

# How to Inspire New Movers to Become Regular Patients



Dentistry Today (May 2019) — Businesses are always on the hunt for new and innovative ways to effectively reach new clients, yet many organizations are completely missing out on arguably the most lucrative portion of the population—new movers. Residents who have just moved to town are actively seeking out new businesses to frequent, including grocery stores, restaurants, gyms, and dental offices.

Attracting new customers often can be quite challenging and one of the biggest obstacles a business can face, so it's crucial to capitalize on this target market and build long-term relationships. The key is to create a personalized offer that will inspire new movers to visit your dental practice and keep them coming back for more!

To build a sustainable client base, business owners first need to give their managers and employees the opportunity to spark relationships that last by getting customers in the door.

### Where Do You Begin?

Let's start with the initial attraction. Targeting new movers can be a tricky

endeavor. The first major obstacle is simply locating a new mover. Fortunately, that's where new mover marketing comes into play. **Our Town America** helps connect new residents with local businesses through custom welcome packages delivered right to their mailbox. These packages include a collection of one-time, practical, and enticing offers from local businesses.

While this paper method of appealing to new movers may seem old fashioned at first, studies have shown that new movers are more likely to utilize a physically mailed offer than one delivered electronically. Despite an increasingly electronic world, paper mailers have shown to be effective.

The key is to deliver a new mover marketing offer that inspires action. A simple 10% off coupon usually isn't compelling enough to pique a potential customer's interest. Ideally, local businesses will offer a free service or gift if possible, though that isn't always an option in dentistry.

Currently, some of the best new mover marketing offers available from dentists include a free exam or x-ray or a \$100 gift certificate for your first visit. Each of these offers will help draw in new customers and give them an added sense of value and appreciation on their first visit.

Some dentists even offer new patients a free t-shirt bearing their office's name and information on the back. This is particularly effective because not only do these new guests feel valued, but each time they wear that t-shirt, the practice gets free advertising. When it comes to crafting an appealing new customer offer or gift, it can pay to think outside the box and get creative.

Community involvement is also a terrific way to reach new customers. Many new movers will attend local community events to get a feel for their neighborhood. Hosting events, sponsoring a local sports team, or manning a booth at a festival can be an effective way to get your name out in front of new movers.

As you gather more and more happy customers, word of mouth advertising can also be a fantastic method of reaching new customers, including new residents. Much like a new mover welcome package, a friendly neighbor can be a great introduction to the community. Neighbors will recommend their favorite restaurants, veterinarians, and, yes, dentist offices to a neighbor who is just settling in. As the new mover has no other frame of reference, a neighborly piece of advice can be a powerful motivator.

While this method of marketing can certainly be effective, it is much harder to target. Many offices have seen success through a referral program. By offering a small discount or gift for both the old and new client, you are killing two birds with one stone. A referral program incentivizes the current resident to spread the word and encourages the new mover to give your office a try.

### First Impressions

New movers are a high-spending target who are actively seeking new dentists. Local practices can't afford to miss out on this segment of the population. That said, it's important to reach new residents before your competitors do. Once consumers have chosen a dentist, they typically will not transfer unless given a compelling reason, such as poor service.

This disinclination to switch dental service providers stems from a combination of brand loyalty, convenience, and a lack of time, energy, or desire to find a suitable alternative, though that's not to say that a new customer will never switch locations. When customers have a terrible first experience, they very well may make the effort to find a different dentist who provides better service. The newer the customers are, the weaker their ties to the business are and the more likely they are to leave.

It's no surprise that first impressions can be crucial to long-term success. Sometimes it only takes one bad experience to turn away a customer for good. If you want to see a long-term profit, it's important to think beyond the initial visit. Lasting relationships, built on a positive foundation, are the key to reaching more people in the community and becoming an established business.

Retention rates are important because it is typically far easier (and cheaper!) to keep a customer than it is to draw in a new client. Beyond a tantalizing welcome gift, top-notch customer service and a passion for client satisfaction will keep patients coming back.

New mover marketing can be a tricky endeavor, but it is one worth pursuing. Drawing in fresh patients will help keep your practice thriving for years to come, so now is the time to put in the work to grow your customer base. A few years down the road, you'll be glad you did!

Mr. Plummer is president, CEO, and CTO of **Our Town America**. A US Army veteran

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