

Journey to the  
Center of your

# FUTURE

BY MARK DILATUSH

We use the phrase “Hindsight is 20/20” when we want to kick ourselves in the fanny for not recognizing an opportunity and taking action soon enough. By not acting soon enough, we lose a majority of the benefit, or miss out on an opportunity altogether. The reality is that you can discover things early, or you can discover things late. This is my attempt to get you to understand the value of early discovery.

What if you knew the outcome of a situation or investment ahead of time? What if the future was 20/20? How would you like to be the one in your group who bought BitCoin at \$600? It hovers around \$5000 today. You get the idea.

What if I told you that another of those opportunities exists? This is the opportunity to be the dentist in the conversation five years from now, who looks at the rest of the group and says: “Didn’t all of you start using real time online scheduling a long time ago?” Someone in the group will say, “Hindsight is 20/20”. Others will be confused and realize that they’re way behind and playing catch up.

Of course, we couldn’t have put the words real time online scheduling in the title. Not yet. Half or more of you would have completely skipped the article. The idea scares too many dentists and team members. Maybe it’ll be less scary once there are 3,000 offices nationwide on the platform, when it has become more mainstream, more accepted, and cause less anxiety.

**Oh wait! There ARE over 3,000 dental offices nationwide on the platform!**

### **BIG POINT MOMENT**

We ARE there. It IS proven. Real time online scheduling integration between your website and your practice management software is not a fad. It is not a concept. It is a reality. It is not in beta testing. It is in 3,000 practices nationwide. It is connecting potential new patients from websites, social media, Google business pages, in emails, etc., to real, live dental practices every minute, hour, and every day of the week. **It is reducing those missed calls. It is maximizing advertising budgets. It’s happening NOW.**

As you might imagine, when we first brought the product to clients (existing and new), we heard MANY moans, groans, trepidations, and outright refusals to even consider the idea! And who am I to judge? A couple of years back, I HAD THE SAME EXACT CONCERNS!

So, to help calm your potential anxiety, let me list the main questions we ALL had, along with the answers. Here they are:

## Q&A

**Q Are patients able to control my schedule?**

A No. No more than you can control when an airline has an available flight.

**Q Who controls what appointment types are available for online patients to choose?**

A You control the appointment types for new and existing patients.

**Q Patients will cancel more if they book online!**

A False. You will experience equal or less cancellations than you do now.

**Q Should I call the new patients who book online?**

A Yes. Only now, you will be prepared with a TON of information from the patient.

**Q Is everyone who schedules online a millennial?**

A No. Not at all. They are predominantly women of all ages. Busy moms 30 to 70.

**Q How and when is my team notified of a new online appointment?**

A Email. Instantly.

**Q Are we eliminating the personal touch with online scheduling?**

A You are improving the personal touch. Happier patient, better onboarding process.

**Q What if a patient needs more time than their appt calls for?**

A Alter their appointment when you onboard them.

**Q Can I control the cancellation notice policy?**

A Yes. Of course.

**Q I have an appointment request form on my website already.**

A This is not a request form. Request forms don't work. Request forms anger some patients.

**Q Does it synchronize a couple times a day with my practice management software?**

A Nope. That would create a bad result. This is real time online scheduling. Real time creates a positive result.

**Q If someone in the office is booking an appointment and someone online wants the same day and time with the same provider, what happens?**

A It works just like another workstation. First one wins. The losing appointment is notified.

**Q Is this really going to ADD new patients to my schedule?**

A Yes. It will convert more new patients from whatever advertising you are currently doing. If you get any reasonable traffic to your website and social media properties, this will add new patients to your schedule.

**Q Can my website developer install it on my website?**

A Yes. It takes about 10 minutes per page to add the online scheduling widget. If they can't, you need a new website developer!

**Q If a patient schedules an appointment online, can I send them a link to complete their patient forms?**

A Yes. Absolutely. It happens automatically.

**Q If a patient schedules an appointment online, can it add the appointment to their personal schedule on their phone, tablet, or laptop?**

A Yes. They just click the "Add To Personal Schedule" link

**Q If I end up hating it, can I get rid of it?**

A Sure. But you won't get rid of it. You'll love it, just like the new patients who use it.

Once set up, installed, and maybe tweaked or customized, the platform really requires zero attention from anyone in the practice. As long as there is an internet connection between the platform and your practice management software, you and the team are on cruise control. If the internet connection is broken, the system is smart enough to alert and continue reconnections until they are established. You would think if dentists were having problems with it, you would have heard something by now. Quietly, over the past three years or so, thousands of dentists have been using, adapting, and benefitting from this new and exciting way to connect patients to their dental office.

Remember, I set out to solve a problem of unanswered phone calls from new patients. Yes, we reduced the unanswered calls, but we also discovered a really important new marketable attribute to brag about in our client advertising. Bragging about it is working out really well! Consumers are choosing dental practices partly BECAUSE of the convenience.

A high percentage of dental consumers are women. Women of all ages. They are the primary gatekeepers of the healthcare decisions. Women are busy. Women are working, taking care of their families, they have a marriage, and probably a list of another 40 things to do before the end of the day today. **WOMEN WANT TO COMPLETE TASKS.** I cannot say it any more succinctly than that.

But don't rely on my input. I am a guy. You (personally) may not want to use online scheduling, but asking why other people do (or would prefer to), is a perfectly

reasonable legitimate question to ask. We asked. Here are the results.

**Why do consumers prefer online scheduling? 1,800 responses break down like this:**

- 46.2 Easy & Convenient
- 23.3 Outside of Business Hours
- 13.3 Too Busy to Call
- 7.6 All Other Reasons
- 4.9 Attempted to Call
- 4.8 Expect Online Booking

The dental consumer market isn't demanding it yet, but it will eventually. Those who adapt early on, will receive the most benefit for the longest period of time.

**Here are some more numbers to ponder. Out of all of our client offices on the platform, including all providers on the platform, 63.7% OF ALL APPOINTMENTS ARE NEW PATIENTS.**

**Existing patients make up 36.3% of all appointments. I'd bet you would think it was the opposite. It's not. New patients love it!**



**Click to hear Mark's back story and his take on the evolution of online scheduling technology.**



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