THE STATE OF SAME STORE GROWTH IN 2025

CARESTACK

Growth in dentistry is not anymore about amassing a bunch of dental practices and selling the larger enterprise at a higher valuation.

Macroeconomic conditions related to political & economic fluctuations have had its effect on consumer spending, staffing availability and cost increases due to inflationary pressures. These pressures are leading to difficulties in growing profitability and enterprise value.

MARGIN COMPRESSION

Due to rising personnel costs, decreased reimbursement from insurance companies and high employee turnover, dental practices of all sizes are experiencing margin compression.

LABOR SHORTAGE

An aging workforce coupled with a decline in enrollment in degreed dental programs has led to a critical staffing crisis.

RISING COST OF CAPITAL

With interest rates going up, growth focused practices have been challenged with the shrinkage in the lending capital availability for inorganic growth. In the face of a debt constrained capital environment, EBITDA multiples have seen significant compression from the past.

The era of growing enterprise value through buying low and selling high is over. In order to grow enterprise value, practices have to drive consistent same-store earnings growth and create meaningful equity value beyond just the arbitrage between buying and selling.

As ambitious dental practices refocus on same-store growth, executing on initiatives that align marketing, sales and operations is of utmost importance.

The bottom line? Operational excellence through continuous business optimization is the name of the game.

Authors

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CEO, Polaris Healthcare Partners

Founder & CEO of Polaris Healthcare Partners, a healthcare consulting firm that specializes in providing strategic consulting and growth capital sourcing services to DSO's and multi-site groups.

Emily Ryba
CEO, OS Dental

Founder and CEO of OS Dental, one of the leading business optimization platforms used by leading multi-site dental enterprises. Previously Emily served as VP Finance at Select Dental Management, a 50+ office DSO based out of Boston.

Dan Hall
VP of Sales, CareStack

With nearly two decades of experience in the dental software industry, Dan specializes in helping dental practices optimize workflows and enhance patient care through innovative technology.

About the study

The study analyzes operational data from 123 practices and involves interviews with 137 business owners, operational leaders and key staff members. The selected practices ranges from independent practices to specialty practices to practices belonging to emerging groups and PE backed DSOs.

1. GROWTH & RETENTION

What strategies do top performing practices adopt to consistently gain new patients and retain existing ones?
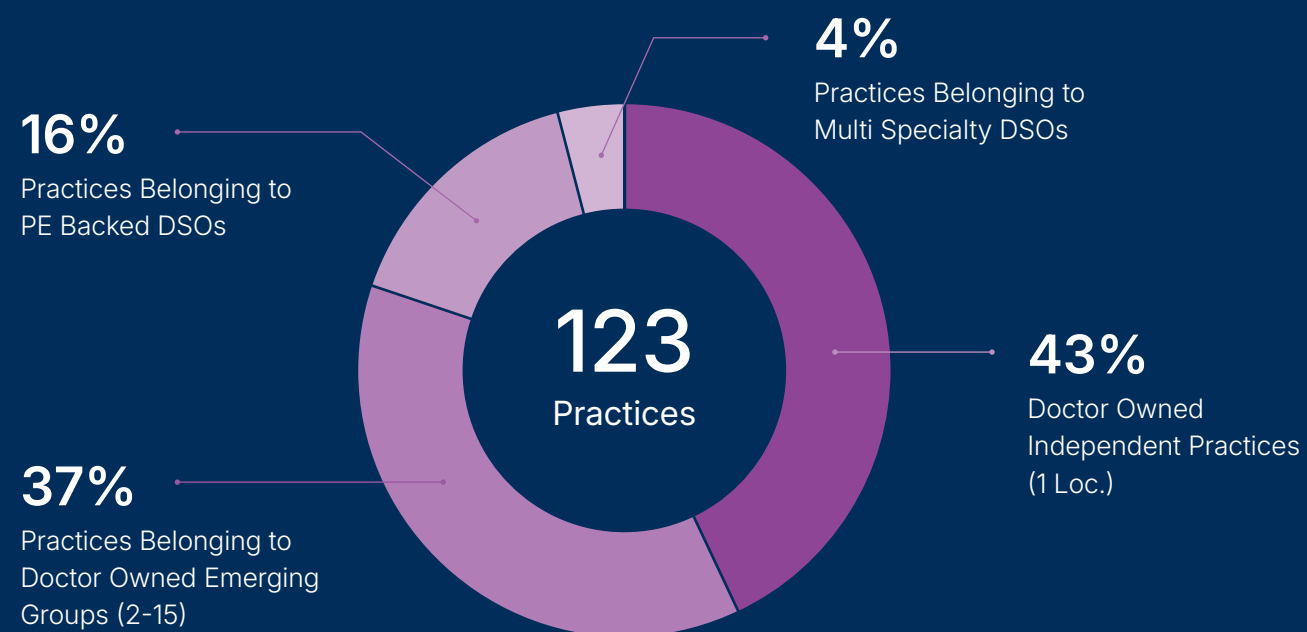
2. REIMBURSEMENTS & COLLECTIONS

