Dental information technology

Technology

Information Technology or IT as it is often called has always been the talk of the modern world. Just like all other technologies, IT facilitates easier ways to processes and simpler solutions to problems not only in the home but most especially in the workplace. IT encompasses all computer hardware and software, the networks that link to computers, and the methods that alter information and images to different formats such as digital formats (Patterson, 2000, p. 1). This description of IT makes it very useful on data management in the workplace such as the dental office.

To further illustrate the significance of IT in the dental office, the information generated and needed by such an office should first be evaluated. There are several basic types of team structures for human services. The dental office belongs to one of these types known as the sole practitioner model. In the sole practitioner model, each staff member individually manages his client relations (NPower, 2005, p. 17). The dentist relates to his client individually. As a patient enters the clinic for the first time, the staff nurse usually collects personal information from the patient.

If the patient has already been to the office once, then it would only entail an update on the personal data. Personal information and accounting of patient's consultation visits and check-ups are better managed by a desktop computer that inputs or edits any new data regarding the patient. Even better, a networking system can be created throughout the whole dental office linking all the computers; thus, linking the nurse's computer with the dentist's computer making communication and data exchange more effective.

Software applications used for these types of data gathering can just be simple word processing applications where files can be saved into a database that can be accessed by the staff members. Another element in a dental office that can be modified by IT is the external communications that the office needs to control. This is done by linking the computers in the workplace to the internet. By having an internet connection, the dentist and the staff can further communicate with the patient in an easier and cheaper way which is by the use of electronic mail, also known as e-mail.

The office also should have a fax machine linked to the computers to so that documents can be delivered faster and easier. Furthermore, a printer can also be located in the office. This can be very helpful with the production of important documents such as dental certificates for patients who need it for different purposes. In addition, the printer can also be used to manufacture personalized business cards for the office. Business cards can equip the office with further promotions.

The printer can also be used to print fliers that can be distributed for advertising thus lifting a very great burden from the marketing department of the office. Another advantage of having an internet connection in the dental office is the advertisement that it can offer by creating an advertising website. Again, the dental website can be a very good method of promoting the services of the clinic. It can also be taken as means of communication for prospective customers.

In addition, the website can be a means to connect the staff members with one another. The internet can also be a means for the dentist to be updated with the latest trends and technology in dentistry by the means of search

engines. Lastly, internet connection can also be of help in assuring the dental office's ample supply of needed medical materials. Instead of travelling to a special dental store that can be hundreds of miles away, the dentist can just find the website of a dental tools manufacturer or distributor using a credit card account.

The dental materials can thus be delivered right in the office front door. This is further made effective by the easier accounting of the expenses of the clinic since it can be electronically processed using ordinary spreadsheets. Information technology really does make life and work easier and less complex. It improves staff efficacy, supports communication and meets the information demands of different human service agencies such as the dental office (Patterson, 2000, p. 5).