

# CAMBRIDGE

## DENTAL PRACTICE CONSULTANTS



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## REACTIVATION

### MAILING LIST

**Create a mailing list** of patients who have not been in for at least twelve months.

Also include patients who have pending unscheduled treatment from the previous twelve months.

Go back five years.

Run your list against the National Change of Address (NCOA) database. The fee is minimal: [www.autozip.com](http://www.autozip.com)

**Note:** All hyperlinks in this PDF should be working. If you have any issues with any links, try copying the link and pasting into your browser's search bar.

### GIFT CARDS

Letters often go unread and postcards can get tossed but, gift cards tend to get held onto so, consider including a *plastic* gift card with a letter or use a postcard with a detachable (rip) gift card. Rip cards can be printed on normal paper stock or on high quality plastic (costs 3.5X more). Details below.

Many get a 10%-20% response rate without making any calls using a gift card. The dollar value of the gift card is up to you. I recommend \$50.00 - \$100.00.

### DISCOUNTS

Example from Delta Dental of how to submit a claim with a discount:

*"Fee discounts should be reflected in the total fee that is entered on the claim."*

**Example:** If your fee for a service is \$100 and you wish to give the patient a 20 percent discount, then \$80 becomes the fee that is actually charged and \$80 should be entered on the claim as the total fee.

By entering \$80 on the claim, you ensure that Delta Dental calculates its payment based on the fee actually charged, as required under the terms of your agreement with Delta Dental.

**Always notify Delta Dental of the actual fee charged.** This helps ensure that you don't contribute to higher costs that can potentially jeopardize patients' dental benefits plans."

## OPTION # 1 POSTCARDS

Postcards with perforated or "rip" gift cards attached are available from a variety of vendors including:

### 1. Mudlick Marketing

They will create a template, rip card and ship for around 15¢ a piece. See here:

<https://mudlickmail.com/direct-mail-marketing/direct-mail-products/rip-cards/>

You can also order high quality postcards with plastic "rip" gift cards for 52¢ a piece.

<https://mudlickmail.com/direct-mail-marketing/direct-mail-products/custom-gift-cards/>

### 2. Got Print

Around 10¢ a piece. You will need a local printer to create a template of your liking. See here:

<https://www.gotprint.com/products/rip-cards/order.html?cid=4260878>

Google "Dental Reactivation Postcards" and "Dental Recare Postcards" for design ideas. Look under the Google "Images" tab.

I know it sounds horrible but, consider **using a loud green neon color**. Many find a **green neon color** gets better results. Postcards should be large such as 5x7 or 6 x 9 so they stand out against smaller postcards. If you're going to print addresses on the postcards use uncoated stock

You can also ask vendors which dental reactivation postcards designs are often re-ordered as that would indicate what other practices are finding effective.

## OPTION # 2 LETTERS

Postcards are much easier to prepare but, if you want to send a letter (sample letter below) use nice office stationery, merge with your mailing list and send out following instructions below. Use “window” envelopes and include a plastic gift card. Sample gift cards:



I like the one on the left using **red** but, either way, the two samples have the following in common:

- Practice name (logo if you have one) in upper right.
- Dollar amount (left one has larger font which I like)
- The words “Gift Card” (left one has larger font which I like)

Plastic gift card vendors can be found by Google search. Check out [www.factorymart.com](http://www.factorymart.com) for gift cards as low as .20¢ per card. The quality won't be as good as higher priced ones but, they are just fine. Spend a little more if you like.

**Folding letters:** If you are doing a large mailing, check to see if there is a letter folding service at a local office supply store such as Staples or Office Depot.

**Mail permit:** If you do not want to send first class you can get a mail permit which cuts costs by about 50% over first class but, you will spend additional time preparing the mailing.

**Letter cost:** Gift card, postage (with permit) and folding should be around .60¢ per piece.

**Stationary:** “Seasonal” stationary is a nice touch. If possible, use “window” envelopes.



**Reactivation letter:** *“You have not been in to see us for some time for your continuing care appointment and you are also due for an oral cancer screening.*

*Please call Dr. \_\_\_\_\_’s office at 555-1212 to discuss.”*

You can use “preventative care” if you prefer but, I do not recommend “cleaning” or “recall” or “re-care” as many find those words decrease the perceived value of the appointment as a preventive measure to reduce tooth decay and periodontal disease.