How do top performing practices gain efficiency and profitability through robust Revenue Cycle Management strategies?
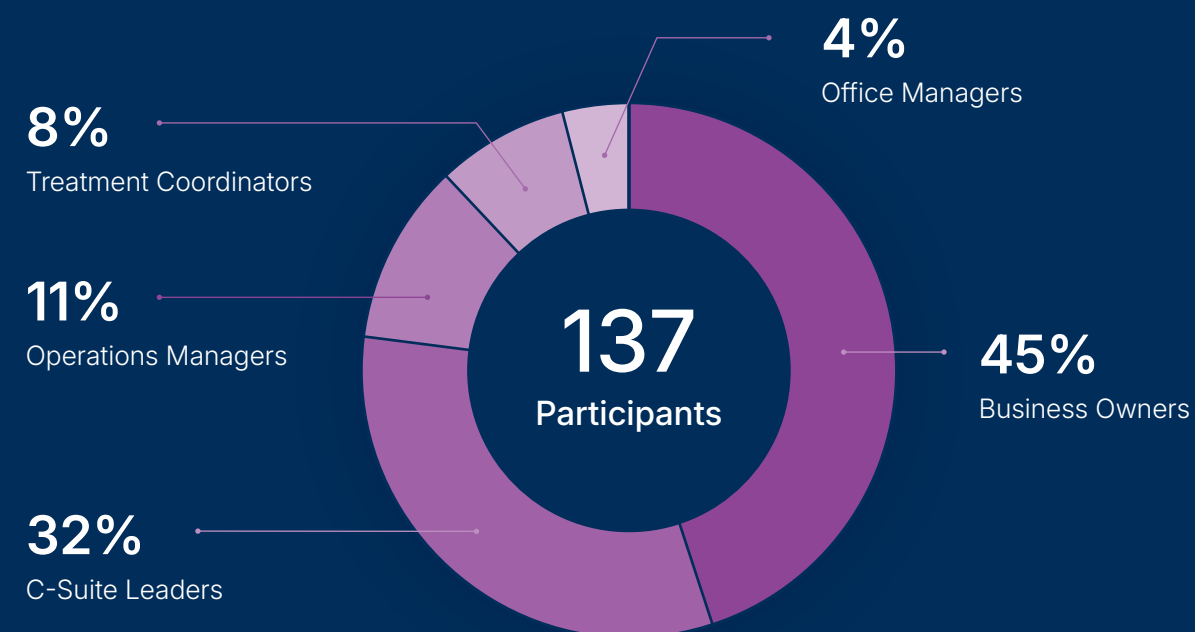
3. TECHNOLOGY LED OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

How do top performing practices leverage technology, data and automation to reduce the overheads per site and boost profitability?

Practice Composition

4%
Practices Belonging to Multi Specialty DSOs

16%
Practices Belonging to PE Backed DSOs

123
Practices

43%
Doctor Owned Independent Practices (1 Loc.)

37%
Practices Belonging to Doctor Owned Emerging Groups (2-15)

Survey Participants

4%
Office Managers

8%
Treatment Coordinators

11%
Operations Managers

137
Participants

45%
Business Owners

32%
C-Suite Leaders

The study involves inputs from leading key opinion leaders, dental entrepreneurs and operators.

Scott Kalniz
Chief Dental Officer, Beam Dental

Founder & Former CEO of Elite Dental Partners, a 100+ location DSO based out of Ohio. He has also served, and currently serves, as a Director on the board of several PE backed dental enterprises.

Katie Post
Owner of North West Dental Group

CEO of Northwest Dental Group, a fast-growing dental service organization based in Rochester, MN. She's a member of the CEO mastermind group at the Scheduling Institute, C12 and Spear Study Club.

Maria Fuertes
VP - Revenue Cycle Management, CareRevenue

Practice Operations leader with a deep expertise in dental RCM and currently serving as the Vice President of Revenue Cycle Operations at CareStack, overseeing end to end RCM services.

Dr. Tarun Aggarwal, DDS
Owner, 3D Dentists

Founder of 3D Dentists, a nationally recognized dental education platform based in Raleigh, NC that focuses on helping dentists integrate digital technology, clinical excellence, and business success.

Laura Maly
Founder & CEO, Wonderist Agency

Co-founder of The Wonderist Agency - one of the leading full services marketing agency in the country serving multi-site dental organizations with solutions to drive up patient growth and retention.

Key Differentiators

DIFFERENTIATOR 1

By focusing on strategic data driven marketing and stellar online reputation, top performers gain a steady flow of new patients.

By leveraging PMS & market research data to target the right patient profile and position the brand to meet the patient preferences, top performing practices demonstrated a net new patient growth of 25%, which is quite higher than the industry average.

DIFFERENTIATOR 2

By deeply engaging with staff members and following a patient centered care model, top performers not only retain but delight patients.

Top performing practices gained a 96% patient-retention rate, versus 57% in the average practice, and contained the no-show rates to 4% compared to industry averages of 8%.

DIFFERENTIATOR 3

Top performers sell more high value treatments by measuring conversion data and optimizing operations with staff training and automation.

By following a team based sales approach coupled with effective adoption of technology to reduce the administrative burden at the front office, top performing practices have been able to generate conversion rates of 70% on high value cases.

DIFFERENTIATOR 4

By standardizing and automating key revenue cycle management processes, top performers have maximized reimbursements & collections.

By optimizing revenue cycle efficiency through standardization and automation, top performing practices have reduced the Days Sales Outstanding (DSO) to under 25 days compared to an industry average of 35 days.

DIFFERENTIATOR 5

By having a well integrated tech stack coupled with adoption of AI & automation, top performers have deeply improved operational efficiency.

Top performing practices have saved over $7,600 / year in direct costs and over above 110 hours of staff time by simplifying the technology stack and implementing smart automations in daily operational workflows.

DIFFERENTIATOR 1

Not all patients are the same. It's important to focus on the right patients needed to grow.

DATA DRIVEN MARKETING

By leveraging data and analytics to precisely target their audience and craft a unique selling proposition, top performing practices consistently gain a steady flow of new "right-fit" patients.

STELLAR ONLINE REPUTATION

By focusing on a tailored approach to manage online reviews, patient feedback and online reputation, top performing practices create the social proof required to influence potential patients' decision to choose the provider.

