation:

**Hygienist:** *Hey, do you have a second?*

**You:** *Yeah, what's up?*

**Hygienist:** *I'm noticing a coffee stain.*

**You:** *Really, what's going on?*

**Hygienist:** *Well, we give the same take-home packet to our DSRP patients as we do with our regular prophylaxis patients. I feel like the take-home packet for DSRP patients should be more special and comprehensive. Don't you think?*

**You:** *You really have a good point there.*

**Hygienist:** *Greeeeeeeeat! Now, let me just take Milo, who has been weighing me down... hoist him off my back... and put him directly on yours.*

Now, you have to think about what goes in the new packet, from what vendors. You have to develop new paperwork for your DSRP patients. One of three things will happen:

- #1 You are just too bogged down with your own responsibilities, and you just don't ever get around to doing the new packets
- #2 You do the new packets, but they are nothing like what your hygienist had in mind
- #3 You put Milo back onto your hygienist's shoulders

### ALWAYS CHOOSE #3

Choice #3 is the preferred method to create lasting positive change in your office. You do this by telling your hygienist that he/she is responsible for the following:

- How are we going to accomplish this?
- Who is going to take charge of this?
- What amount of time do you need?
- What other resources do you need?
- Whose help will you need to enlist?
- How will the new thing affect our team? Our patients?
- **You will be expected to present at a future team meeting**

# EXTRAORDINARY CUSTOMER SERVICE

FOR YOUR DENTAL PRACTICE



ANKUR GUPTA, DDS





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# THE COMFORT MENU

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## FOR ANY PATIENT ABOUT TO UNDERGO:

- Procedures lasting 90+ minutes
- Procedures that involve numerous injection sites
- This includes RDH procedures. Hygiene procedures are often equally terrible for the patient
- Procedures that involve blood
- Procedures that are past a particular financial threshold (generally, greater than \$2000)

***Upon seating the patient, as they wait for the dentist to begin treatment, the dental assistant offers one or more of the following:***



### **Cheap Headphones with Disposable Ear Covers**

Have several adapters that connect a headphone jack into both Apple and Samsung products



### **Memory Foam Neck Wrap**

Ideally situated underneath chair cover, to avoid aerosol contamination



### **Blanket**

Especially during cold days



### **Warm Towelettes**

Pre-moistened and warmed for after the procedure

## NOTES

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# WEATHER

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## RAIN

- First, purchase 2-3 large golf umbrellas
- Systematize, during the morning huddle, who will be the point person responsible for keeping track of the weather outside, and which patients will be leaving during heavy rain
- Make a commitment that, whenever patients are leaving the office during a rainstorm, someone from the office will walk them out to their car with an umbrella
- If this is not possible for all patients, commit at least to elderly patients or physically compromised patients
- Most offices, during the Covid-19 pandemic request that patients call or text when they arrive for their appointment. This provides an excellent opportunity to also walk patients from their cars to the office



## SNOW

- This will often be the responsibility of the first person finished with their end-of-day responsibilities before everyone else (in my office, it happens to be the dentist's responsibility)
- First, purchase 2 high quality, long length ice scrapers/snow brushes
- As the end of the day draws near, walk up and down the halls, asking patients (and team members) if you can take their keys and start their cars
- While cars are warming up, that same team member goes around the parking lot, clearing cars of accumulated snow and ice

# HANDWRITTEN NOTES

## GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST:

- Purchase branded, postcard size stationery
- Pre-stamp envelopes
- Keep stationary in ops, offices, and front desk
- Never spend more than 30 seconds writing a note (maintain consistency and reduce burnout)

## WHO SHOULD GET A HANDWRITTEN NOTE?

- All new patients
- All patients who referred a friend, family member, co-worker, neighbor, colleague, etc.\*
- All children
- Any special events
  - Wedding
  - Birth of a child/grandchild
  - Graduation
  - Death
  - Sickness/Diagnosis
  - etc.



