

An Introduction to Marketing In-Office Plans: A Primer for Office Managers

By Jeremy Cutler, VP of Marketing at Bento

Congratulations, you've joined the revolution and created an in-office plan for your practice! Now what? Creating an effective in-office membership plan designed for your patients is the first step towards increasing your revenue and gaining independence from traditional insurance companies. Now, you need to build an effective marketing strategy to take your new in-office plans to market. There are countless ways to market to your patients, from in-office promotion to traditional advertising and even digital strategies. When creating your go-to-market plan, it's important to identify all opportunities and then develop a strategy that is right for your practice. Let's explore some of the ways you can effectively market your new in-office plans.

Start spreading the news: Creating effective in-office promotion and awareness

Start by getting the word out there – you'll need to build awareness and start outreach to current and prospective patients. Did you realize that you can begin marketing your plan minutes after you've created it?

Printed Collateral

At Bento we know that in-office plans are only as effective as the number of patients using them, so we created a marketing kit that provides templates for practices to start promoting their plan in the office instantly. We highly recommend setting up point of purchase (POP) display pieces such as flyers or brochures. Our favorite is the simple rack card, it's small enough to fold and put into your pocket while large enough to provide a meaningful value proposition. Best of all, it features all of the plan details and how to purchase. When Dr. Kwon and Ipswich Bay Dental in Massachusetts switched to plans powered by Bento, they instantly created a new flyer using one of the provided templates, printed it and displayed at reception. "I had hundreds of patients on our existing in-office plan," said Dr. Kwon, "we wanted to immediately inform patients about new added features and advantages of our [in-office] plan." Often displayed at your front desk, these easy-to-create materials are key to converting patients on the spot.

Training Staff

As you prepare materials for your office, don't forget to prepare your front-line staff. Office managers, assistants, and hygienists often have the highest engagement with patients and have the best opportunity to sell plans directly to patients. Take the time to train all staff on the value of in-office plans for the patient and the practice. With a system like Bento, patients can purchase in minutes while sitting in the chair; there are no waiting periods. Unlike accepting a PPO plan, these are your plans and ensure that your staff as just as invested into the plans as you are.

Digital Marketing

Now that you've equipped your office and trained your staff you are ready to begin outbound marketing. The fastest way to communicate with your existing patients is through a simple email marketing and/or direct mail campaign. Using your patient information, you can begin to send them communications about your new plans. Do you have a list of patients who don't have access to dental insurance through an employer? What about a list of patients who come in and pay for cosmetic services out of pocket? By segmenting your patient list by need, you can send targeted messages to enhance your ability to convert patients towards purchasing a plan. The more that you can personalize and make the content relevant to your individual patients, the more effective your marketing will become.

Email marketing can be effective and provide the necessary data that you need to optimize future campaigns. We often see practices send a single email and receive little response. The key to a successful email campaign is consistency, relevancy, and regularity. There are great low cost tools available such as MailChimp or HubSpot that will allow you to organize your patient's contact information and easily create and send attractive email campaigns. Even if you don't want to setup a new system, you can send personal emails with the details about your plans directly to patients. Your emails should have a clear call-to-action for interested patients by sending them directly to your website or by providing instructions on how to purchase immediately. We recommend that you keep your website up to date and prominently feature your plans so that both new and existing patients will see this great option.

Shouting from the rooftops: taking your strategy to a broader market

At this point, you should have been able to introduce your new plans to your existing patient base. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. Get ready to climb to the rooftop and shout out "join the best plan in the world." Spreading the word can seem overwhelming, but it can actually be quite easy. Start small within your community. With Bento, we enable practices to create any number of plans. One of our most common plan types are plans dedicated to senior citizens. Savvy practices will partner with local senior centers and community organizations to promote their plans. Working at the grassroots level provides an authentic, budget-friendly option to traditional advertising.

Looking to get the word out to a broader community? Here is where traditional and digital advertising take the helm. Identify and establish an advertising budget and begin to divide and conquer. Local magazines, newspapers, circulars, and billboards can be surprisingly cost effective and can get the word out fast. As a technology company, we often utilize digital marketing because similar to traditional advertising, you can target a large group and segment to smaller more qualified audience. It's important to diversify your marketing efforts with Google search campaigns, digital ads and remarketing. Don't forget about social media, which can be a great way to connect with both current and future patients without a large added cost. Web-based tools such as Canva ([canva.com](https://www.canva.com)) make editing design templates from Bento and creating your own designs simple and quick.

Building an effective marketing plan for your new in-office plan can seem daunting, but it can

really be quite easy. From simple printed materials in your office to full digital campaigns, decide which channels make the most sense for your practice and start creating. When Bento began to offer in-office plans as part of our platform, we understood that practices needed a simple and easy way to increase practice revenue, decrease administrative costs and improve patient retention. Remember, you're not in this alone. Marketing templates and online tools like those provided by Bento set a strong foundation to build effective content with or without a degree in graphic design. Bento also provides dedicated consultants who can help guide you on what makes the most sense for your practice. Regardless of how you begin to advertise your in-office plan, one thing is clear, don't wait to get started.

About Bento:

Bento is a modern alternative to traditional dental insurance. Bento, enables employers, groups and individuals access to comprehensive dental coverage through an advanced AI-based digital platform. Bento is proud to be endorsed by the American Dental Association. For general information about Bento or details how you can offer an in-office plan powered by Bento visit bento.net or contact Bento at 800-734-8484.

About the Author:

Jeremy Cutler is the VP of Marketing for Bento. Jeremy has worked within technology, consulting, retail and consumer products for over 12 years building effective marketing and advertising strategies for over 100,000 products and services.