

Plugging the leaks that may be costing you thousands of pounds every year

Did you know that many healthcare offices might be losing tens of thousands of pounds each year due to their poor handling of phone inquiries, and yours might be one of them?

The average healthcare office spends 5% of its annual turnover on marketing to generate new enquiries.

For the purposes of this exercise, let's make a few assumptions:

- Your turnover is £100,000 a year and you spend £5000 on marketing.
- This marketing effort generated 1000 enquiries
- Your secretary converts 10% of these enquiries
- These 100 patients pay you £1000 each

Marketing Investment	New Enquiries	Conversion Rates	New patients	1000	CPA	% of sales
5000	1000	10%	100	100000	£50	5%

What would your turnover look like if you could increase that 10% to 15%, or 20%, or even 25%? Have a look:

Marketing Investment	New Enquiries	Conversion Rates	New patients	1000	CPA	% of sales
5000	1000	10%	100	100000	£50	5%
5000	1000	15%	150	150000	£33	3%
5000	1000	20%	200	200000	£25	3%
5000	1000	25%	250	250000	£20	2%

Well, many offices have done just that by plugging the leaks had been costing them tens of thousands of pounds every year. How did they do it? In 4 steps:

1. Mystery call your office
2. Identify the skills gap
3. Systematise your phone reception with training
4. Monitor and coach for continuous improvement

Step 1: Mystery call your office

When is the last time you heard yourself represented on the telephone by someone else? It can be an eye-opening experience. When you do, answer these questions:

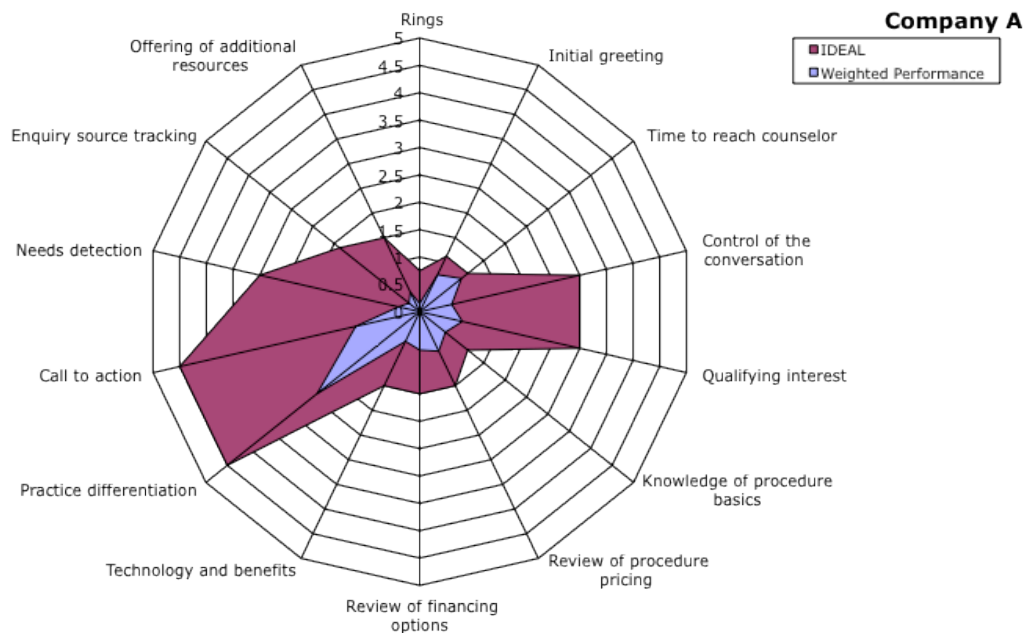
- How long does it take for someone to answer the phone?

- How long were you put on hold?
- How are prospective patients greeted?
- How do difficult questions get handled?
- How does your receptionist handle resistance to price?
- How does she help you stand out from your competition?
- How soon were you able to schedule an appointment?

Of course, it may be impractical for you to call your own office and get a genuine patient experience. You may want to want to ask a friend to do this for you.