> What sets your practice apart?
>
> Your answer shapes how patients see you and why they will choose you than the dentist down the street.
>
> After having worked with thousands of practices, what we did consistently find was that the leaders of successful practices have relentlessly focused on creating a distinct brand that focuses on getting better and not just bigger.
>
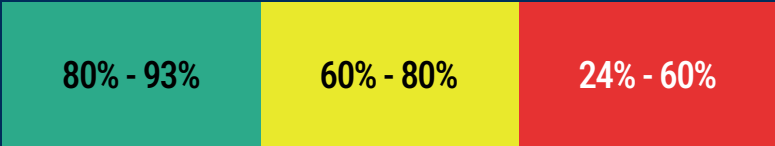> Your brand is your biggest competitive advantage.
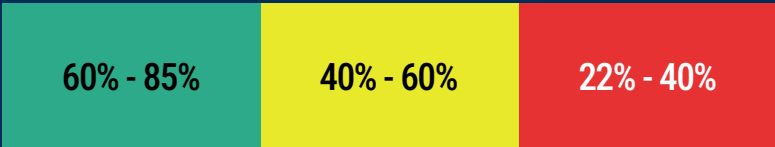
LAURA MALY
Founder & CEO, Wonderist Agency
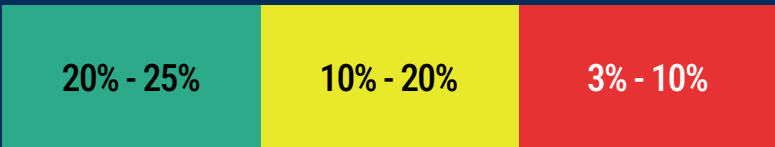
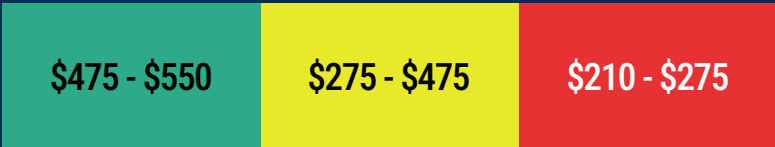**BENCHMARKED KPI DATA**

New Patient Growth

Call Answer Rate

80% - 93%	60% - 80%	24% - 60%

Call Conversion Rate (Booked Appointment %)

60% - 85%	40% - 60%	22% - 40%

Net New Patient Growth (YoY Growth %)

20% - 25%	10% - 20%	3% - 10%

Avg. Production Per New Patient

$475 - $550	$275 - $475	$210 - $275

- Top 10% Performers
- Average Performers
- Bottom 10% Performers

By combining PMS & market research data, top performers follow a personalized approach to attract more new "right-fit" patients.

PATIENT DATA

By combining internal (PMS) and external (market research) data sources around the geographic, demographic and profitability aspect, top performing practices identify and profile the patient segments that are relevant to the growth of the practice.

BRAND POSITIONING

High performing brands have demonstrated differentiation by catering to the priorities, preferences and personality of their target patient segments.

CAMPAIGN EXECUTION

Top performing practices have implemented an omni channel experience to personalize every aspect of the patient journey and monitor the outcomes continuously.
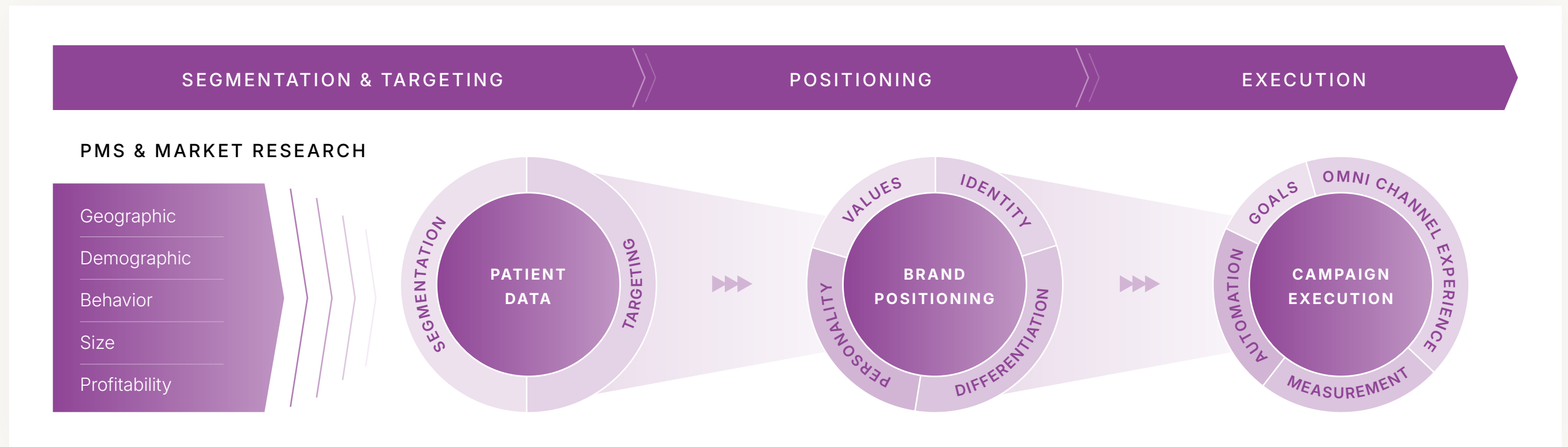
Top performers follow a tailored approach to managing online reviews, patient feedback and social media presence.

4.6+ ★★★★⯪

Top performing practices have a minimum of 4.6 scores in their Google ratings to attract patients.

REVIEW QUANTITY

The number of reviews for a practice signals popularity and reliability. Prospective patients often skim ratings first; if they see only a handful of comments, they worry the score is "unproven." Additionally for SEO, Google's local algorithm also treats review volume as a relevance and prominence signal.

REVIEW RECENCY

For patients, fresh feedback reassures that the quality of care they're reading about reflects the latest experience at the office, including staff changes, new clinicians, or remodeled operatories. High performing practice operators understand this, and install a well-oiled process to constantly collect reviews from patients before they step out of the practice.

ENGAGEMENT RATE

When a practice answers reviews, it demonstrates empathy, accountability, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Patients are 88% more likely to choose a practice that replies to every review, versus only 47% for one that never responds.

150+
Total Number of Reviews

15-35
New Reviews per Month

98%+
Engagement Rate

Maintaining relationships with existing patients is just as crucial as attracting new patients.

PATIENT CENTERED CARE

By fostering open communication, empathy, and shared decision making, top performing practices personalize the patient experience which then leads to improved patient loyalty and retention.

ALIGNED & ENGAGED EMPLOYEES

By supporting employees with rewards & recognition programs and technology investments to reduce administrative burden, top performing practices make the staff vested in delivering outstanding patient experiences.

