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# FROM MEDIocre TO *Magnificent* One Step at a Time!

## An Effective Cosmetic Consultation

Just as no two mouths are the same and deserve to be treated individually based on their specific needs and risk factors, no two patients and their capacity for processing information are the same, they are unique unto themselves. With this article, we will share new ideas through the use of technology and research that will enable you to more effectively communicate with your patients and achieve a better case acceptance rate with your TMJ, sleep apnea and full mouth reconstruction case consultations and presentations as well as any consultations and presentations you may encounter in your practice of dentistry.

### DISC Assessment

First, let's discuss how to "connect" with your patient and establish an element of trust. Historically, a patient that trusts you is more likely to agree with the treatment you are recommending. Consider the DISC assessment/profile as a tool to help you establish that trust.

The DISC assessment is a behavior analysis tool based on the DISC theory of psychologist, William Marston. Marston's theory centers on four different personality traits: Dominance (Drive), Inducement (Influence), Submission (Steadiness) and Compliance (Cautiousness). Marston's theory was then developed into a personality assessment tool or "personality profile test," by industrial psychologist Walter Vernon Clarke. These behavioral types came from people's sense of self and their interaction with the environment. Finally, Clark published the Activity Vector Analysis, a checklist of adjectives through which he asked people to indicate descriptions that were accurate about themselves. Finally, John Greier contributed to the assessment tool by producing the DISC personality profile. He conducted

hundreds of clinical interviews which assisted him in further developing the fifteen patterns which Clarke had exposed. In conclusion, the development and utilization of the DISC profile is used in a wide variety of settings including business, education, sales, coaching and counseling.

It doesn't take much imagination to recognize how the DISC profile could benefit a cosmetic dental practice with every aspect of a case consultation and presentation from the doctor's perspective, to the patient's perspective, to the team's perspective and finally to potential problem solving during the follow-up and maintenance phase.

In becoming familiar with your patient it is imperative in the first few minutes to assess their personality type, and adapt and apply it to your presentation as soon as possible after the consultation begins. A patient who is a "D" is a patient who is a visionary, they want results and they want only the facts that are pertinent to get the job done. A patient who is an "I" is a patient who likes to be complimented and wants to build relationships. A patient who is an "S" is a patient who tries to keep everyone happy, they seek approval and find it difficult to make decisions. And, a patient who is a "C" is detail oriented. They do not like change and they want to know all of the research behind the treatment you are proposing.

With a "D" patient, give them a short, precise description of your findings and your proposed treatment, no long explanations are necessary for them to make the decision. In contrast to the "C" patient who needs a lot of proof and evidence of your findings and allow for the possibility that they want to go home and do their own research on the internet. An "I" patient wants to hear about themselves and needs to have their ego stroked. And, finally, an "S" patient just wants everyone to be satisfied.

## Use of Technology

Our first recommendation to enhancing your presentation involved building a relationship between you, your team and your prospective patient by adapting your personality to their personality using the DISC profile and assessment theory. Next, we will discuss how to create a more appealing presentation utilizing technology. Patients are visual and as such, tend to be captivated and moved forward in their decision by technology applications to your case presentation, including the iPad, intraoral photography and videotaping to name three of the more prominent means of technology utilization.

The iPad is commonly used during the initial consultation phase. The iPad is used to show short educational videos about different restorative techniques including implant dentistry, crowns and veneers and how they are accomplished. It is important to remember that our mission is “building relationships” with our prospective patient so do not leave the consultation room and expect the video to do your work. Patients do not build relationships with technology; they build relationships with people, unless of course your name is Theodore Twombly (played by Joaquin Phoenix) and your iPad’s name is Samantha (played by Scarlet Johansson) from the movie Her!

Intraoral photography is gathered from both a digital camera utilizing mouth mirrors, retractors and an intraoral camera to show defective margins, decay, cracked teeth and broken teeth. In addition, multiple parafunctional habit anomalies can also be photographed including abfractions, cracks and wear facets. All of these photos are used to create validity and believability to your presentation.

The patient can also be videotaped during their “report of initial concern.” It is important that if you plan to use the video of your patient for other consultations, publications or lectures that you receive consent from your patient. The videotape is then shared with your master lab technician to demonstrate personality of your patient, facial expression as well as providing a visual of your patient’s current status and the potential of what the two of you will create for your patient. Once your case is completed, the patient is again recorded with respect to their initial response to their finished product and this video can be played to market your practice, with the written consent of your patient.

There are numerous other technologies that have potential to enhance your presentation, but we focused on three of the technological advances that have proved most successful during our consultations. Finally, we offer several guidelines to help you improve your case acceptance. These suggestions include:

- **Videos, webinars, smart phone apps, etc. cannot match the power of a person who is skilled at building relationships and getting case acceptance.**
- **People need relationships to build rapport, and that’s tough to do electronically.**
- **Some clinicians and team members grasp how to use technology intuitively. Most of us need some training. Train your team how to use technological tools most effectively to get the job done.**
- **With technology, you instantly position your practice as innovative and forward-thinking.**
- **Utilize high quality images of your own patients and cases. Real people get a lot more attention while stock photographs rarely get the attention you are looking for.**
- **Use technology to enhance your efforts, attempt not to flip the process upside down and build your process around the technology you want to use.**

Your patient should feel like they are ultimately making the decision about their mouths and their treatment. You may use “leading” questions and “pace” the conversation to accomplish your goals, however, the opportunity to be able to choose your path when making such a big decision about your dental treatment is very important! Remember that you are the consultant, and the patient is coming to you because of your expertise. That being said, another important point is to ask permission of your patient to share the information you have gathered and present the treatment solutions to them.

**People hardly agree to invest in anything without seeing it. Usually they want to touch it, hold it and take it for a spin. That’s where professionally fabricated, lab created temporaries help you sell your expertise. Your patient gets to see what the final product will look like while the final product is created at the lab.**

In conclusion, keep in mind that you are the subject matter expert! And, your team, including your master lab technician and his team, support you and your mission. Building relationships and utilization of imagery through the use of cutting edge technology during your presentations will substantiate your clinical findings and confirm the need for treatment which will ultimately improve your case acceptance.