



**Turning Patient Experience
Into Practice Growth**

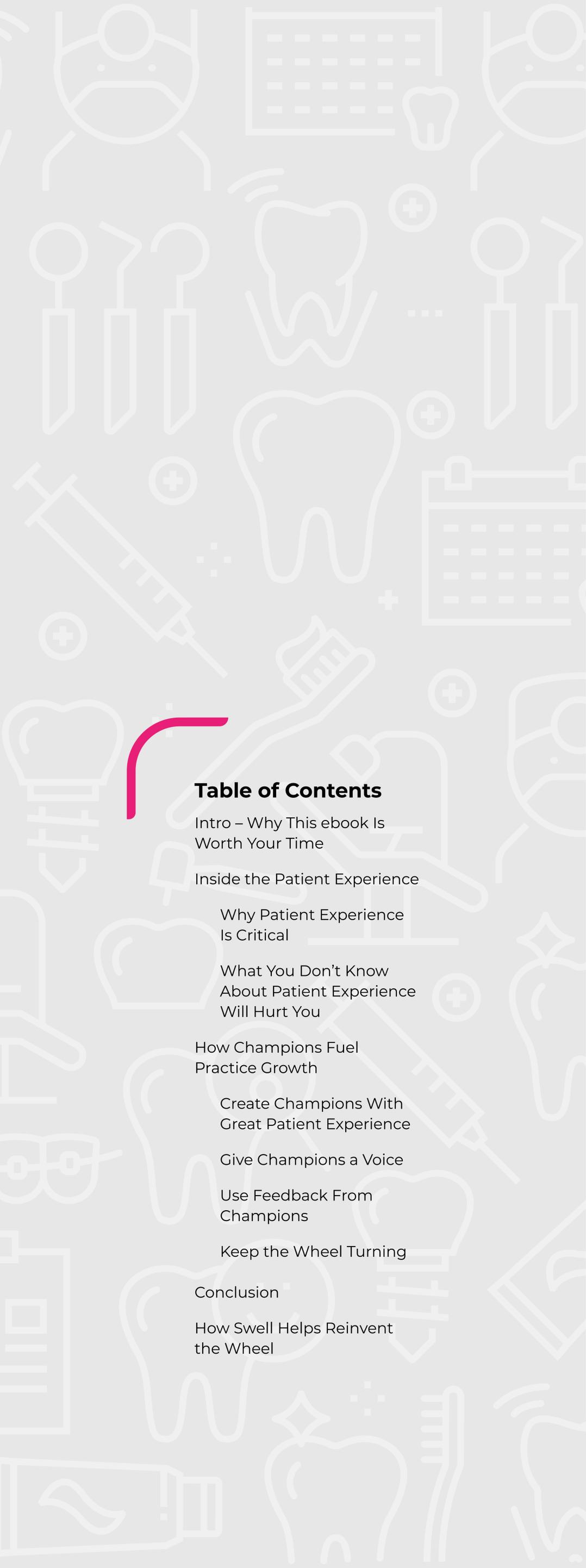


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Intro

Why This eBook Is Worth Your Time

Wouldn't it be nice if doing great clinical work automatically got you new patients?

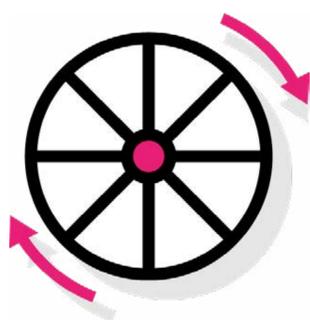
What if the quality of your work spread like wildfire online, then brought potential patients to your door? What if you didn't have to rely on roulette-wheel marketing (Fig. 1) and constantly wonder if you're really getting ROI from your marketing spend? Worse yet, do you even have marketing spend?