> "
>
> When you think about 'patient experience', you may automatically go to the superficial: being nice to patients.
>
> 'Patient experience' is the totality of the experience. The clinical, operational and cultural – everything that happens to, about, and with the patient.
>
> Patient experience is not a nicety anymore. In the fiercely competitive healthcare marketplace, It's a necessity.
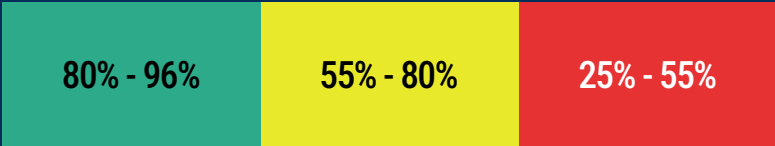
KATIE POST
Owner of North West Dental Group

BENCHMARKED KPI DATA

Patient Retention

Avg. Patient Retention Rate

80% - 96%	55% - 80%	25% - 55%

Active Patient Growth (YoY %)

15% - 20%	6% - 15%	2% - 6%

Avg. Reappointment Rate

85% - 90%	60% - 85%	45% - 60%
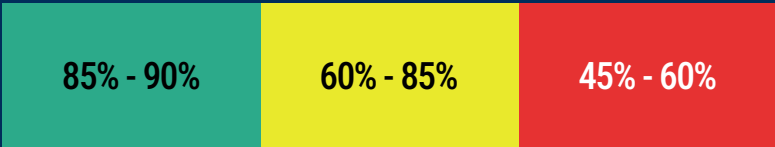
Avg. Broken Appointment Rate

3% - 6%	6% - 15%	15% - 30%
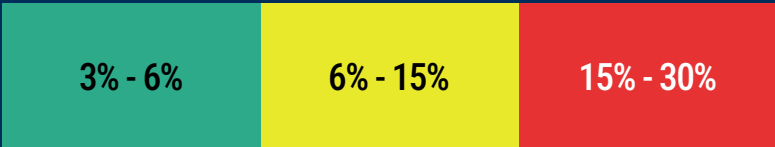
- Top 10% Performers
- Average Performers
- Bottom 10% Performers

Top performers combine clinical expertise with a personalized touch to ensure that patients feel heard, understood & valued.

The top performing practices excel in viewing the practice workflow from the patient's perspective and have demonstrated success in humanizing the process, constantly ensuring that they address the fears, priorities and preferences of their patients. This builds confidence, trust and loyalty in patients, creating better clinical outcomes by bringing them back to the office as strong brand advocates.

Revenue Growth	83%
Patient Loyalty	88%
Organization Reputation	3.4x
Health Outcomes	2.2x
Trust	BASE

Note: **The improvement is compared against bottom performers.

The 5 pillars of Patient Centered Care demonstrated by top performing practices.

CARING
Genuinely care for the patient as a person and be sensitive to their needs.

LISTENING
Hear the concerns of the patients and include them in the decisions related to care.
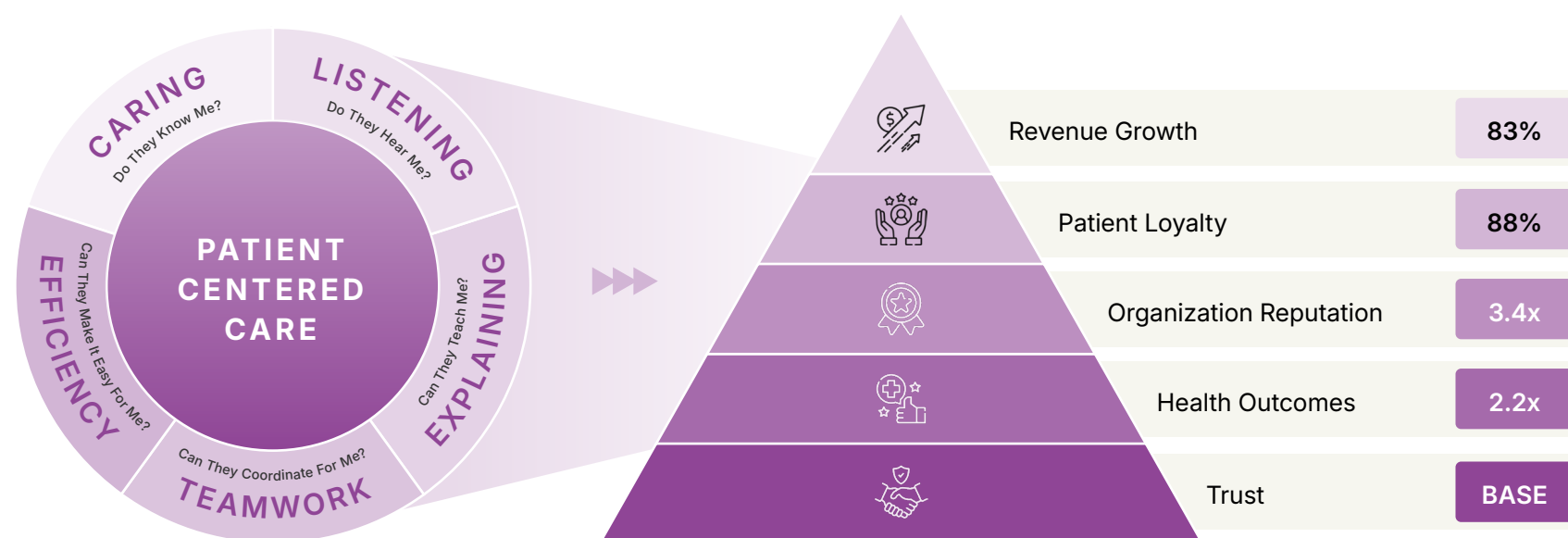
EXPLAINING
Speak in a simple language, focusing on health, finances and alternatives.

TEAMWORK
Eliminate communication gaps between teams during entire patient journey.

EFFICIENCY
Make it easy for the patients to say yes to the treatment and complete it.

In top performing practices, growth, empowerment and well-being of the staff is considered a primary driver of organizational success.