Some may find the use of the word “cancer” uncomfortable, but it is a trigger word. A trigger word can cause a person to take action. The purpose is not to be “manipulative” but, to get the patient in for what they need for their oral and overall health.

Adjust your letter as you see fit but, keep it concise and communicate **honest urgency**.

Letters should be personally signed by the doctor or one of the staff. Use nice office or seasonal stationery.

## USE IT OR LOSE IT

After Labor Day insurance patients with outstanding treatment or unused benefits should be sent an “Use It or Lose It” postcard or letter.

### **Do not include a Gift Card.**

Depending on the practice, you will want to do up to three “Use It or Lose It” mailings between Labor Day and early December. **This requires advanced planning.**

Google “Dental Use It or Lose It Postcard” for design ideas. Look under the Google “Images” tab.

I know it sounds horrible but, for postcards, consider **using a loud green neon color**. Many find a **green neon color** gets better results. Postcards should be 5x7 or 6 x 9 so they stand out against smaller postcards. If you’re going to print addresses on the postcards use uncoated stock.

You can also do a “Use It or Lose It” letter but, I do not recommend.

**Note:** Do your usual reactivation letter or postcard for the rest of your list.

## CALLING PATIENTS

**Patient list:** Go through your inactive patient files breaking them down into the following categories:

- a. Patients who have not been seen within the last year but, have unscheduled treatment.
- b. Patients who have not been in for 12 to 18 months.
- c. Patients who have not been in for 18 to 24 months.
- d. Patients who have not been in for over 24 months.

Start with group “a” and “b” shortly after your mailing goes out.

**Daily stats:** Reactivation calls should be spread out over the course of each day. That way calls don’t get backlogged and making calls does not become burdensome. This takes discipline so, it is vital that the employee doing the calls report the following stats daily:

# of calls made daily  
Patient’s last name who schedule

Appointment date

Result: Arrived, Cancelled or No Showed

**Reactivation script:** The script below need not be memorized. Use it as an outline. Practice with the employee(s) assigned who will do reactivation calls so they can do it naturally and comfortably. They need to “make it their own”. Do this by having a staff member or the dentist play the role of the patient. Do an audio recording of the role playing if you like. Listening to oneself is a highly effective learning tool.

**Chart review:** Quickly review the patient’s chart before calling. You want to know when and what the last treatment was so that when you call you can communicate something such as, “Dr. Jones is concerned about your tooth on the lower left and you don't want it become a more expensive issue down the road”.

**Tip:** The words “You” and “Your” help make it personal.

Also, when reviewing the patient’s chart, see if the patient has been on vacation, attended a wedding, etc. It’s just good manners to ask about such things without taking up too much of the patient’s time or being intrusive but, keep it real and natural.

**Script:**

*Hello Mr. Smith, this is \_\_\_\_\_ from Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ office. How are you?*

*Weren't you planning a trip to Paris the last time we spoke?*

*The dentist just reviewed your chart and he/she noticed that you haven't been in since \_\_\_\_\_. He/she asked me to call you as you are overdue for your oral cancer screening and periodontal evaluation.*

*When is the best time to schedule? I have 11am Tuesday or Thursday at 3pm.*

**Important:** “Cancer” is a trigger word. Trigger words cause patients to act.

**Schedule as soon as possible:** Do not ask when they can come in. Instead ALWAYS offer two specific time slots as close to the present date as possible. The odds increase the patient will cancel or no show the further out you schedule and then you will be back to calling that patient again.

**Do not multi task** when speaking to any patient. It is bad manners. Give all patients your full, undivided attention whether in person or on the phone. Without patients there is not a practice. Treat them as VIPs.

**Patients who will not schedule:** Two common reasons patients won’t schedule are:

1. The patient does not understand the value. Solution: Educate them.

2. The patient had a negative experience in the office. Solution: Ask. Let the patient tell you about it. Handle accordingly

If the patient still won't schedule, the dentist can call the patient. Sometimes just the fact of the dentist calling will get a patient to schedule. If not, the dentist will be wise to check the above two points.