Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a Payment Processor?

When choosing a payment processor... *For Dentists*

Selecting the right payment processor can be more complex than it seems, especially in an industry that often suffers from aggressive sales tactics, unclear pricing, and lackluster customer support. Many providers have well-trained salespeople who can make their offers sound appealing, but it's crucial to know what red flags to watch for before committing to a contract.

Mistake #1: *Choosing a Provider Based on "Free" Card Readers*

One of the most common traps we've seen - especially in dental practices - is signing up with a company that offers a "free" card reader. On the surface, this sounds like a great deal, but in reality, it often leads to much higher costs over time.

We've conducted thousands of payment processing reviews for dental offices, and in some cases, we've helped practices save over $50,000 per year! What did these high-cost scenarios have in common? They all started with "free" equipment.

The truth is, card readers are not cheap, and processors offering them at no upfront cost need to make up for it somewhere—usually through higher ongoing processing fees. Even after the equipment has been paid off, those higher rates stay in place, leading to long-term overpayment.

Helpful Tip

Buying your card reader outright may involve an initial cost, but it often results in significantly lower processing fees and better flexibility in the long run.

Mistake #2: *Trusting the rates that were quoted*

Credit card processing rates can be confusing and often companies exacerbate this with pricing structures designed to hide the true costs you are signing up for.

- We regularly see inaccurate cost comparisons that misquote the rates charged, exclude important fees, or even include basic math errors. Many practices are told they will have savings only to find out that their new "deal" is more expensive than what they currently pay
- It is very common for processors not to include sneaky additional fees that they add to transactions, such as downgrade rates, risk surcharges, or funding fees. Even if they may not affect all cards, it's important to ask about them because they will add to your costs.
- On average, most credit card processors raise rates a few times per year. The rates that you are being offered may be competitive at signup but much more expensive just a few months later.

Helpful Tip

Ask any processor to show you statements from two other dental offices on the exact same pricing that they are offering you to verify that the rates and fees are accurate.

Mistake #3: *Not Reading the Fine Print*

Payment processing contracts often include fine print that hides costly terms - like early termination fees, equipment leases, or hidden surcharges. Unfortunately, some salespeople claim there's “no contract,” only for practices to later discover hefty cancellation fees—sometimes exceeding $100,000.

We’ve also seen offices unknowingly locked into equipment leases costing thousands for devices worth just a few hundred dollars. These extra charges are often buried in lengthy legal documents, making them easy to miss.

Helpful Tip

Always ask for key terms - like termination fees and lease details - in writing from a supervisor, not just the salesperson. Best Card, for example, has no early termination fees and doesn’t lease terminals.

Mistake #4: *Not Researching the Company You're Considering*

The payment processing industry has a bad reputation—and for good reason. Many companies receive poor reviews due to hidden fees, confusing contracts, and disappointing customer service, often glossed over by persuasive salespeople.

While word of mouth can be a great way to find a trustworthy provider, it’s not always easy to find someone you know who’s already using the service. That’s where online research becomes essential.

Helpful Tip

In addition to checking reviews on Google and Yelp, there are several websites dedicated specifically to reviewing payment processors. Reading detailed reviews, and especially the comments from other business owners—can offer valuable insight into what you might expect from a provider.

About Best Card

Best Card was originally founded as a member benefit program of the Colorado Dental Association, created to support dental practices that felt underserved or overcharged by their payment processors. Our mission has always been to offer transparent, consistently low pricing and exceptional customer service.

Thanks to positive word of mouth, we’ve grown into a nationwide provider endorsed by more than 50 dental associations. In fact, over 95% of the dental offices we compare costs for end up saving with our ADA-endorsed rates.

We welcome comparisons with other providers and are always happy to answer your questions. Give us a call at (877) 739-3952 - we’re here to help!

Best Card 877.739.3952