

Efficiency and Hygiene Go Hand in Hand

Everything Counts in Your Dental Practice

OVERVIEW

Today more than ever, dentists are realizing that their dental practices are in fact businesses and need to be run efficiently in order to derive the highest possible value for both the dentist and the patient. Efficiency allows dentists and practice managers to save money and time, positively impacting the bottom line. There are many areas in the dental practice both clinically and operationally where efficiencies can be easily achieved. This case study focuses on my practice's experience and on how hygiene products in the dental office produced meaningful and tangible efficiencies and savings during a six-month period beginning February 2014.



HYGIENE PRODUCTS:

The Dollars on the Wall

Paper towels and soap dispensers are on the wall of every practice. While they play an important role in hygiene in the dental practice, they are bastions of wasted dollars if not managed correctly. And who knew? Yet when it comes to running a profitable and efficient dental practice, everything counts. Patients and employees routinely, and certainly unwittingly, grab more C-fold towels than they need and throw them in the garbage. The C-fold towel dispenser has always looked out of place. My office is warm with a boutique feel, yet the C-fold towels have an industrial feel about them. Every unused or extra towel tossed away translates to dollars wasted. Freestanding soap dispensers usually rest on the bathroom sink's rim, causing unsightly drip marks in the sink. Those drips and the time it takes to clean the sink also translate to dollars wasted. As someone who pays attention to every detail from the patient perspective, both the C-fold towel and soap dispenser created a

negative impression on my patients who expect a clean and spotless bathroom environment as well as the highest level of customer service.

TIME IS MONEY

Time and labor management are critical to my dental practice. Like everything else in the dental office, if a person has to maintain it, it's time and money. By observing the behavior of how my staff manages our hygiene products, I've found they spend an inordinate amount of time ordering, storing and refilling both paper towels and soap. For my particular practice, that time is money. Sending staff to local stores to purchase these items also posed an unnecessary insurance risk to my practice as well as time away from office. I measured the time my staff spent on purchasing, storing, and managing our hygiene products in addition to the waste generated from my current paper towel and soap products and calculated the costs (*salary rate x time spent*). The result was astonishing.

SAVINGS & PRODUCTS FOUND

First and foremost, I searched for an effective, easy to use hygiene system that is also efficient. The system also needed to be aesthetically pleasing and utilize high quality products. Hand hygiene compliance is critical to the safety of my patients, so the system had to appeal to both employees and patient. After a little research, I found that Georgia-Pacific Professional's line of hygiene products met all of these requirements. I added the wall-mounted SofPull® Automated Towel Dispenser because of its large, one-at-a-time dispensing capabilities and touchless technology. I can control the length of the towel, which I've set at 12 inches to encourage more prudent use. Because it's touchless, it contributes

to improving hand hygiene in the practice by helping to reduce the risk of cross-contamination. In my practice, the SofPull® dispenser has already proven itself to need fewer refills because users are not taking as many paper towels as they did when I offered C-fold towels. The sleek, modern design enhances the image of my dental practice. The Georgia-Pacific® Manual Soap and Sanitizer Dispenser's adjustable portion control allows me to set the dispensing setting of soap or sanitizer to help reduce wasted product. The high-capacity, closed hygienic system prevents dripping into the sink basin and helps reduce maintenance time, allowing my staff to tend to more important things in the practice.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Glenn MacFarlane is a dentist in Red Bank, New Jersey. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison and earned his Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He is a member of the American Dental Association (national, state and county), the Academy of General Dentistry, the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, the Academy of Laser Dentistry, the American Academy of Facial Esthetics, the Academy of Comprehensive Esthetics, the American Academy of Implant Dentistry. He may be reached at <http://drglenmacfarlane.com>.