CONNECTION TO WORK

In high-performing practices, team members are regularly exposed to patient feedback, treatment success stories, and clear communication on how their roles contribute to the overall patient experience.
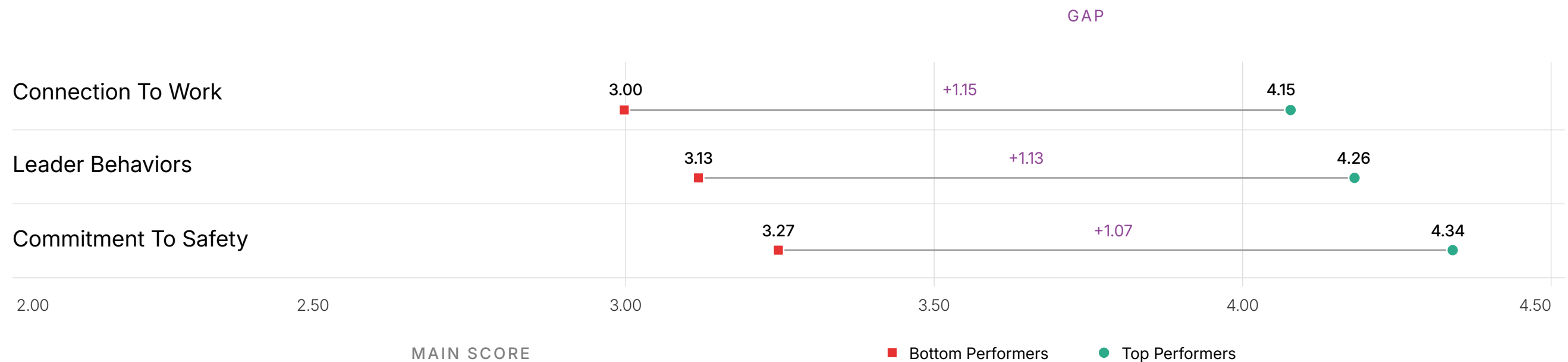
LEADER BEHAVIORS

In top-performing practices, leaders invest in regular one-on-ones, recognize contributions, and provide clear developmental pathways to create an environment where team members feel valued and motivated.

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

High performing practices that foster both physical and emotional safety see stronger teamwork, fewer mistakes, better patient outcomes and a 30% reduction in staff turnover.

Top 3 items with the largest gap between top and bottom performers

GAP

Connection To Work	3.00 +1.15	4.15
Leader Behaviors	3.13 +1.13	4.26
Commitment To Safety	3.27 +1.07	4.34

2.00   2.50   3.00   3.50   4.00   4.50

MAIN SCORE

■ Bottom Performers   ● Top Performers

DIFFERENTIATOR 3

Selling high value treatments involves a patient centric approach focused on building relationships.

TEAM BASED SELLING

High performing practices have high performing clinicians, treatment coordinators and front office staff selling in unison to attract and close high value cases. The teams are supported adequately with automation to reduce the administrative burden and gain more time to focus on building relationships.

PHONE CONVERSIONS

By integrating technology to monitor, measure and optimize the performance of staff numbers handling phone calls, top performing practices demonstrate a higher closing % on converting incoming inquiries into booked appointments.

"

High-performing practices aren't built on luck—they're built on high-performing teams. That means great clinicians supported by a great team.

If you want to grow consistently, you need more than just good dentistry. You need a team that knows how to attract, present, and close high-value cases—together.

Success at scale always comes back to team performance. Dentistry is no different.

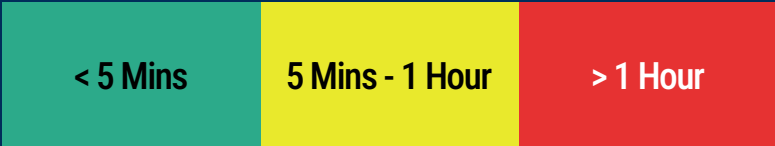**DR. TARUN AGGARWAL**
Owner of 3D Dentists

BENCHMARKED KPI DATA

Specialty Growth

High Quality Lead Cost ($650+ Credit Score)

$75 - $100	$100 - $300	$300 +

Speed To Lead

< 5 Mins	5 Mins - 1 Hour	> 1 Hour

Qualified Financing Rate

80% - 85%	55% - 80%	30% - 55%
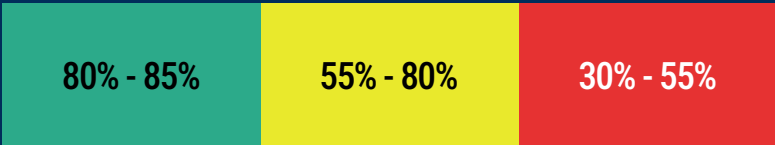
Case Closing % (Booked Case)

60% - 80%	40% - 60%	< 40%
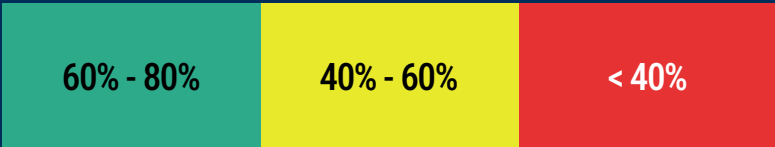
- Top 10% Performers
- Average Performers
- Bottom 10% Performers

High performing practices have well trained TCO's and front office staff playing an active role in attracting and closing high value cases.