Here's the thing. With the right game plan, great clinical work will lead to practice growth, and it's probably much easier than you think. In this eBook, we'll help you stop spinning a marketing wheel, and show you how easy it can be to enhance the patient experience and turn it into a practice growth engine. You'll learn how to:

- *Turn the patient journey itself into an automated marketing machine.*
- *Use real-time patient sentiment to enhance the patient experience.*
- *Apply expert advice from dental thought leaders like Paul Goodman and Kiera Dent.*
- *Solidify your online reputation as the awesome practice you are.*
- *Totally whomp your competition in local search and patient acquisition.*

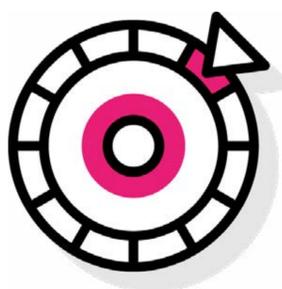
**Excited? Us too.
Let's get going.**

Figure 1
How Some Practices Find Patients



Hamster Wheel

Does the same things over and over. Never makes progress.



Roulette Wheel

Picks a new tactic every time. Almost always loses.



Asleep at the Wheel

Doesn't really do anything and might be driving toward a cliff.

Inside the Patient Experience

Most practices have a sense of what patient experience is, but when is the last time you walked a mile in your patient's shoes?

When we think about patient experience, we're specifically referring to the entire patient journey. This requires you to think carefully about every interaction a patient or potential patient has with your practice. How did they find you? Why did they choose? What interactions mattered?

Figure 2 Using Patient Experience for Growth



Patient's journey from finding you to loving you.



Turning regular patients into people who advocate for you.



Better search rankings. Better online reviews & star ratings.



More patients and a growing, thriving practice.

Remember, this spans the digital realm (i.e. your website, social media, Google listings, reviews, etc.) and everything that happens in your office (from check-ins to procedures, reminders, and so on). Once you've got that on lock (we'll talk about how to improve it a bit later), you can start taking steps toward creating new patients out of happy patients you already have (Fig. 2).

Expert Views: “Bonding” With Patients

Dr. Paul Goodman,
Founder of **Dental
Nachos**

“Often, people don’t like the dentist. What we dentists do can be annoying and expensive. Getting

dental care is about as fun as getting a new furnace. What bonds dentists and their teams is a shared love of helping patients do what they love to do—chew and eat! Creating a fantastic experience for a dental patient takes a coordinated effort that will help you grow your practice in

amazing ways. When it comes to bonding (pun intended) with patients, it’s ultra-important they feel good about you as a dental team; it’s about them knowing your people care about them. Dental school tends to focus on technique but being successful in a private

practice requires being “top nacho” in multiple “toppings” such as practice management, patient communication and clinical dentistry.”

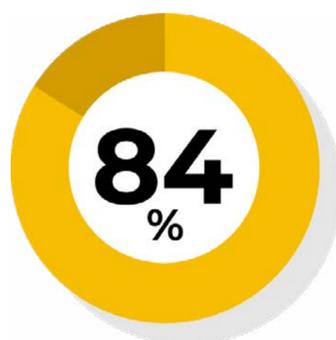


Why Patient Experience Is Critical

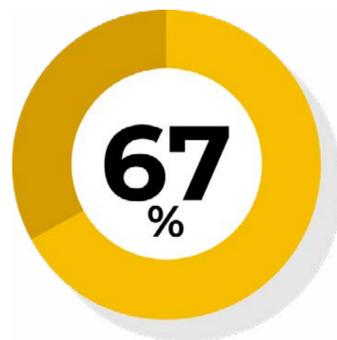
Your practice is nothing without your patients. You can’t succeed unless they feel safe in your care and happy with everything from check in to procedure

to appointment reminder. But don’t take our word for it. Here are just a few eye-opening stats about customer experience (Fig. 3):

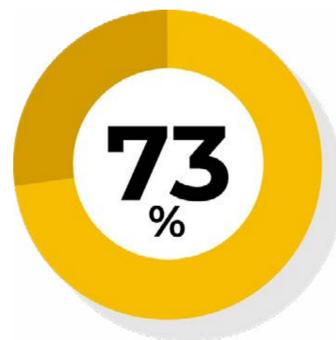
Figure 3



84% say the experience a company provides is just as important as the product or service.
(Salesforce)



67% of customers cite “bad experience” as their reason for churn.
(Koslky)



73% of customers expect companies to understand their needs and expectations.
(Salesforce)



Time savings are some of the **top 5** ways practices can provide the greatest satisfaction.
(Accenture)

Figure 4

Do your patients see your practice the way you do?



