FOUR STRATEGIES

To allow you more time with patients

Hearing care professionals spend years studying the science surrounding how people hear,

the causes of hearing loss, how it can be treated and how it can be prevented. They are masters of their incredibly specialized domain.

Today, across the United States, we have over 10 thousand private practices where the nearly 45 million individuals who suffer from hearing loss are able to seek treatment.

Understanding these facts and recognizing the disproportionate number of professionals to those that need treatment begs a question the industry needs to address: How do we improve business processes so hearing care professionals are able to spend more time with patients?

Those outside the hearing care industry may be surprised to learn how much time is spent on the business end of maintaining a private practice. Far too often the management aspects take center stage and the time left to spend with patients is cut short.

How do we remedy this dire situation that is only getting worse?

The following 4 part eBook examines the different business aspects that are required to run a private practice. We'll explore different solutions to help automate workflows, streamline processes, eliminate double entry and more. All the solutions we examine share one thing in common - they are designed to help hearing care professionals spend more time with patients.

Part 1: Streamline accounts receivable

Properly managing accounts receivable (AR) can be make-or-break for many small to medium sized businesses. Entire careers are devoted to AR. Large companies have entire teams and departments dedicated to the function. Optimizing accounts receivable is critical. Unfortunately it can also be incredibly time consuming. Especially when resources are scarce and systems aren't synchronized. It's not surprising that 58% of owners surveyed reported they found bookkeeping to be the most draining aspect of running their business.

One of the first steps a practice can take to free up more time for patients is to synchronize their practice management software with their accounting software. The benefits of this integration will be seen immediately - sales data is entered once rather than multiple times, eliminating time consuming double entry. Records synchronize automatically, eliminating the risk of human error.

The Sycle QuickBooks Sync tool allows you to easily streamline your AR. Sales, exchanges, returns and payments are entered into Sycle, allowing clinics to capture powerful data about their business. These transactions are transferred to QuickBooks using a simple, accurate and time saving synchronization tool.

With Sycle QuickBooks Sync your patients are synced as QuickBooks customers. Patients will only appear in the QuickBooks customer list as a result of the sync process for a purchase in Sycle. In other words, QuickBooks will not necessarily contain a complete list of all Sycle patients – only those who have had a new or updated purchase since you began syncing with QuickBooks. When a Purchase Summary is synced, the associated patient is either added to QuickBooks (along with their Sycle ID number) if they do not yet exist or updated in QuickBooks if they already exist.

Each item on a Purchase Summary in Sycle has its own transaction date. When these items are synced to QuickBooks they are organized based on date. Purchases are synced to QuickBooks as invoices. Returns are synced to QuickBooks as credit memos.

The Sycle QuickBooks Sync tool has quickly become one of Sycle's most widely adopted integrations and is used by thousands of practices across the United States.

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Part 2: Centralize critical business & patient data in a secure, private cloud environment

The moment you find yourself running more than one database is the moment you will begin to find inaccuracies in your data. That's why, as previously mentioned, it's critical to synchronize your practice management software with your accounting software. It is equally critical to ensure all of your business and patient data is centralized within your practice management software as well.

As any small business owner will tell you, the work doesn't stop when the clock strikes five. Owners and employees require access to accurate, up-to-date, business information at any given time. Single location practices and multiple location practices both reap the benefits of implementing a secure, private, cloud-based practice management solution - one that allows users with secure passwords and privileges access to it remotely.

Sycle's private cloud-based practice management software provides several tools for centralizing all critical business and patient data.

Sycle NOAH Sync
By integrating practice management software with NOAH, Sycle helps eliminate one of the most time consuming areas of double entry providers face today. This best-in-class integration is the only one certified by HIMSA and is utilized by single-clinic and multi-clinic practices across the country.

Practices comprised of several offices also face challenges when patients float between locations and NOAH data isn't readily available. Sycle's NOAH synchronization tool solves this problem by storing all NOAH records and attaching them to the patient's file. This means providers are able to see the patient's most up to date NOAH information from any computer with an internet connection.

eDocs
Similarly, integrating a paperless document storage solution with your practice management system ensures historical records, and any other documentation for that matter, are easily accessible from any computer or office location.

Sycle eDocs allows user to scan and save all their paper documents so they are centralized digitally and organized clearly within the patient records.

Total Equipment inventory
Hours can be lost tracking demos, loaners, repairs and other equipment. Bringing your inventory management online saves time and money by allowing total visibility into which devices and equipment are located where, when they are past due or perhaps ready for delivery. Sycle's Total Inventory module allows for the complete tracking of all your in-stock equipment. If it has a serial number, it can be tracked.
These are just a few examples of business-critical processes that, when centralized and integrated into your practice management software, can save providers hours and allow them more time to spend with patients.