SALES TRAINING FOR TCO'S & FRONT OFFICE

In high performing practices, TCOs and front office staff are coached on communication protocols to build trust, overcome objections, and guide patients through emotionally and financially significant decisions.
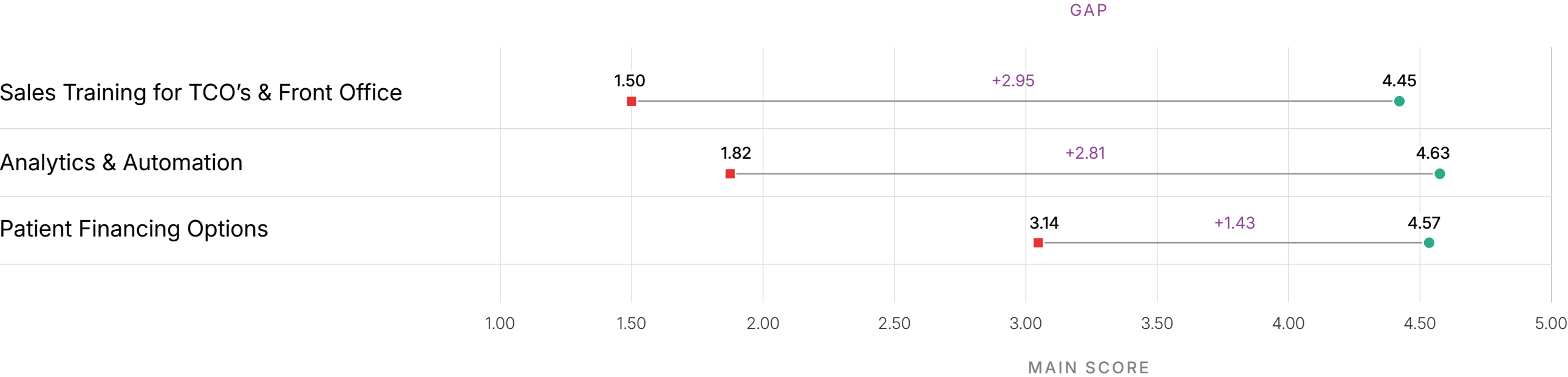
ANALYTICS & AUTOMATION

Using analytics, front office teams and TCOs at top performing practices identify patterns in case acceptance, patient objections, reactivations and use the insights to ensure no opportunity slips through the crack through effective omni channel engagement.

PATIENT FINANCING OPTIONS

Top performing practices empower TCOs and front office teams to not just offer third party financing, but to frame it in a patient-centered, stigma-free way that helps patients feel supported, increasing their trust and case acceptance.

Top 3 items with the largest gap between top and bottom performers

GAP

Sales Training for TCO's & Front Office	1.50 +2.95	4.45
Analytics & Automation	1.82 +2.81	4.63
Patient Financing Options	3.14 +1.43	4.57

1.00 1.50 2.00 2.50 3.00 3.50 4.00 4.50 5.00

MAIN SCORE

Top performing practices have a well-oiled front office system to convert more calls into appointments.

In an industry where trust and comfort are paramount, investing in stellar phone communication and technology has enabled top performing practices to see consistent growth.

INTEGRATED TELEPHONY

High performing practices understand that the front desk is the most critical touchpoint for new patient acquisition and have integrated telephony solutions to personalize customer service, helping them with up to 45% more conversion than average performers.

AI LED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

AI-enabled systems at top performing offices analyze every inbound and outbound call, measuring conversion metrics, patient sentiment, missed opportunity flags, and agent response quality. Such AI led call analysis results in improving new patient conversion rates.

CALL COACHING & OPTIMIZATION

Using AI-powered call scoring of every phone call, elite dental practices invest consistently in front office call coaching programs that focus on tone, scripting, objection handling, and conversion psychology.

Avg. Hold Time

8 - 15 Mins

Avg. Handle Time

5 - 9 Mins

Call Answer Rate

80% - 93%

Call Conversion Rate

60% - 85%

Hours of Operation

24/7 Availability

DIFFERENTIATOR 4

Revenue cycle management efficiency is the backbone of practice growth & financial success.

REVENUE CYCLE EFFICIENCY

Top performing practices continuously optimize revenue cycle performance with automations and constant monitoring of data to reduce the DSO (days sales outstanding), increase OTC (over the counter collections) and decrease the labor costs.

PATIENT COLLECTION AUTOMATION

By removing the payment obstacles through flexible & convenient payment options, personalized payment plans, and collection automation workflows, top performing practices save staff time and reduce cost to collect.

> I think what threatens the existence of dental practices is not whether they have enough patients but rather cash flow problems.
>
> And a lot of times those cash flow problems come from poor revenue cycle management workflows.
>
> As much as net revenue is important, you also need to be mindful of your cost to collect in order to determine the overall effectiveness of your revenue cycle.

MARIA FUERTES
VP of RCM, CareRevenue

BENCHMARKED KPI DATA

Reimbursements & Collections

Days Sales Outstanding

20 - 25 Days	25 - 40 Days	40 - 60 Days

Insurance Clean Claims Rate

92% - 98%	80% - 92%	< 80%
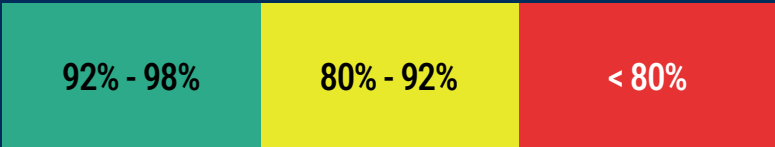
Over The Counter Collection Rate

> 95%	70% - 95%	< 70%

RCM Overhead Costs (% of Revenue)

< 4%	4% - 8%	8% - 12%

Top 10% Performers
Average Performers
Bottom 10% Performers

By leveraging data and automation to improve revenue cycle efficiency, top performers maximize reimbursements and collections.

Top performing practices have streamlined revenue cycle management to effectively manage an expanding number of practices without the need to hire extra staff members.

AUTOMATED VERIFICATION

High performing practices automate the insurance verification process with tools that estimate the coverage before the patient arrives, flag policy issues in advance, and generate accurate out-of-pocket estimates, helping to reduce claim denials by up to 30%.

AUTOMATED RECONCILIATION & POSTING

Top performing practices use automation to match incoming bank payments with ERA's and claims data, followed by automatically posting the reconciled information into the PMS. The automation eliminates posting errors and brings down manual labor costs by 75%.

CARD ON FILE AUTOMATION

By keeping the cards on file, top performing practices are able to see 98% of balances collected within 14 days of claim closure, compared to industry averages of 52% in practices following a manual patient billing process.

62% - 70%
less time spent verifying insurance coverage than bottom performers

65% - 77%
less time spent on insurance posting compared to bottom performers

65% - 85%
less time spent on patient billing compared to bottom performers

By unifying patient billing, automating collection workflows and providing flexible payment options, top performers eliminate patient AR.