What You Don't Know About Patient Experience Will Hurt You

You know patient experience is important—it's synonymous with reputation. But does your perception of your practice line up with what your patients might say (Fig. 4)? Is your service as great as you think? These days, only the absolute best can grow. The rest just stagnate. So, when it comes to patient experience, here are some tough truths you might not have thought about:

Good enough is not good enough.

You're fighting for the same patients as Doctor Whatshisname down the street and dozens of others. You must be

exceptional, and you must stand out. Are you doing everything you can to level-up patient care from start to finish?

Your in-person reputation might differ from your online reputation.

You could be the absolute best in your market without changing a thing. But if someone finds you online, do you still look great? Are your reviews proof of that fact? We'll touch on how to get more reviews in another section.

Some unhappy patients will stop seeing you and never say why. [Kolsky reports](#)

that of consumers that have a problem with a brand, 91% of them won't complain, they'll just get what they need somewhere else. Are you retaining a vast number of patients or are you losing them to a problem you never even heard about?

Expert Views: Thinking About Patient Perception

Kiera Dent, Founder of
[Dental A-Team](#)

“Patient experience is the reputation of a practice! So, I ask the question: how do you want to be perceived? Disorganized and frantic? Or would

you rather be seen as put together, friendly experts—the office of excellence? Now, how do your patients actually perceive you? What we want to be known as versus what we are actually seen as can be two very different things, and this can make or break your practice. Aligning your team and ensuring that patient perception matches

your perception can drive a practice to success. Is everyone on your team aiming in the same direction? Do you role play how you, the doctor, wants new patient and recurring patient experience? Does your team know how important this is? Sometimes simply aligning, role playing, and creating an expectation can be all it takes. Your

reputation is what gets passed on to friends, families, coworkers, etc. So, I invite you to ask these questions: what do patients really say? Is that what I actually want them to say? If not, change today to become who and what you know you can be.”



Even happy patients don't leave feedback or refer others. Patients might be satisfied or even ecstatic, but they have busy lives with things to do. Sometimes even the most delighted patients won't leave feedback or refer you. If you're struggling to get more online reviews, you know just what we

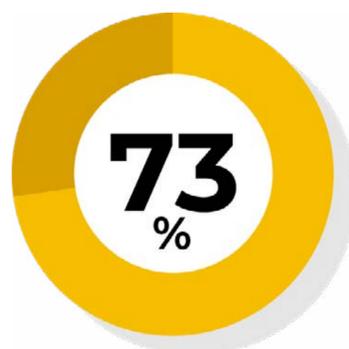
mean. You must dazzle them, then find ways to solicit feedback to be successful (Fig. 5).

As you can see, there's probably a lot you don't know about the way your patients perceive you. But fear not, we have the remedy.

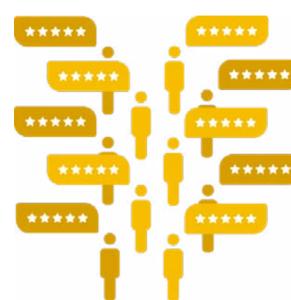
Figure 5
The Power of Online Reputation



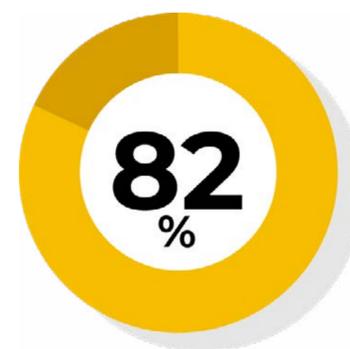
Reputation is one of the **top 3** concerns a patient considers when selecting a practice. ([Deloitte](#))



