

# The Down Low On Credit Card Processing

by Deanna Townsend

**A**s an office manager, I can appreciate how having your day interrupted with unsolicited sales calls can be frustrating. Even though I'm in the credit card processing business I get 3-4 calls a week by salesmen that know they can save me time and money on my processing! They want to show me the latest system that looks great, but all I want to do is run a credit card for the lowest possible rate and have the money deposited in my account fast. I think that's what most merchant's want. So how do you do that?

First, know that everyone has the same cost for credit card processing. The difference is based on the type of card and how it is taken. A card from a bigger bank that is connected to your patients bank account is cheaper than one issued by a bank where they get a reward for using the card. Flex benefit cards and corporate cards are even higher. Using the chip reader or swipe mechanism is the best way to take a card and usually the cheapest. But everyone has to key in a card or two so how do you do it at the lowest cost? Make sure you answer the Address Verification questions that include an order number, address and zip code. If you're not being asked for all three, you're paying too much for your keyed in cards. That's what your processing bank wants you to do. They can make more money this way, especially if you're not on an interchange program.

The latest scam, and it is a scam, are sales people showing how much time is saved using their online processing tied to a practice management program. One doctor was told they'd save thousands of dollars a month using the online program in staff time. So basically they are saying that it takes hours for your staff to run a credit card through the terminal. I've timed it. On average it is 30 seconds start to finish. I'm not seeing the thousands of dollars in staff time, are you? And by using the online system you still have to go to the computer, open the patient file, swipe the card or enter the card number and then waste a full sheet of paper or 2 for a receipt. I'm not seeing the savings. Is it more convenient? Maybe. Is it sleek & cool? Possibly. But does it save the doctor any money? No. If you want to take credit cards through your computer, we can do that too!

Also, you have now gone from a simple PCI Compliance to a more complex PCI Compliance with scans required, usually at an additional cost! If they didn't tell you and now

you're not PCI Compliant, you're probably being charged a monthly non-compliance fee!

Many companies are selling systems that will do everything for you. And they'll sign you to a really inexpensive lease so that you don't have to pay upfront. Great idea? Not really. A lease is never a good idea. Many of these new systems cannot be reprogrammed by anyone but the person that sold you the system. So while they may sign you at a great rate, in six months you'll probably see rates increase and continue to increase and you're stuck! You have a lease that you can't get out of and equipment no one else can reprogram. That great idea is now a problem that's costing more than it's worth. Don't be swayed by the newest gadgets!

Also, be aware that 95% of processing companies have termination fees. If they don't mention it, they have one.

Keep in mind that your goal with credit card processing is to get your customers payments processed quickly, efficiently, and as cheap as possible. International Payment Solutions can assist you with getting that done. We will provide a no cost analysis of your current processing statement. Fax a statement to 844-483-1996 or email to [interpay@aol.com](mailto:interpay@aol.com).

*Deanna Townsend is Chief Operations Officer and co-owner of International Payment Solutions, a merchant services company. You can call her at 844-483-1995. We're one of the few companies out there that will not require you to spend money to save money and we can reprogram most EMV capable terminals at no additional cost.*