Top performing practices using unified billing with automated collection workflows and flexible payment plans have experienced a 43% reduction in patient AR days, 26% increase in collection rates and 65% reduction in staff time spent on billing.

Patient Collection Rates Trends 2024

Days Sales Outstanding (DSO) Trends 2024

● Bottom performers   ● Average performers   ● Top performers

Modern & frictionless patient billing solutions adopted in top performing practices

TEXT TO PAY

The convenience to pay from mobile phones by clicking on a text message.

CARD ON FILE

Collect the patient portion with a one click deduction from a card already on file.
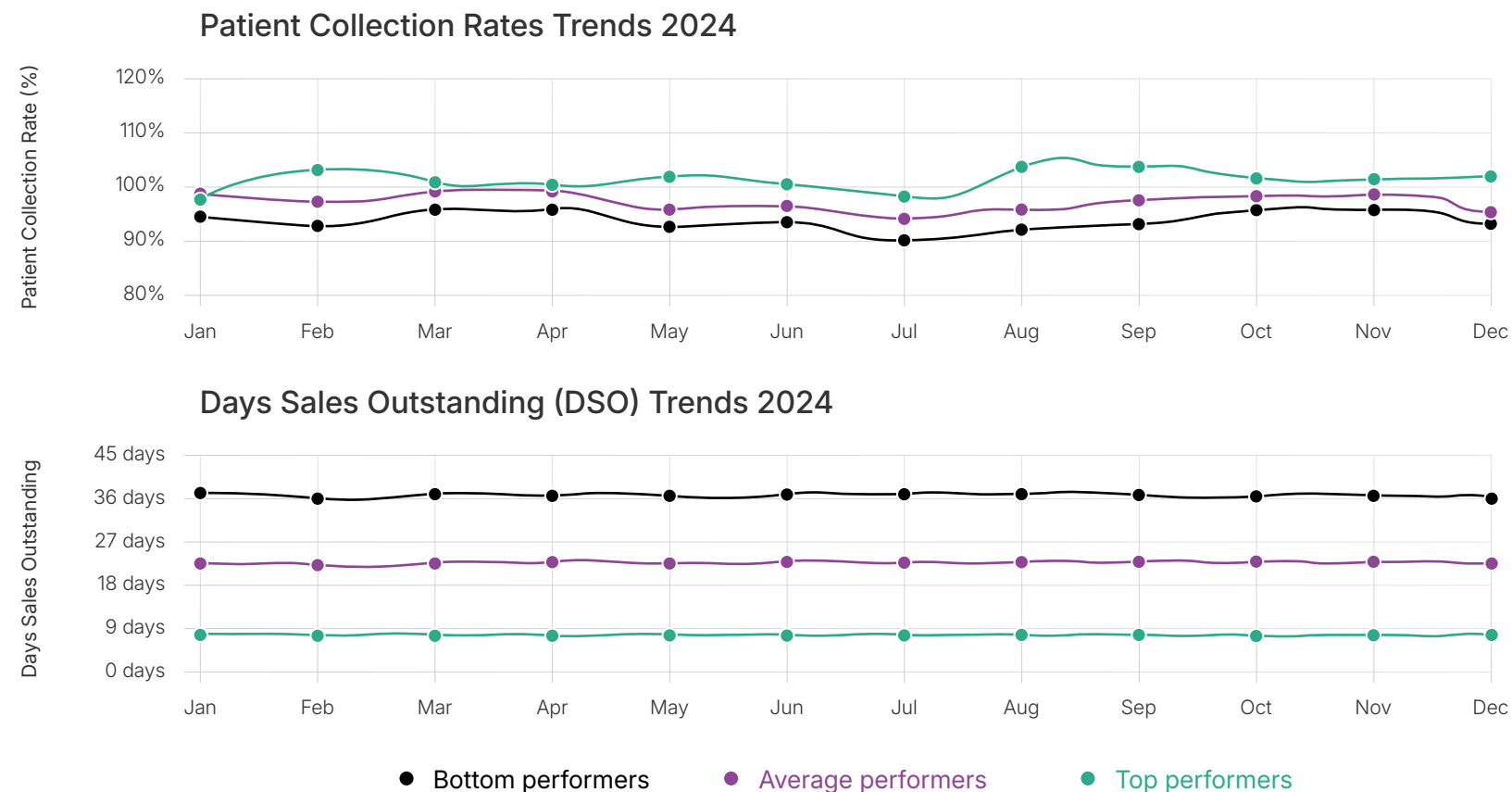
CUSTOM PAYMENT PLANS

Installment based payment plans with a configurable payment frequency.

COLLECTION AUTOMATION

Pre-templated rules to send out automated collections via phone, text, email.

ONLINE PAYMENTS

Ability to pay from anywhere, anytime by accessing statements.

DIFFERENTIATOR 5

An integrated technology stack reduces the total cost of ownership while improving operational efficiency.

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY STACK

By consolidating and streamlining the technology stack, top performing practices have simplified operations, reduced administrative overheads and consolidated data to optimize operational efficiency.

AI ADOPTION

Top performing practices are early adopters of AI solutions and effectively use the power of AI to reduce labor costs, personalize patient experience, improve clinical outcomes and eliminate administrative burden on staff members.

> Every time someone recommends an exciting new technology product, I ask them three questions:
>
> 1. Does it work with our existing systems?
> 2. Are there limitations to the data exchange between systems?
> 3. Does it add additional work elsewhere in our processes?
>
> Because many times, we see only the planned benefits, but we overlook the data fragmentation, manual efforts for data reconciliation, and extra hours of training and troubleshooting. Which is why I always look for systems that bring everything under one unified umbrella.

