

How Software Automation Boosts Productivity at Your Dental Office



Patterson Dental's National Technology Advisor, Dan Easty, offers valuable tips on taking back your office time.

You know the list. Those things within your dental office that take entirely too much of your valuable time. Determining which patients are eligible from an insurance standpoint, for example. Or what about communicating with patients and reminding them of upcoming appointments? Even backing up your data each week can be time-consuming.

Here's the good news: Advances in software automation now make most of these labor-intensive tasks relatively pain-free. And, we're going to see more software enhancements in the future that will allow you to focus even more of your time on your patients.

In working with many dental practices over the years, I have discovered a number of ways that software helps them operate more efficiently. First, software can be used to automate tasks that can run in the background, saving you and your staff time. For example, automated reports can help you organize your morning huddle by identifying opportunities with patients that will be seen that day or chances to celebrate patient-care wins of the week.

Software also enables you to automate tasks like insurance processing, so your front desk staff can stay focused on the patient experience.



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What are the areas of your office where automation delivers the biggest difference?

Four come to mind:

1. STARTING WITH PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Owning the right practice management software is key to leveraging the benefits of automation. Start by finding a system that enables one patient record for each patient's information, images and clinical records. Next, consider options that automate and simplify many of the repetitive and time-consuming tasks that fill up your workday. This allows you to get more done in less time and focus on the things that matter most.

One dental office I've worked with is loving the automated period processing capabilities of Eaglesoft. This office is using software automation to compile quarterly and year-end processing of all office financials. This office is also using a "silent installer," which essentially updates all computers "silently" to the newest version of Eaglesoft the moment it becomes available. When one staff member realized this, he raved, "I have 13 computers and I can't tell you how much time this will save."

Success is knowing that you and your team know how to incorporate these tools and all information is into one platform.

2. COMMUNICATING WITH PATIENTS

Another time-consuming task for offices is often communicating with patients. This job can now be automated quite easily with tools like **RevenueWell**, **Solutionreach** and **OperaDDS**. A couple of years ago, I remember working with one dental office that was using four to five cell phones to reach out to patients



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and remind them of upcoming appointments. I remember thinking, “Wow. You really should be automating this process!”

Software can help with automations in a number of ways. You can use software to send simple reminder emails and texts. Patients can request and make appointments online, fill out forms to prepare for a visit, and rate their experience after being seen at your practice. All of this helps boost productivity – especially among front desk staff.

Teledentistry is yet another option to add to your practice capabilities. This can help you expand your practice beyond the walls of your dental office.



3. MANAGING THE INSURANCE PROCESS

Whether it's confirming eligibility or reviewing coverage levels for patients, insurance to-dos can take a long time. But software automation tools can help relieve that stress and result in real bottom-line savings. For example, you can now submit **claims** and **attachments** electronically to payers, saving your office \$0.88 per claim on average, reducing rejections, and quickening the time in which you're paid by insurance companies. It can also help you avoid those long phone calls to insurance companies and time spent visiting payer websites to verify eligibility. Look for software tools that allow you to check **real-time eligibility** from within the platform, saving you hours on the phone and on the web.

4. SECURING YOUR PRACTICE DATA AND PATIENT INFORMATION

Historically, securing your practice data has been a gargantuan task. But for those who use software automation, like Fuse, our cloud-based practice management software, or Eaglesoft with **DDS Rescue**, this now happens without a single click. Thanks to software like this, not only can you secure your patient data with ease, you can also recover from a system crash in just 10 minutes – something that took hours in the past.

What's more, software automation now makes it possible to secure patient data not just to your servers, but also to the cloud. So, no matter what, your data is safe and sound. And, you don't have to lift a finger to protect it.

Working smarter, not harder

Beyond these four areas, software automation has great potential. Right now, practice analytics software like **Dental Intelligence** can help you analyze practice data, track progress toward business goals, and spot red flags. Essentially this kind of software “runs in the background” and sends automated reports right to your inbox each day so you can manage your office more efficiently. Dentists who have implemented this kind of automation have called it “life changing.”

And, for those practices that already are using automation, future software enhancements will most likely allow you to take your productivity and patient experience to a whole different level. Just imagine how artificial intelligence will start to impact the insurance claims process down the road.

For now, adding automation to simplify tasks with software can truly help improve your office's productivity. Whether it's appointment reminders, managing the onerous claims process or securing your patient data, software automation allows you to focus more time on the reason you got into dentistry in the first place: your patients.

