



Take your practice to the next level.



BY KRISTINE MORRILL, BS

HOW TO TALK ABOUT PRICING WITH PATIENTS

Two key strategies can build your confidence.

Once you know how to pare down the number of IOLs you're stocking to meet the requirements of cataract patients (scan the QR code to read "Four Tips for Creating the Right



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Mix of IOLs for Your Practice"), the next step is to get comfortable talking about pricing with patients.

I work closely with several IOL manufacturers.

One of my responsibilities is talking to surgeons about how they position IOL technologies among other vision correction options in their practices. At some point during the discussion, the conversation inevitably turns to pricing new technology.

The first thing I ask surgeons is, "How do you discuss the price of different, new treatment options with your patients?" I have posed variations of that question to many

surgeons over the years in relation to myriad new cataract and refractive technologies. The answers are always telling. Allow me to explain.

When I lived in the United States, I regularly saw advertisements that detailed the differences in pricing for premium and standard surgical procedures—bladeless laser vision correction versus LASIK with a microkeratome and presbyopia-correcting IOLs versus monofocal IOLs, for example. US surgeons talk openly about fees and pricing, and they are generally comfortable talking to patients about why premium technology costs more.

In Europe, however, the number of surgeons who are comfortable talking about costs with patients remains low. All too often I hear, "It's too complicated to talk about" or "I leave that for my staff to explain." I am disheartened by these comments because of the amount of time that people such as myself have dedicated to educating surgeons about how to

discuss pricing with patients. (Scan the QR codes to read "You Aren't Charging Enough for LASIK" by Shareef Mahdavi and "How to Increase Conversion Rates Through Entry Point Offers" by Rod Solar and Laura Livesey.)



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SETTING AND EXPLAINING FEES

Cataract surgery in the United States and Europe is different—except when it comes to the cost of premium IOLs such as trifocal and extended depth of focus lenses. On both continents, patients pay privately for an IOL if it is not a monofocal or monofocal toric lens. Additionally, practices in both the United States and Europe can establish the fees for implanting a premium

SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE WEBSITES

Augenzentrum Dr. Aus der Au
Fribourg, Germany



Centre for Sight
London



Centro Oculistico
Firenze, Italy



Clinique de la Vision
Paris



Medipolis
Antwerp, Belgium



WHAT MAKES A GOOD PITCH?!



▶ **Sharing a personal anecdote**



▶ **Avoiding the use of metaphors and complicated terminology**



▶ **Encouraging patients to speak with others who have received the same technology**



▶ **Providing facts and clinical results**



▶ **Tapping into their fear of missing out or FOMO (FOMO is a particularly powerful motivator thanks to social media and social media influencers)**

1. Larsen G. 10 sales pitch examples (plus tips on how to write your own). Hubspot. September 1, 2021. Accessed January 21, 2022. <https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/sales-pitch-examples>.

IOL. The cost of the IOL to the patient should reflect the amount of additional work that is involved in implanting a premium IOL compared to a monofocal IOL. Of course, local and country requirements must be respected when determining the pricing structure.

Two key strategies can give you confidence when discussing fees with patients.

▶ **No. 1: Make your website as informative as possible.** Don't just list the procedures you offer at your practice. State the corresponding procedural fees and describe what is included in each package (if permissible in your country). These measures can help to set realistic expectations for patients. Note if your clinic offers financing or partners with private insurers.

All patients who contact your practice should be directed to this section of your website. Scan the QR codes in *Successful Practice Websites* on the previous page

for some great examples of websites that provide clear and detailed information about surgical options and pricing.

Allowing patients to familiarize themselves with your fee structure, financing programs, and insurance partners should help alleviate the discomfort of talking to them about the costs of a procedure because the conversation is already underway.

▶ **No. 2: Practice the pitch and the close.**

You are a surgeon, not a salesperson. With that said, patient education is your responsibility. There is nothing wrong with informing patients about—rather than selling them on—a valuable service you offer.

Effective *itches* have three key components:

- A stated problem (eg, the patient has a cataract and wishes to reduce their dependence on spectacles);
- Personalization (eg, the outcomes that the patient desires may

be obtained through specific procedures and technologies that entail certain fees); and

- An open-ended question that encourages discussion.

See *What Makes a Good Pitch?* for more ideas on creating a great pitch.

During the short time you have with each patient, reinforce what they read on your website and heard from your team. In other words, *close* the deal. One trick that can help you feel more comfortable closing the deal is to write down the key points that you want to convey and practice discussing them with a colleague, family member, or friend.

CONCLUSION

I've heard many objections to using terms like *pitch* and *close* for medical procedures. Surgeons do not want to be viewed as salespeople. In my experience, however, it does not pay to be reticent about the value that your services bring to patients. Do not spend too much time trying to justify prices. After all, restoring vision is a life-changing experience. ■

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