73% of customers say companies' trustworthiness matters more than it did a year ago. (Salesforce)



10 reviews needed for someone to trust a business. ([BrightLocal](#))



82% of customers read online reviews for local businesses. ([BrightLocal](#))



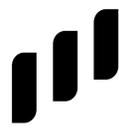
How Champions Fuel Practice Growth

In a perfect world, great work would automatically result in more patients and incredible growth, but that's not always the case. Unless you have a plan. Here are the parts of a process that will turn the hard work you do on the clinical side into a growth machine. It will also help you improve every part of the patient journey.

Create Champions With Great Patient Experience

It all starts with doing great clinical work that helps turn regular patients into champions of your practice. Have you outlined every step in your customer journey? Have you roleplayed it and tested it? Have you considered how someone goes from finding you online to booking an appointment to becoming a raving fan? What areas do you know you

can improve? What's that little something extra that will push you from great to unbelievable? One practice gives patients a printed menu that lists television shows they can watch while a procedure is being performed.



***Have you outlined
every step in your
customer journey?***



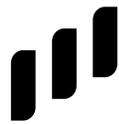
Turning Patient Experience
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Another gives patients a cookie when their cleaning is done (clean teeth + cookie? Questionable, but people love it). These things seem silly, but those little touches matter—a free toothbrush isn't going to cut it anymore.

Think carefully about how you'll stand out, because that's how you turn patients into champions (Fig. 6). Be absolutely sure you're doing your best, because the next part gets hairy if you don't.

Give Champions a Voice

Remember, just because a patient doesn't say anything doesn't mean they're happy. You can find out how



A free toothbrush isn't going to cut it anymore.

patients feel by asking them to leave you online reviews or fill out surveys. There are two approaches to this, and there are pros and cons to both.

Asking in Person –

Many practices will have staff members ask

patients to leave a review as they check out after a visit. While this has the benefit of being free and something you can start immediately, it's another task a staff member must complete. It then becomes dependent on people rather than process, and the results are usually poor. Plus, by the time a patient arrives at home, will they remember to leave a review? Will they even know how or where to do it? Will they feel awkward being asked in person? There's a better way and it requires even less effort than asking in person.

Figure 6

Patients vs. Champions

Champions are powerful allies for your practice.

Patients

- No feedback
- No referrals
- Indifferent



VS.



Champions

- Boost reputation
- Provide referrals
- Advocate for you

Automating Invites – Practices with tons of reviews don't usually get them by asking in person. Instead, they send invites through a software solution. Platforms like **Swell** make it easy to automatically send text invites to patients during times they're most likely to respond. Patients get a message on their phone and can leave you a review with just a few taps. Since it integrates with practice management systems, staff members need only check-out a guest as they usually would, and Swell does the rest. Depending on the solution, practices can take advantage of many other features for engaging with patients, managing online reputation, and soliciting reviews.

Worried About Asking for Reviews? Don't Be

Many practices worry that as soon as they solicit reviews, they'll get a bad one that will tank their reputation. The thing is, if you're automating the process of getting reviews, you'll likely see dozens of great reviews and they'll add up fast. In the event

that you do get the feared one-star review, it will barely make a dent. Plus, it will actually be a valuable opportunity that lets learn and adapt to patient feedback. In many cases, you'll create champions out of patients whose issues you can resolve faster. This lets you continue to benefit from referrals and other perks of a great patient-to-practice relationship.

Use Feedback from Champions

Reviews do a lot for a practice. If you're worried that your reputation isn't as great online as it deserves to be, reviews are how you prove you're awesome. It's also how you can find ways to improve your whole practice, which will get

Doctor Whatshisname shaking in his khakis. When you get down to it, reviews and surveys can help you:



Practices with tons of reviews don't usually get them by asking in person.

Fix problems immediately. – According to Bain and Company, 67% of customer churn is preventable if you resolve issues after the first engagement. Reviews can quickly point you to

problems, so you can correct them and keep patients for the long haul.