*Just a quick note to:*

*express my appreciation to you for . . .*

*being such a nice patient . . .  
being such a pleasant patient . . .  
being such a loyal patient . . .  
referring \_\_\_\_\_ to our office.  
It is so nice having you as a patient.  
Sincerely, . . .  
PS. Enjoy some coffee/shopping on us!*

*express my sincere . . .*

*condolences for . . .  
congratulations for . . .  
excitement for you . . .*



### **\*WHEN A PATIENT HAS REFERRED SOMEONE, ADD:**

"PS. Enjoy your coffee!"  
and add a \$5-10 Starbucks gift card

## NOTES

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# FOLLOW UP CALL

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## WHO GETS A FOLLOW UP CALL?

- Any procedure involving blood
- Any procedure involving multiple injection sites
- Any procedure with anticipated post-op pain
  - Includes hygiene procedures
- Any procedure lasting 90+ minutes
- Any procedure past a particular financial threshold

## DON'T ASK FOR TROUBLE. AVOID ASKING ABOUT:

- Swelling
- Pain
- Bleeding

## INSTEAD, USE THIS LINE:

"I am so happy with how your procedure went today. I just wanted to quickly check in to see if you have any questions."

## PRO TIP

Utilize patient communication software like **weave** to make calls/texts from your personal cell phone, with the practice phone number appearing on the recipients caller ID.

[www.getweave.com](http://www.getweave.com)

## NOTES

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# VIP(PATIENT) TREATMENT



## WELCOME LETTER

When a new patient calls the office, and they can't be seen immediately (the same day or the next day), a welcome letter should be sent to their home via US mail. This should include:

- Handwritten note from the person who handled the phone call
- Google map directions from patient's home to your office
- New patient paperwork (if needed)
- Brochure/Business card or any high quality printed stationery showcasing your office
- A \$5 gift card to Target/Starbucks



## 15+ MINUTES LATE

In the uncommon (but unavoidable) event that your patient is made to wait 15+ minutes before being taken back to the clinical treatment area, or if they are made to wait 15+ minutes before being seen after being seated

- Acknowledgement by someone is incredibly important in reducing frustration
- Acknowledgement by the Doctor is even more effective
- Acknowledgement accompanied with a small token is still more effective



## THE \$15,000 SPY

- Choose a particular treatment amount threshold
- If a patient commits to treatment at that particular threshold, assign a "spy" to that patient
- The spy determines their hobbies, favorite restaurants, outdoor activities, etc.
- Choose an amount (in our case, 1% of treatment - \$150) on a gift personalized to the patient

### FOR EXAMPLE:

*If, after hearing that a patient loves Longhorn Steakhouse, but hasn't been able to eat there because of his poor dentition, it is the spy's responsibility present it in an attractive manner to the patient at the culmination of treatment*



## FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

- Affordable, nice looking arrangement to be delivered on Monday
- At the morning huddle on Thurs/Fri, pick a patient to get the flowers
- Take a photo and post it on social media!

# HOLIDAYS & SPECIAL EVENTS

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Throughout the year, organize volunteers who will plan, purchase, and distribute “goodies” in the theme of any major special event. These can include:

## SPRING

### ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Chocolate golden coins and a black plastic pot

### MARCH MADNESS

A major sporting event as 1st prize, and amazon gift cards for runner ups

### EASTER

Chocolate eggs, wicker basket with some plastic grass

## SUMMER

### JULY 4 SPARKLER PACK

Red, white, and blue bucket w/ patriotic confetti

## FALL

### BACK TO SCHOOL GOODIE BAGS

Pencil bag/box full of fun pencils and erasers

### HALLOWEEN

Plastic pumpkin bucket with bouncy balls, fake tattoos, and erasers

## NOTES

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# IN-OFFICE PHILANTHROPIC EVENT

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While this will most likely be the most intensive and thoroughly planned of all customer service initiatives explained in this packet, it also:

- Is the most meaningful
- Is the strongest reputation builder
- Has the greatest return on investment
- Will set you apart from other dentists in your community

