



The MultiSpecialty Practice

How to Incorporate a Specialist into your Dental Practice

The most successful independent and group practices strive to achieve a multispecialty dental practice.

Running a successful dental practice is challenging. Aside from providing care for our patients and managing our team, we are constantly seeking new opportunities to grow our patient base and our revenue. We buy expensive new equipment, employ a variety of marketing strategies, and staff our team with well-trained professionals. And yet still it seems like we are continually facing new external challenges from the cost of real estate, employees, or competition.

The most successful independent and group practices strive to achieve a multi-specialty dental practice. By bringing the wide range of specialists into their practice, they attract new patients, provide care for all their dental needs, and have a higher retention for follow up restorative care.

Traveling Specialty

Graduating specialists enter a challenging marketplace these days. Student debt, competition in metropolitan areas, and the cost of running a practice, are all

barriers to career success. Since the last financial crisis more and more specialists have opted to pursue careers as a traveling specialist. This has created a huge opportunity for GPs to serve their patients with a true multi-specialty approach.

While there are many challenges to bringing a specialist into your practice, we'd like to cover some of the topics and methodology we use to facilitate the experience.

Your first consideration, is it time to hire a specialist?

Not all dental practices are ready to bring in a specialist. The practice owner needs to consider if their staff, systems, and patient flow, can support a full specialty treatment day approximately once a month.

We recommend starting with an analysis of the procedures being currently referred out. Gauge the demand for certain specialty procedures by talking with your patients and staff. Talk to your staff about their previous experience assisting specialty and consider how and where you might accommodate the specialist in your practice. Evaluate your current patient flow and your ability as the provider to handle more growth personally or if a specialist will help you relieve some of that strain.



Specialties to Consider

Depending on your responses to some of the considerations above, you might decide you'd like an Endodontist to complete all your molar endo or a surgeon to place all your implants.

You might consider bringing an pedodontist or orthodontist to provider services to a younger demographic in your community. Or bring on a prosthodontist to serve more full arch cases to the actively aging population.

Many practice owners also start by hiring a specialist to perform procedures they don't do or don't like doing. Then once that specialist is comfortable, practice owners may consider an additional specialty to grow the practice's offering.

Outline of Benefits



Higher Standard of Patient Care

In today's challenging environment it is more important than ever to elevate the patient experience in your practice. After a successful pair with a dental specialist, you will maintain the relationship throughout the treatment process and create a higher level of comfort and care for your patients.



Multi-Disciplinary Approach

Patients that present more challenging cases require creative treatment planning, utilizing a multidisciplinary approach will give your team a higher rate of treatment success. The patient will benefit from a more comprehensive correction of the core issues early in the process.



Increased Production

Retaining specialty treatments in-house instead of referring patients out to specialists creates a higher utilization of your treatment operatories. By maximizing your existing practice space, your business will experience lower per treatment overhead costs and higher profits.



Patient Convenience

By offering in-house specialty inside your practice you provide your patient with a one stop solution. The comfort and familiarity with your staff along with the number of locations your patient is exposed to provides your patients with a higher level of comfort and convenience throughout their treatment experience.



Quality Care and Service for Patients

Improved communication with patients for insurance processing and budgeting between GP and specialist. Reduce patient anxiety by performing treatment in a familiar environment.



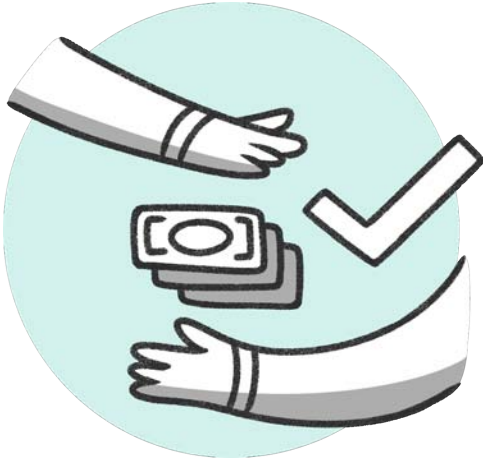
Additional Restorative Income

By leveraging the expertise of specialists within your practice, your patient retention will increase when you don't have to refer your patients out. This approach also provides an opportunity to bill payors at higher specialty rates.

Finding the Right Specialist for your Practice

Bringing the right specialist into your practice, unlike other hiring processes, involves interviewing and evaluating a professional with likely more training than yourself. These specialists can have a massive impact on your practice's productivity.

So your ability to hire the best specialist will be dependent on how you attract, recruit, accommodate, compensate, and support the specialist.



