



Digital by Default

POWERED BY INTELLIGENCE

CLIENT CASE STUDY

WhatsApp Automation Cuts Missed Appointments by 58% for a UK Dental Group

A UK dental group with 6 clinics was losing £22,000 a month to no-shows and overwhelmed reception staff. Within 5 weeks, WhatsApp automation was handling 3,200+ monthly conversations — and patients could book, reschedule, or cancel in under 60 seconds.

58%

REDUCTION IN
NO-SHOWS

3,200+

MONTHLY WHATSAPP
CONVERSATIONS

2.8x

ROI WITHIN 5
MONTHS

5 wks

FROM ENQUIRY
TO LIVE

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CONFIDENTIAL

April 2026

Ref: CS-WBA-2026-04

THE CHALLENGE

Reception staff buried in confirmation calls while patients demanded WhatsApp booking

When the Practice Manager at a UK dental group with 6 clinics across South London and Surrey reached out to Digital by Default, the frustration was palpable:

// We run a chain of dental clinics and our reception staff spend half their day confirming appointments by phone. Patients keep asking to book via WhatsApp but we have no system. Can you automate appointment booking and reminders on WhatsApp?

Practice Manager, UK Dental Group (6 clinics, 28,000 patients, 14 reception staff)

The group was caught in a cycle of rising demand and shrinking capacity, with every manual process compounding the next:

Operational Pain Points

- Reception staff making **120+ confirmation calls daily** across 6 clinics
- **18% no-show rate** costing £22,000/month in lost chair time
- Patients requesting WhatsApp booking but **no system in place**
- **35% of calls go to voicemail** during peak hours (lunchtime, after school)
- New patient enquiries wait **2–3 hours for callback**
- Paper-based reminder system with SMS only

Business Impact

- **£22,000/month** in lost revenue from no-shows
- **14 receptionists** spending 50% of time on phone confirmations instead of patient care
- **4.1/5 Google rating** with recurring “hard to reach” complaints
- Losing new patients to competitors offering **online/WhatsApp booking**

DISCOVERY

What we found during the audit

Before recommending a solution, we ran a discovery sprint analysing the group's booking data, patient demographics, and communication patterns:

- **82% of patients aged 18–55** preferred WhatsApp over phone when surveyed
- **65% of no-shows** said they “forgot” or “couldn't call to cancel”
- **Average confirmation call takes 2.5 minutes** — totalling 300+ minutes daily across all clinics
- **Peak booking requests** align with off-hours: 7–9am and 6–9pm — when clinics are closed or unstaffed

Why SMS Reminders Weren't Enough

The group was already sending SMS reminders, but they were one-way — patients couldn't reply to confirm, cancel, or reschedule. The result was a 22% SMS read-and-action rate versus the 85%+ engagement rate typical of WhatsApp two-way conversations. Patients needed a channel they could actually interact with.

THE SOLUTION

A WhatsApp-first booking and reminder system built for dental clinics

We designed and deployed a fully automated WhatsApp booking system integrated with the group's practice management software, with GDPR compliance baked in from day one:

LAYER	TECHNOLOGY	ROLE
WhatsApp Platform	WhatsApp Business API (via 360dialog)	Official API access, verified business profile, template messages
Orchestration	Botpress	Conversation flows for booking, rescheduling, reminders, FAQ
Calendar Integration	Dentally API (Practice Management)	Real-time availability, appointment creation, patient record sync
Payments	Stripe (via WhatsApp Pay link)	Deposit collection for new patients, payment reminders
Workflow	n8n (self-hosted)	Reminder sequences (48hr, 24hr, 2hr), no-show follow-ups, analytics
Compliance	Custom consent layer	GDPR opt-in management, data retention, patient data encryption

Why this stack — and not the alternatives

We evaluated four WhatsApp platforms against the group's specific requirements for healthcare compliance, cost at scale, and booking-focused conversation flows:

PLATFORM	STRENGTHS	VERDICT
360dialog + Botpress	Cost-effective, full API control, healthcare-ready, flexible conversation builder	Selected
Twilio WhatsApp	Excellent reliability and documentation; higher per-message cost at scale	Shortlisted
Intercom WhatsApp	Strong omnichannel platform; overkill for a booking-focused use case	Considered
MessageBird	Good API and delivery rates; less flexible conversation builder	Considered

5 weeks from first call to live across all 6 clinics

1

Week 1: Discovery & Compliance Setup

Audited booking workflows across all 6 clinics, configured GDPR consent flows, set up WhatsApp Business verified profiles for each location.

