

FollowApp.Care

How leading orthodontic group is using follow up technology to drive its customer relationship marketing

Innovation sits at the heart of Queensway Orthodontics, a group of eight practices led by specialist orthodontist Dr Guy Deeming, established for 25 years ago in the north east of England.

The appreciation that technology can help to improve the patient experience, and ultimately drive profitable practice, sits at the heart of why Queensway incorporated FollowApp.Care – the pioneering technology that allows dental practices to create an exemplary patient follow-up.

“We are very, very keen on using technology to enhance our efficiency, but most importantly, to improve the experience that we offer to our patients, as well as forming part of our life cycle marketing. In other words, keeping that relationship going and making sure that if patients are unhappy, we're well positioned to respond to and manage any issues, and improve what we do in the future. Traditionally, we've done that through manual processes, such as end-of-treatment surveys or simply feedback forms, all the traditional kind of methods,” says Dr Deeming.

He adds that having something that is integrated and automated, with a sufficient level of flexibility to allow the clinics to develop and utilise it as part of their digital workflow and patient journey was “too good an opportunity to miss”, not least because **FollowApp.Care sits in what he calls the “magic gap between technology and amazing customer experience”**.

“One of the key things we're trying to drive is that fine line between the two where we're not Luddites, but equally, we're not weaponising technology to keep patients away or to make them feel like digital aliens in an analogue world. We're trying to get that balance right and FollowApp.Care is a perfect example of how that can work really, really well with technology and a genuine human touch.”

Tailoring technology to meet clinic needs

Queensway Orthodontics initially introduced FollowApp.Care a year ago for a limited number of appointment types but has since expanded its use to cover the majority of its direct clinical patient contact, something it is continuing to refine and evolve.

Says Dr Deeming: “When I first heard about FollowApp.Care, dental colleagues told me it wasn't for orthodontics, but when I looked at it again I thought it was absolutely perfect for us. We just needed to slightly tweak the way we position it and

look at which appointments trigger a follow-up and what that follow-up flow might be. The difference between dentists and orthodontists is that dentists tend to ask a lot about pain after a procedure because they want to be able to manage that. Orthodontics is different because there's an assumption that adjustments are going to be a bit sore, and we don't really want to draw attention to that. Instead, we tend to ask a different questions, such as 'Have you booked your next appointment? Do you need any oral hygiene supplies? Have you thought about leaving us a review? Do you need us to be in touch about anything else, etcetera'."

He says his clinics initially only used FollowApp.Care for new patient consultations and at the end of treatment. "Since then, we've expanded its use to look at various different things: For example, when patients come in for what we call a full case assessment, FollowApp sends them a series of questions, which are very carefully phrased to ensure they book in and begin their treatment. In other words, have you booked your next appointment? Yes/No. If it's a no, then we have the opportunity to ask them why not."

Letting FollowApp.Care take the strain

Dr Deeming explains that using the tech takes the pressure off both patients and practice members from having to have awkward conversations about why they might not want to go ahead with treatment - because of finances, for instance. "If they can just read a succinct text and provide a short response and say, actually it's because of finances, suddenly that's much easier for them to provide awkward feedback. So it takes away a lot of the friction around traditional communication methods.

"Of course, using FollowApp.Care also allows the practice to offer patients solutions to issues such as finance, or to schedule referral to the treatment coordinator. The beautiful thing about FollowApp.Care is it is not one-size-fits-all. It is entirely customisable according to your needs, whether that's incredibly simple or more complicated."

FollowApp.Care also helps the clinics track their overall Net Promoter Score, which sits at the heart of how Queensway Orthodontics drives its business forward. FollowApp helps each clinic to increase Net Promoter response rates, something they had previously struggled with. It has also helped to drive positive Google reviews.

Says Dr Deeming: "FollowApp is without any shadow of a doubt, a marketing asset and we definitely saw a spike and more consistency around the frequency of those reviews because we used to rely on team remembering to badger patients, and then we'd get a few reviews and then they'd forget again. Also, if there is a negative review, it's embargoed for a period of time to allow you to respond and to consider your action, which allows you to manage any negativity in a very open, transparent and responsive way."

Technology drives new ways of working

Dr Deeming says FollowApp.Care is now such an essential part of practice operations that he wouldn't want to be without it. "It frees up the humans to add that essential human touch point...and what they do best, which is to create that brand value of the warm, fuzzy glow of a great experience. **FollowApp.Care does that in a very digitally intelligent way: The combination of automations and AI and a great human, empathetic touch creates a really fantastic customer experience, one without the other doesn't work well with digital.**"

He also stresses that technology, such as FollowApp.Care, allows practices to restructure operations. "Sometimes the most dangerous thing you can say or do is 'this is the way we've always done it'. That doesn't make sense anymore. The six-month check-up – get rid of it. Do it differently because the technology now allows you to do it differently. Use this opportunity to enhance the patient experience.

"More and more dental services are being judged and assessed by the public and our communities in the same way that they would judge or assess making a purchase of any kind - a holiday, a washing machine or choosing restaurant. We are absolutely not immune from those consumer behaviours and forces. FollowApp.Care allows us to be much more engaged with our community and consumer base," he concludes.

How FollowApp.Care works:

1. Integration: Integrates with your practice management system to automatically extract the data needed to ensure appointment notifications trigger patient communications
2. Communication: Makes patients feel cared for, while checking up on post procedural health, requesting feedback and prompting reviews.
3. Results: Results are analysed and collated in the FollowApp.Care web application where clinics can resolve flagged issues or sit back and watch FollowApp.Care work for them by garnering improved Google reviews.

More than 5,000 dentists have already used FollowApp.Care - predominantly in the UK and Australia, and millions of patients have connected with them through the app. For more information please visit <https://www.followapp.care/>

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