

Effective scheduling for productivity

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As dental practitioners in the city that never sleeps we all are running against time. In all probability the waiting room is forever overfilled with patients and the appointment books overscheduled. In Mumbai, it is not uncommon to find dentists working till late and working even on Sundays, in spite of the fabled “by appointments only” notice in all our clinics, it is common for patients to breeze in to the clinic with no prior intimation.

Though it is a commendable effort each dentist puts in to run this routine everyday, it leaves us sapped of energy and unable to take our practice to the next level.

Some tips to schedule effectively –

Identify your speed with every procedure – block time accordingly.

At the time of scheduling, let patients know that their appointment time has been especially reserved for them. Emphasize on the significance of reserving appointments before they leave the clinic to avoid a prolonged waiting period.

Have the front desk staff inform patients that 48-hours notice is required to cancel an appointment.

Plan the day with your assistant so he knows exactly what is to be kept ready for every procedure to minimize delay in arranging the operator for the patient.

Block some time to handle unpredictable interruptions.

Get help –an additional dental chair, an associate dentist or staff to ease the situation.

“The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities” says Stephen Covey.

Finally, a full waiting room simply means ineffective scheduling. An effective scheduling system allows the doctor and team to manage patient flow rather than be managed by it.