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Part 3: Automate your marketing efforts

Your competition is marketing to your patients. This is a fact I tell every practice owner I meet with. I say this not to discourage them but to motivate them to implement an easy, cost effective, automated marketing program in their practice; one that will allow them to continue seeing patients and running the business as usual without having to spend hours pulling mailing lists, managing mail merges and fussing over advertising creative. And there are many solutions available to help.

The key to any successful marketing program is consistency. And the best way to ensure consistency is to automate. Consider all the different possible appointment outcomes that could result after a patient books an appointment and let's examine some examples.

The patient could:

1. *cancel their appointment.*
2. *not show up for their appointment.*
3. *test for hearing loss and not purchase a device.*
4. *test for hearing loss and purchase a device .*

All four of these examples require a practice to initiate some form of follow-up communication with the patient.

The first two are straightforward - the practice needs to contact that patient and get them booked for a new appointment.

The tested and not sold patient requires something different. Here, the practice may want to reach out and further explain the benefits of treating their hearing loss and encourage them to come back in for a product trial.

Finally, the patient who did purchase a device, will most certainly need to be sent a thank you note to show appreciation for their business.

With these four scenarios we are presented with four opportunities to communicate or market the practice to these patients. Managing this type of patient care communication by hand can be incredibly difficult and time consuming. However automating it is simple. Sycle Patient Care Communications allows users to build custom patient letters that are generated and sent automatically - triggered by the data a user enters in the software when completing the appointment.

And these are just a few examples of the automation Sycle allows. Others include birthday letters, warranty expiration notices, annual hearing checkup letters and more.

Building on the importance of consistency there is yet another marketing tactic clinics can implement in minutes that will benefit the practice year round - a quarterly patient newsletter program. Your current customers are your most valuable asset. Providing them with rich, informative, content on a regular basis is the best way to ensure they think of your practice when it comes to service a repair or upgrade equipment.

Newsletters, through Sycle Marketing Group, provide you a channel to deliver this educational content as well as a way to promote products and services. Getting the entire year's program in line requires nothing more than a 20 minute phone call with a Sycle representative. Simply select your design template and your articles and Sycle will take care of the rest - customizing each newsletter to your practice's brand.

For more information on how a simple, customized newsletter program can grow your practice while providing you more time with patients read Quarterly Newsletters: Easy, Effective Marketing by content marketing professional Matty Byloos.

Automating patient retention mail and newsletters are two simple ways to ensure you're consistently communicating with your patients year round without sacrificing the valuable time that's needed to treat them in your practice.

Part 4: Process insurance electronically

As we've acknowledged in this series, all too often hearing care professionals, despite their best efforts, end up sacrificing precious time they would like to spend with patients to take care of more business management related tasks. One of the areas where we see this problem most prevalently is within insurance billing and collections.

Similar to accounts receivable, insurance billing is an industry and profession all on its own. The insurance industry landscape is always changing as are the rules and requirements to file claims so reimbursements are timely.

One of the greatest advancements in this process in recent decades has been the advent of electronic insurance billing. Filing claims electronically is proven to prevent errors, eliminate double entry, speed up reimbursement and save valuable time. So how exactly does it work? Let's look at Sycle's eClaims solution as an example:

During the lifecycle of a patient's appointment a lot of data can be collected and entered into their patient summary and appointment summary. Some of this data is related to the insurance, such as the primary carrier, secondary carrier, CPT codes, diagnosis codes and more.

When it comes time to bill insurance for the services you provided you are able to create a HCFA right from within Sycle. When you do, all the insurance information from that patient's record and appointment automatically populate to the HCFA.

Once the form is complete, Sycle checks it to ensure all the required information is included. If not, it will highlight the areas that need attention. From there, you simply click submit. Sycle works with a clearinghouse to process claims. This clearinghouse also checks the form for accuracy.

You can choose to submit claims individually or in batches. And everything is tracked in easy to read billing and HCFA status reports.

And just like that, the once laborious, time consuming process of filing insurance and chasing claims for reimbursement is simplified. Not only do you benefit from the time savings, but your patients benefit from having the claims processed correctly the first time. By integrating this digital process into your practice management solution you are able to streamline yet another business management process, freeing you up to do more of what you do best - help people suffering from hearing loss.

In this series we've examined four business strategies that can be implemented to help save time. From accounts receivable to marketing and insurance, automating and digitizing practice management is helping hearing care professionals focus more of their attention on providing patients with the treatment they need.

For more information about business automation and how Sycle can help, contact us at:
info@sycle.net
or click here.

Filing claims electronically is proven to prevent errors, eliminate double entry, speed up reimbursement, and save valuable time.