2

Weeks 2–3: Bot Build & Dentally Integration

Built booking, rescheduling, reminder, and FAQ flows in Botpress. Integrated with Dentally for real-time slot availability and appointment creation. Built patient matching logic to link WhatsApp numbers to existing records.

3

Week 4: Testing & Staff Training

200+ test conversations across all flow types. Trained reception teams on the management dashboard. Ran parallel system (phone + WhatsApp) with the first clinic as a pilot.

4

Week 5: Phased Rollout

Clinics 1–2 (Mon–Wed), clinics 3–4 (Wed–Fri), clinics 5–6 (following Monday). Real-time monitoring and rapid iteration throughout.

THE RESULTS

Measurable impact within the first 90 days

Key Performance Metrics (90-Day Average)

58%

REDUCTION IN NO-SHOWS
(DOWN FROM 18% TO 7.6%)

3,200+

MONTHLY WHATSAPP
CONVERSATIONS HANDLED

74%

BOOKINGS NOW MADE
VIA WHATSAPP

£14.6k

MONTHLY REVENUE
RECOVERED
FROM REDUCED NO-SHOWS

62%

REDUCTION IN RECEPTION
CALL VOLUME

2.8x

ROI ACHIEVED
WITHIN 5 MONTHS

What the numbers mean in practice

Revenue Recovery

With no-shows dropping from 18% to 7.6%, the group recovered **£14,600/month** in previously lost chair time. Automated deposit collection for new patients reduced first-appointment no-shows by **81%**.

Patient Experience

Patients can book, reschedule, or cancel in **under 60 seconds** via WhatsApp. 24/7 availability means bookings happen when patients think of it — **67% of WhatsApp bookings are made outside clinic hours**.

Staff Transformation

Reception call volume dropped **62%**. Staff were redirected to patient care and in-clinic experience. Receptionist overtime was eliminated entirely. **Staff satisfaction surveys improved from 5.4 to 8.2/10**.

Growth Impact

New patient enquiries up **34%** as WhatsApp lowered the barrier to contact. Google rating improved from **4.1 to 4.6** within 4 months. "Easy to book" is now the most common phrase in patient reviews.

// Our receptionists are actually talking to patients in the clinic now instead of being glued to the phone. And our no-show rate has more than halved — that's real money back in the business.

Practice Manager, UK Dental Group (6 clinics)

// Patients love it. We had a 73-year-old grandmother book her own appointment on WhatsApp last week and she was thrilled. It's not just for young people.

Lead Dentist, Croydon Clinic

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

Phase 2: Expanding to treatment plan follow-ups

Following the success of the booking automation, the client expanded WhatsApp into the full patient lifecycle. The system now:

- **Sends post-treatment care instructions** — patients receive tailored aftercare guidance via WhatsApp immediately after procedures (extractions, fillings, hygiene visits)
- **Automates 6-month check-up reminders** — follow-up booking reminders are sent at the right intervals, with one-tap rescheduling built in
- **Runs lapsed patient recall sequences** — patients who haven't visited in 12+ months receive a gentle, personalised recall message with a direct booking link
- **Integrates with NHS dental charge notifications** — patients are informed of band charges before appointments, reducing billing confusion and front-desk queries

Ongoing Support & Optimisation

Digital by Default provides monthly optimisation reviews: analysing conversation logs, tuning booking flows, updating FAQ responses, and monitoring WhatsApp delivery rates and patient engagement metrics. **The no-show rate has continued to fall, reaching 6.1% at the 6-month mark.**

IS THIS RIGHT FOR YOU?

This solution is a strong fit if...

- You have a **high no-show rate** costing real revenue
- Reception staff are **overwhelmed by confirmation calls**
- Patients are requesting **WhatsApp or online booking**
- You need **24/7 booking availability**
- You use **Dentally, SOE, or similar** practice management software
- You want **GDPR-compliant** patient communication
- You need **appointment reminders that actually work**
- You want results in **weeks, not quarters**



Let's explore what WhatsApp automation could look like for your clinics.

Book a free 30-minute discovery call. No pitch decks — just an honest conversation about your booking volumes, your no-show rate, and whether WhatsApp automation is the right fit.

[Book Your Discovery Call →](#)

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About Digital by Default

Digital by Default is a London-based AI automation consultancy that builds production-grade AI systems for businesses ready to move beyond experimentation. From voice AI and intelligent chatbots to workflow automation and AI governance, we deliver measurable outcomes — not transformation theatre.

Services include: AI Voice Agents · Chatbots & Virtual Agents · Custom AI Agent Development · RAG & Knowledge Base AI · Workflow Automation · White-Label AI SaaS · AI Strategy & Training · AI Governance & EU AI Act Compliance