SCOTT KALNIZ
Chief Dental Officer, Beam Dental

$7.6K - $10.2K

savings per year on software subscription costs compared to bottom performers
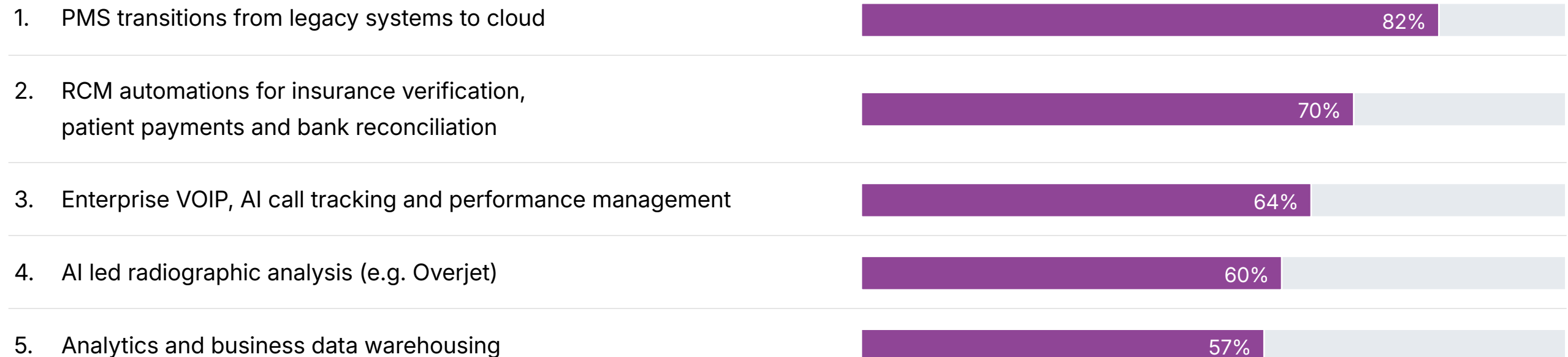
116 Hrs - 173 Hrs

of staff time saved per month per office compared to bottom performers

Simplifying the technology stack has allowed top performing practices to scale operations profitably and reduce the total cost of ownership.

Implementing transformative technology projects, especially those that consolidate multiple disparate technology systems, are hard to implement in fast growing practices. However once implemented, a simplified, unified tech stack trims total cost of ownership with fewer licenses to pay for, fewer integrations to manage, and more time for existing team members to focus on revenue-producing tasks instead of juggling multiple systems.

Technology modernization initiatives as reported by survey participants that created the most impact on practice operations

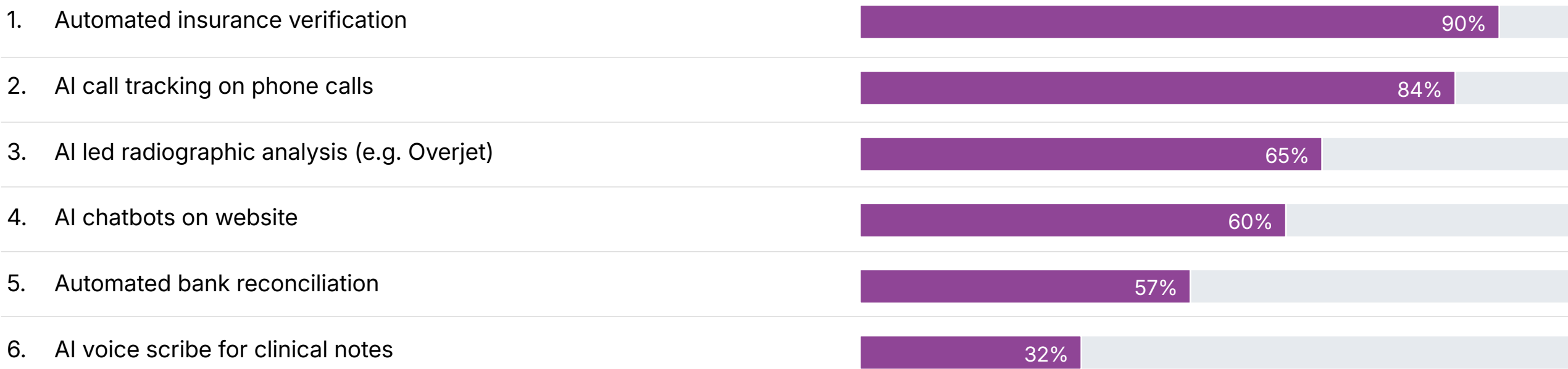|	Initiative	Percentage
1.	PMS transitions from legacy systems to cloud	82%
2.	RCM automations for insurance verification, patient payments and bank reconciliation	70%
3.	Enterprise VOIP, AI call tracking and performance management	64%
4.	AI led radiographic analysis (e.g. Overjet)	60%
5.	Analytics and business data warehousing	57%

Note: **Survey Participants Size - 137

By being early adopters of AI & automation, top performing practices have improved customer satisfaction and operational efficiency.

Early adopter dental practices who went all-in with AI at chairside have reported a 10–20% jump in case-acceptance rates, while practices that have invested in AI-enhanced phones have seen improvement in their call conversion rates adding up to 3000 additional active patients per clinic in a year.

Key operational workflows reported by survey participants to benefit the most from Gen AI automations

1. Automated insurance verification — 90%
2. AI call tracking on phone calls — 84%
3. AI led radiographic analysis (e.g. Overjet) — 65%
4. AI chatbots on website — 60%
5. Automated bank reconciliation — 57%
6. AI voice scribe for clinical notes — 32%

Note: **Survey Participants Size - 59

FORRESTER® REPORT

CareStack pays for itself within 6 months

Up to

$1,300,000

Increase in Profits

Save up to

$280,000

by Consolidating Systems

Save up to

$162,200

by Improving Efficiency

Straumann commissioned Forrester Consulting to conduct a Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) study and examine the potential return on investment (ROI) dental practices may realize by deploying CareStack. For the purpose of this study, Forrester aggregated the experiences of the interviewees and survey respondents and illustrated the results from the perspective of a composite organization. The composite organization is a multisite dental organization that operates in 10 locations, employs a total of 115 staff, and generates $20 million in annual revenue.

Value Proposition

1. BETTER
SAME STORE GROWTH

2. BETTER
RCM EFFICIENCY

3. BETTER
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

www.carestack.com