Step 2: Identify the skills gap

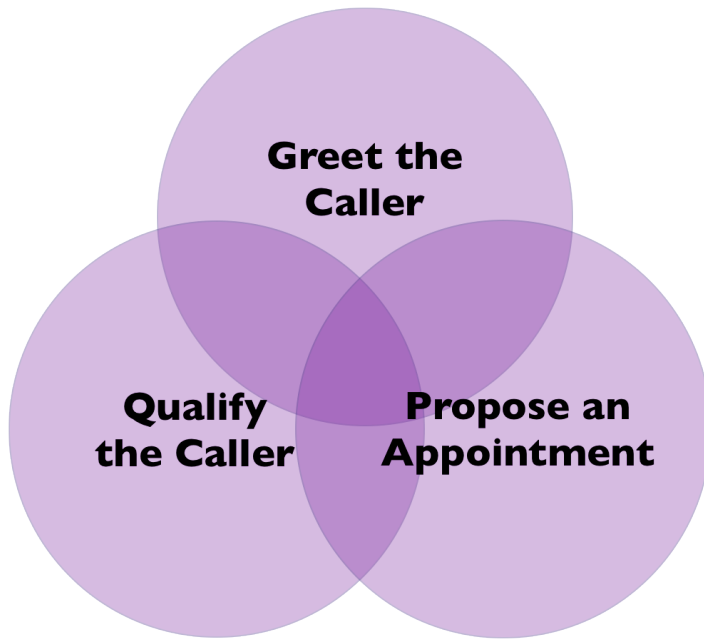
Over the past 10 years working with healthcare offices in multiple specialties, we have been working hard to identify which phone behaviours positively correlate with higher conversion rates. We've identified the following Ideal Skills Baseline:



The purple coloured area above is the skill level (on a scale of 1 to 10) that we have observed correlate highly with higher conversion rates. The blue area is what is actually happening.

Step 3: Systematise your phone reception with training

Like a dramatic play, every telephone call has three acts. Your secretary's ability to convert undecided enquiries is dependent on their ability to execute the three acts in a disciplined and consistent way. It is a good idea to train your staff in tried and tested methods at converting callers into patients.



Act 1 – Greeting the caller

Greeting callers appropriately involves answering the phone promptly and delivering a proper greeting. For example, an engaging and professional greeting sounds like this: “Good morning, Mr. Smith’s Practice, Susan speaking, how can I help?” It’s important for your receptionist to determine if the caller is a new enquiry or an existing patient of yours. Therefore, they need to get the caller’s name, their phone number, and their email address. And, if you are spending any money on marketing, you’ll want to know where that money is working for you, so it’s important for your receptionist to ask callers where they heard about you.

Act 2 – Qualifying the caller

The second act of the call involves creating a relationship with the caller. One of the main reasons that many enquiries do not convert is because they lack trust. Trust takes time to earn, and it usually requires listening to the needs of the caller so you can earn the right to make recommendations. Recommendations like inviting the caller to make an appointment. To determine the needs of the caller, your receptionist needs to ask questions. There are an infinite amount of questions your receptionist could ask in order to focus on the callers needs as a unique individual. Three questions that you’ll certainly want asked are

- How long have you been considering this procedure?
- What is motivating you to have the procedure now?
- Why have you chosen to call us?

Of course, listening to callers answers is as important as asking the questions. Active listening involves asking for information, listening to the answer, acknowledging the caller’s feelings and informing and educating the caller.

Act 3 – Proposing an appointment

Callers are more likely to come in for a consultation when invited, so it's important that your receptionist actually give the caller an invitation. It's a good idea to provide choices, and once the appointment is made it is important to follow up. Following up is as easy as calling the day before and leaving a warm message letting the caller know that you are expecting them at the consultation.

How to choose your training provider

Any training you select should

- Be customised to the healthcare industry (traditional telemarketing training used in other, more hard-sell, industries may do more harm than good)
- Involve role play – people learn by doing, not just by listening
- Provide measurable evidence that improvement in behaviour has occurred – which can be verified by pre- and post-training mystery calling

Our gift to you

Our gift to you is a valuable tool that will help you stop losing profits that are leaking away from your practice due to mishandled phones. You can combat this common problem — with a FREE customer service evaluation of your office that will tell you exactly how to improve your staff's phone skills and convert more inquiries to new patients. Your first "Mystery Shopper" call is FREE.

To request your free customer service evaluation, contact us tell us the best time to call you, and a marketing expert will contact you with sound advice about stopping the loss of valuable new patient inquiries (and revenues!).