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In the last edition of *Silverman On Smiles: Cosmetic Dentistry SOS*,I said that I would share with you a simple form that helps you determine what your patients want to change about their smile. While that sounds simple enough, if a “form” could do all of that, more dentists would provide elective cosmetic dentistry than they already do. Taking your cosmetic dentistry practice to the next level requires more than just a form. Let me share with you the approach I teach other dentists during my one day and 2 day regional and on-site Cosmetic Dentistry Boot Camp Programs. See if this approach fits your style as well.

Do Patient Education Material Drive Consumer Awareness?

Before I tell you about the form, let’s consider how effective patient education materials are in stimulating interest in smile enhancement services. Will they motivate your patient to ask if he or she is a candidate for cosmetic dentistry? To a limited degree, yes, they will. However, in the offices I coach on cosmetic dentistry, we found that relying too heavily on patient education materials isn’t the answer.

If you go back several years in time, developing your cosmetic dental practice seemed analogous to the famous line in the movie, *Field Of Dreams* where the profession thought we simply had to “build it and they will come.” Placing a brochure, poster or video in the office reception area, with a caption that said, “Wouldn’t you like to smile like this too?” elicited interest. It still does. While many dentists still place brochures, posters and DVDs in their office, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that, I have found that it cannot be counted on as the

driving engine if your goal is to take your cosmetic practice to the next level.

Your team's knowledge, communication skills and sincere belief in your talents and artistic skills will be the most effective driving engine. A cosmetically trained team will be the locomotive to drive the train. However, some dentists consider cosmetic dentistry to be low hanging fruit. It can be if you know how to harvest it. Best of all, the beneficiary of this is your patient, who can now have his/her dream smile.

For example, over the years, you probably have seen many patients who have literally brushed their enamel away at their gum line from being too zealous or using the wrong type of toothbrush. Whatever the cause, it is a problem that needs to be addressed and can be included in your *smile evaluation* process.

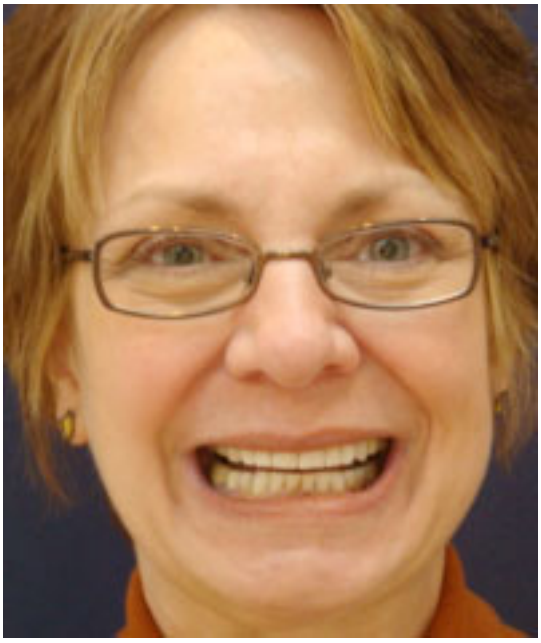
Let me suggest that one of the simplest ways to expand your cosmetic dentistry practice is to expand your patient assessment from restorative/health issues to their aesthetic dental restorative needs. As you do, you will find many patients looking for a noninvasive veneer solution to restore and revitalize their smile.

In the case of the patient who brushes too aggressively and creates toothbrush abrasion defects by the gum line—we often perceive this as being a *restorative* case that could be treated with a Class V composite. I would suggest you probably see patients with this type of problem every day.

However treating these cases with Class V composites can be challenging. Retention can sometimes be frustrating for both the patient and for you. If you start to think of simple restorative cases such as this as an opportunity to restore the defect using a noninvasive, in-office LifeLike Veneer, you will achieve greater resistance to applied stress—resulting in greater retention and enhanced aesthetics. In the case below, the patient previously had her teeth restored with Class V composites by another dentist that failed. Instead of replacing it with new Class V composites, I placed LifeLike Veneers to restore and enhance her smile and combined that with the EasySmile Tooth Whitening System. EasySmile is a simplified high concentration in-office tooth whitening system I developed that requires no isolation and is indicated for first-time users who have mild to moderate stains. With EasySmile Tooth Whitening I am able to achieve from 4 to 6 shades of color improvement in about 30 to 45 minutes without sensitivity—and the patient was very pleased with the final outcome. EasySmile is also an excellent "boosting" system for anyone who previously whitened their teeth and wants

to maintain the brightness of their smile without the hassles or expense associated with conventional in-office tooth whitening procedures.

Figure 1. This patient could benefit from tooth whitening and cosmetic restorative veneers



Before

[redacted] veneers.