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Meeting Your Specialist

We always recommend that practice owners and specialists meet at least twice before showing up for a first treatment date. Once to interview, get a feel for each other's personal and professional style and communicate general terms. Once terms have been mutually agreed upon, an in-person tour of the facility and meet the team.

There are many subjects to cover between a specialist and practice to calibrate expectations in addition to a basic contract: supplies responsibilities, invoicing practices, emergency protocols, billing, staffing, and documentation.

Contract Structure

Specialists should be categorized as independent contractors as your practice will form an agreement with their professional corporation. The specialist has control of the results of their specialty treatments, brings their own instruments, and contracts with multiple practices on varying schedules to earn income.

Onboarding Checklist for the Specialist

Once you and the specialist decide to move forward, there are a variety of items you will need to complete in order to officially onboard them.

- ☐ Credentialing and specialty fee schedules
- ☐ Training for your front and back office to support the specialist
- ☐ Specialty supplies

- ☐ Review your treatment planning, billing, and collections systems
- ☐ Surgical dental assistants for OS
- ☐ Imaging
- ☐ Setting up the specialist in your PMS

Patient Care and Scheduling

Recruiting and onboarding a specialist can create some added work for your team. The next phase to ensure success for your specialist is to screen and schedule patient candidates for them. That process begins with marketing the specialist to your current and future patients.

Many practice owners add the specialists name to their marketing collateral and keep a specialists profile on hand for prospective specialty patients. Occasionally practices will need to engage a marketing agency to extend their ads, website, social media, and other listings, to include content on specialty.

Next, we want to ensure that the GP, hygienist, and assistants are accurately communicating the diagnosis and referring patients that have a good understanding of expectations. We recommend communicating with the specialist frequently, early in your relationship to learn how they evaluate cases and what indications/ contra-indications help them make decisions about treatment.

Patient scheduling varies by specialty and changes over the first few months as the team acclimates. The specialist will also inform the practice on the types of procedures the specialist will be performing or how busy the specialist likes their schedule. Early on it's recommended to have a lighter schedule to allow the team to learn from the process until everyone hits their stride.



Treatment Coordination

Your office manager will need to undergo training to learn the unique differences in coding, billing, and communicating specialty. This may create somewhat of a strain for them as there are some nuances to navigating these topics. Consider adding visual aids and explainers, thoroughly researching all corresponding specialty procedure codes and insurance restrictions, pre and post-op instructions.

We've found that the best practices incentivize the performance of their whole team as the specialist is getting acquainted and comfortable with your practice. Gather your team and do a thorough review of indications/contraindications for each specialty treatment.

The treatment coordinator or scheduling coordinator should be a designated point of contact with the specialist since they will be frequently organizing patient treatment, pre-authorizations, scheduling, and medical alerts to address prior to treatment day. The specialist will then be able to address

Specialist Compensation

Some GP's may be concerned that they might lose too much production to the specialist for procedures that they were doing themselves and therefore experience a

net loss in profit. Specialists often receive higher insurance reimbursements for the same procedure as a GP. They usually diagnose and treatment plan conditions more accurately, complete procedures more efficiently, and with better results.

Specialist compensation can also vary greatly depending on specialty, availability, and region. The extra mile that practice owners go is greatly appreciated by specialists who often travel far distances to serve your patients. Therefore we recommend compensating your specialists well.

Specialists will usually mirror the insurance plans of the practice but there are strategies that the parties can collaborate on to maximize reimbursements and specialty fee schedules.



Supplies and Facility Preparation

Most specialists travel with their own instruments but be sure your staff is trained to ensure they are properly accounted for and not mixed in with your own supplies during sterilization.

Your practice will generally be responsible for disposables that aren't really feasible for travel, bone graft material and regenerative material that may expire if not refrigerated.

Review special surgical disposables as well such as anesthetic and gauze. Review your emergency kit with

the specialist and consider having your team review emergency protocols.

Support from Synergy Specialists

Synergy Specialists was built to help GPs incorporate in-house specialty. We have a vast network of all specialists across the country who are equipped and ready to integrate with your practice. It used to take months to source the right specialist. Provider onboarding may place a large burden on your front office. Experience has taught us that practice owners appreciate the security and consistency of working with a company that provides support through all phases of the experience: contracts, credentialing, supplies procurement, team training, and more.

We know what it takes to facilitate a successful treatment day for your team and your patients. Searching and matching with a specialist is free for practice owners since our fee is paid by the specialists. Register with us today to see which specialists are ready to match in your area.

Alex Molayem DDS

Co-Founder, Synergy Specialists