## HOW IT'S ACCOMPLISHED

Closing your office to its regularly scheduled patients, and instead opening only to a particular group or population, to provide free care/expertise



**Mouthguard Day**



**Oral Cancer Screening Event**



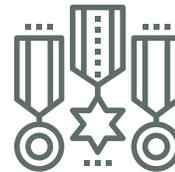
**Christmas Tree Donation Event**



**Invitation to Underserved Schools**



**Invitation to Underserved Adult Public Population**



**Opening the Office to Military Veterans**

## NOTES

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# SCHOLARSHIP

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Similar to the “in office philanthropy,” this customer service initiative has immense potential as a reputation builder in your community.

## HOW TO START

- First, inquire with local high school *early* around November/December
- Any amount is acceptable, and appreciated. The average is a \$1,000 scholarship.

## YOU CAN ACCEPT APPLICATIONS BASED ON:



GPA & Test Scores



One-Page Essay

## ESSAY TOPIC EXAMPLES

- What are your career goals? Why?
- How are you going to achieve financial peace in life?
- How are you going to make your community a happier place?
- How will you find peace in such a stressful world?
- How do you plan to maintain strong overall health?
- What are the greatest challenges facing your generation?
- Do you think the country is getting better or worse? Why?

## NOTES

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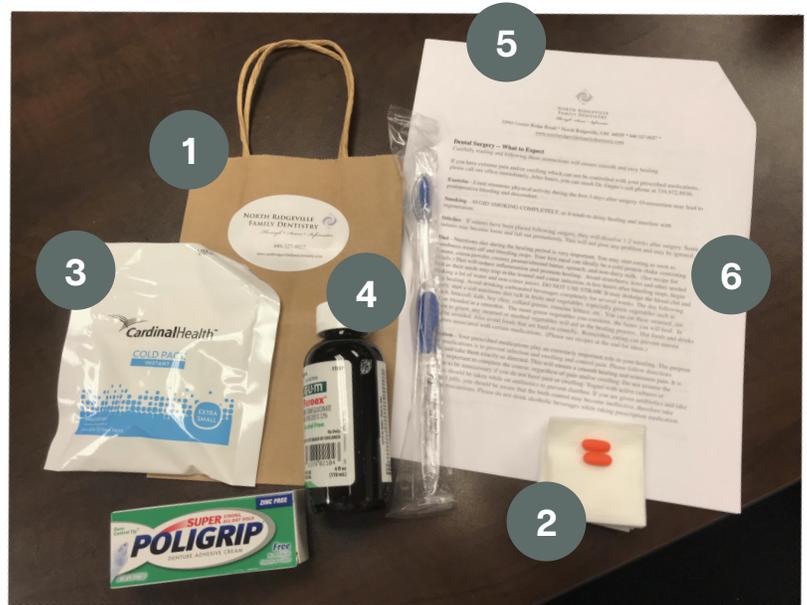
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# A WAY BETTER POST-OP KIT

## AFTER ANY OF THESE PROCEDURES:

- Procedures lasting 90+ minutes
- Procedures that involve numerous injection sites
- Procedures that involve blood
- Procedures for which swelling, pain, or bleeding is anticipated
- Procedures that are past a particular financial threshold (generally, greater than \$2000)



1 Branded paper bag with handles

4 Mini Chlorhexidine bottle

2 Pack of Advil

5 Recipe for green smoothie

3 Cold pack

6 Contact information so patient can get ahold of Doctor

## NOTES

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# HOW TO GET STARTED

## IMPLEMENTING SOME OF THESE IDEAS

- 01. Choose one**  
Preferably one that is not too expensive, and not too difficult to implement
- 02. Elect a point person for the project**
- 03. Create a timeline and deadline for complete implementation**
- 04. If it isn't fun, don't do it**
- 05. If you don't have a logo, have one made cheap**  
Use [www.designcrowd.com](http://www.designcrowd.com) or a similar site
- 05. If you haven't yet, create a Facebook fan page**  
So that every one of these initiatives can be photographed, and marketed for free

### NOTES

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