Identify ways to improve – Not sure how to level-up the patient experience? Put together a survey and ask what you could do better. You may be surprised what you learn and how easy it is to adopt.

Improve your online reputation – People are more likely to take a look at your practice if it's popular. Great reviews are proof people love you. They make you an easy choice for prospects.



Turning Patient Experience Into Practice Growth

Tell the right story – People will read your reviews. In fact, most people read about **10 reviews on average** before working with someone. What are your reviews saying about your practice?

Be found by ranking higher in search

– According to Yotpo, companies that gather reviews see about **a 45% increase in pageviews** on their websites. They'll often also appear higher in local searches. This is free advertising, folks.

Get new patient inquiries

– If you're visible online and your reputation is solid, patients will start coming to you. According to some dentists, most new patients come to a practice after seeing

reviews. We've also heard that the overall value of the patients that see a review is much higher than average.

Keep The Wheel Turning

Once your online reputation matches up with what you provide in person, you'll start to see massive results quickly (Fig. 7). Your reviews and surveys will help you create a better experience for patients,

which creates more champions, gives you more reviews, a better online reputation, and all the new patients that come along with. Even still, there are some things to keep in mind that will keep the process running smoothly.



Gathering reviews can increase website pageviews by 45%

Expert Views: Mastering Patient Experience

Dan Johnson,
Marketing Director,
Acre Wood Dental

"I am a firm believer that we're in the people business

and not the dental business. It's crucial for us to make sure that we're treating people as people and not as patients. When we instill this in our teams, they will treat our patients as family. This is a critical piece of our patients' experience in our office. When we do this, our patients feel

the genuine care that we provide and as with anything that is great, they want to share that experience with friends and family. This is essential to any practice growth model. With great patient experience, practices will grow organically through their current patients. One of the

greatest compliments we can have is when one of our existing patients trusts us enough to send one of their family or friends to us."



Turning Patient Experience
Into Practice Growth

Here are some tips to help maximize the effectiveness of your marketing machine:

Consider when to send reviews –

Thinking about the patient journey, you won't want to immediately send a review invite to someone recovering from surgery or someone in pain following a procedure. Give them time to recover, then ask for feedback.

