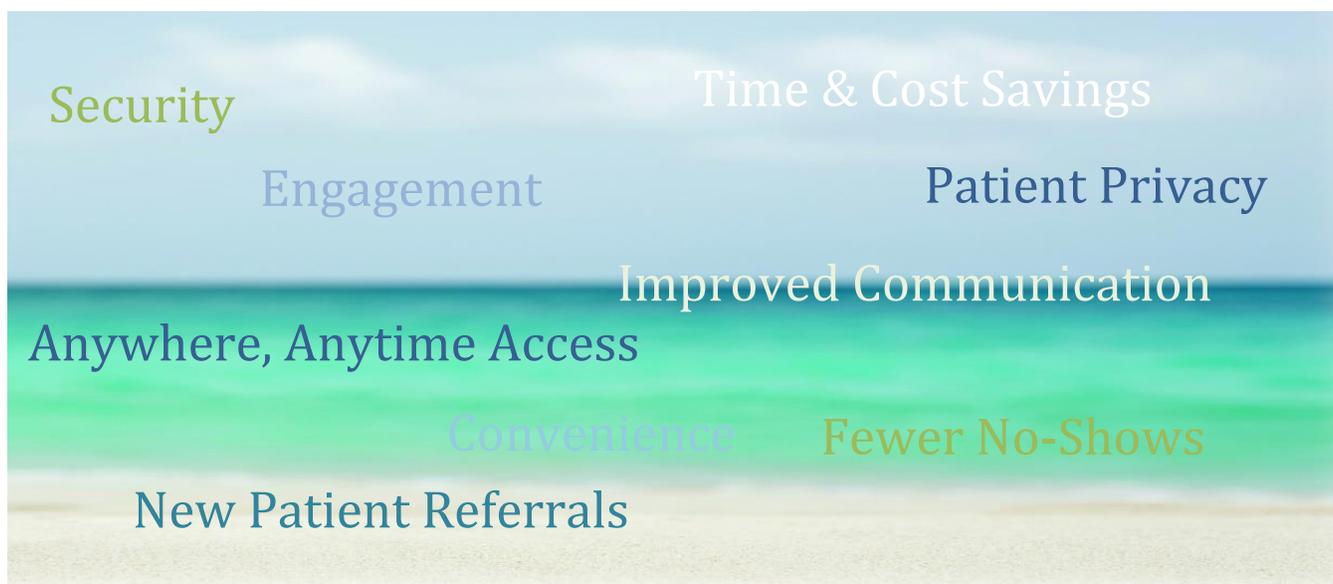


A Best Practices Point of View from



Harness the Power of your Patient Portal



Don't wait to Harness the Power of your Patient Portal

A Patient Portal is a smart first step in giving your practice the platform and the power to move towards engagement.

The Portal itself is a threshold to improved communication, but it's what you do with it that matters most. Developing a strong database of mobile contacts and email addresses is a critical aspect of ongoing successful usage. However, like Rome, it takes some time to build. It takes strategy and patience.

Some practices wonder whether they should wait until they have amassed contact information for all of their patients before implementing their Portal; in fact, the opposite is the recommended strategy.

The sooner you can set up and start using the capabilities of your new portal, the more efficient your team will be and the better you will meet your patient's expectation. You will never look back!

Start Small and Gain Momentum

Even if you have only recently started to ask patients for their email addresses and mobile numbers, there is a good chance that those patients prefer – perhaps expect – to communicate through a digital channel. Your early initiative to offer them the option and convenience they seek can be valuable in building their loyalty.

Because the ABELDent Patient Portal is completely integrated with your practice software, you have a tremendous head start. Your patient data is already populated so there's no need to re-key any data. This would be an extremely time-consuming task in a stand-alone portal product. With ABELDent, you simply add cell numbers and email addresses you don't already have into your existing patient records as you collect the information.

It's a good practice to acknowledge patient interest with a welcome email once you have their address and permission to use it in accordance with US or Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation. Introduce the portal capabilities, create excitement and offer

patients the choice of communicating with you via their preferred method: SMS text, email or telephone call. The Portal should be fully operational to make a great first impression.

Build your Database

Here are some strategies to help you build your database:

1. Take advantage of every patient encounter to create excitement about the new Portal. Explain how it will benefit them, and explicitly ask for their mobile phone number. Start updating your files immediately, with every office visit, every telephone call, every email, and every item placed in the mail.
2. Add your Portal information to all staff members' email signature.
3. Update all your paper and electronic forms to include a space for the patient's up-to-date mobile number and email address (and permission to use them to meet US and CASL requirements).
4. Make sure you promote the use of your portal on any patient-facing documents: receipts, statements, brochures, business cards, appointment cards, and treatment recommendations. Adjust your printable templates to include this, or print adhesive labels for other items.

Don't forget to promote your portal message the next time you order your custom-printed toothbrushes and/or floss for your patients!

5. Print (or reprint) business cards or postcards to promote your technology. Print counter cards or in-clinic posters. More details regarding marketing tools will follow soon.
6. If you have a website, a Facebook page or any other social media presence, use it to get the word out. Create a button to give patients a seamless, easy link.

7. Mention your Patient Portal in your voice mail messages. If possible, promote it in your on-hold message.

Encourage Referrals

Nothing builds awareness and drives opt-ins more than word of mouth and endorsements of your brand by customers.

Many ABELDent users have found that their patients welcome the technology and tend to talk about it to their friends. So make it easy – even rewarding – for your clients to refer new patients to your practice.

Emailed and texted appointment reminders, confirmations and appointment eCards are just the beginning. The ABELDent Patient Portal puts all of the benefits of electronic interaction at a practice manager's fingertips as we continue to launch new features: e-statements and receipts, customizable form templates for patient information gathering... even patient follow-up service surveys!

Put the power of your Portal to work. Remarkable, measurable improvements in your overall practice performance and growth are sure to follow.

Angela Spinks is Vice President of Business Partnerships and Sales for ABELDent Inc., a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and leading provider of outstanding clinical and practice management software. Established in 1977, ABELSoft Corporation is privately held and based in Burlington, Ontario. Easy to use and fully integrated, ABELDent offers efficient product implementation with customized training, patient/practitioner portals, unparalleled customer service and around-the-clock support to thousands of dental professionals across North America.

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