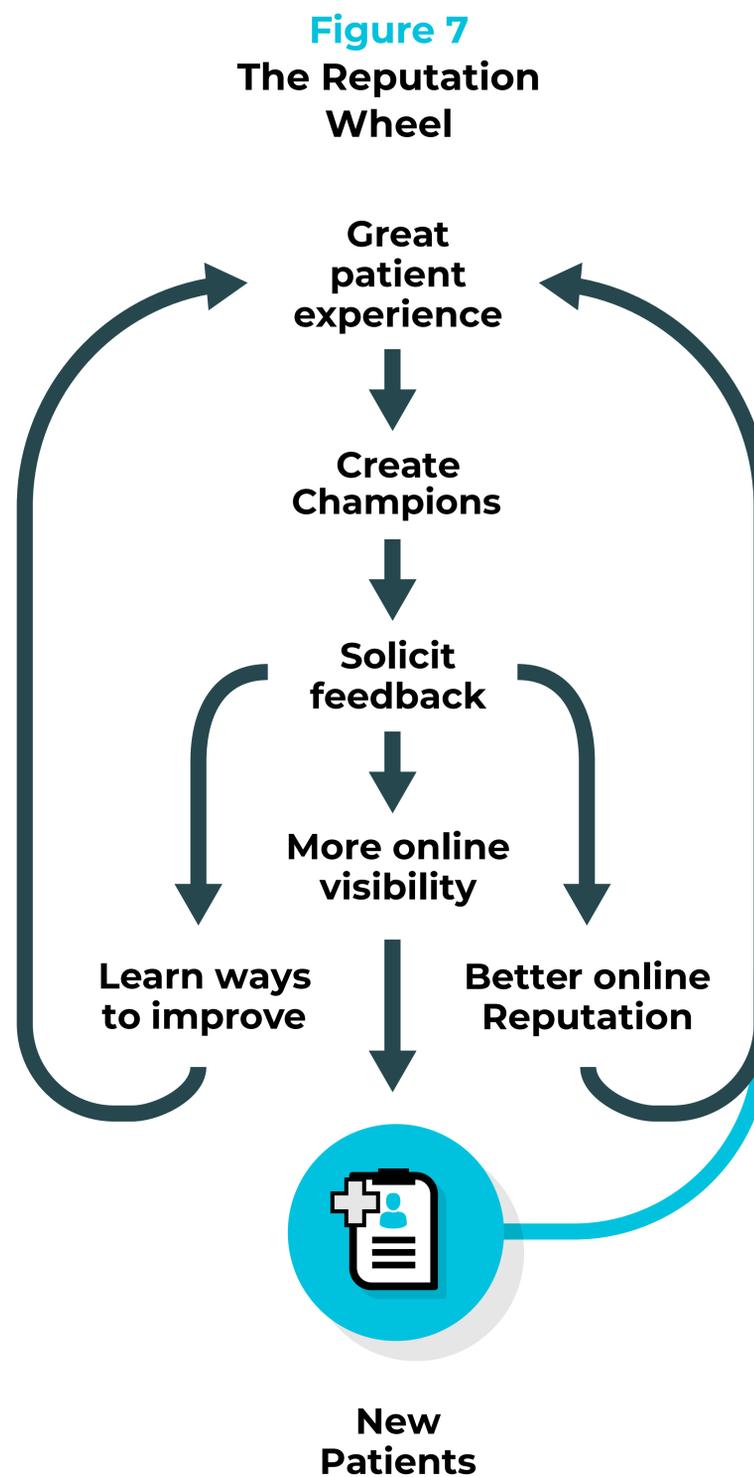
Consider who to send invites to –

Sometimes you might be aware of a problem that happened with a patient in the office—that's not a good time to ask for feedback. Instead, you might want to pause automated reviews, correct the issue, then solicit feedback. Platforms like [Swell](#) make this incredibly easy.

Make sure reviews are fresh – Many practices wonder how many reviews are enough. When they get to a hundred or so, do they stop soliciting feedback? The trouble is, if you have a 6-month period where you get hundreds of reviews then stop getting anything new, potential patients might take that as a sign that something went wrong. Plus, your competitors get an opportunity to rank higher than you in terms of review scores and search results. Keep those reviews coming.

Use surveys carefully, but do use them

– Surveys are a useful way to gather feedback, but they get annoying to patients if you send too many. Don't send a survey to any one patient more than



once a quarter and be sure to keep them simple and focused. This will make it more likely that patients fill them out and don't find them invasive.



Conclusion

*This may sound like a lot.
You may wonder if it's
worth the time and effort.*

The fact is that a process like the one discussed in this eBook can be set up in as little as 30 minutes, with a few minutes of maintenance a week. By automating the process, it's far less burden on your staff than having them ask for feedback, and the results are real and outstanding. When you compare a process like this to the hamster wheel (wasting energy), roulette wheel (gambling), or asleep at the wheel (not trying), it becomes obvious why a little effort used the right way can result in

almost immediate growth. Take some time to map your patient journey and find ways to get feedback, and you'll start getting new patients fast.

How Swell Helps Reinvent the Wheel

Swell is an automated growth platform for dental practices. Once set up (it takes about 30 minutes), you can create a marketing machine from the happy patients you already have and draw in new ones the easy way.



Interact

Create meaningful interactions with customers through text, email, and more.



Understand

Learn how customers feel through reviews and surveys. Address issues and improve your practice.



Leverage

Online feedback fuels a better reputation, provides higher SEO rankings, and results in new patients.



Acquire

Webchat lets you interact with new patients so you can provide top-notch service at every part of the patient journey.



Turning Patient Experience
Into Practice Growth

**Get Your Custom Demo
Today at [Swelcx.com/demo](https://swelcx.com/demo).**

