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Guest editor

*Andrea  
Ubhi*

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equality and embracing  
dissatisfaction



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# Beautiful discontentment

Siobhan Hiscott  
Group managing editor

I always feel a little starstruck when talking to Andrea Ubhi, this month's guest editor.

From our very first encounter several years ago through to the present day, Andrea has been a source of inspiration, guidance and honesty for me.

Back in 2020, just before the country went into national lockdown, she invited me to an event she was holding with Martina Hodgson in Leeds. I jumped at the chance to attend.

The conference – Inspiring Women in Dentistry – brought together women from the dental sphere and beyond. It generated plenty of interesting discussions, ranging from the power of positive thinking and mindfulness to the old question of whether women can 'have it all' and the impact of gender imbalance in the home.

The highlight for me was listening to keynote speaker Sally Gunnell OBE. I remember watching Sally run the 400-metre hurdles in the 1992 Olympics in awe: I never dreamed that 28 years later I would have the opportunity to see that gold medal (let alone hold it).

A lot has happened since that conference, but I often think of Sally's talk.

She discussed the power of applying the right mentality, delving deep into the concept of

visualisation as a useful tool to help drive success. Talking through her athletics journey, the gold medallist explained that coaching and attention to detail were key to her success – but mental strength played a pivotal role.

Andrea's perspective on page 54 mirrors this. Regardless of what life has thrown at her, her resilience has seen her through, and she is arguably more successful than ever. Forever the advocate, Andrea is a true force to be reckoned with.

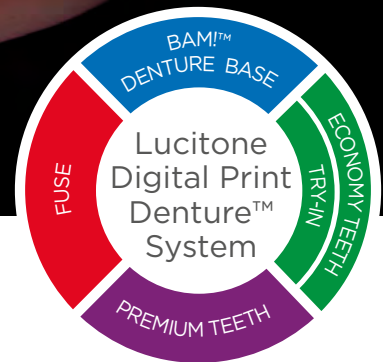
I believe I may find myself thinking about our interview often in years to come too. Where Sally focused on visualisation, I think there's a real power in Andrea's viewpoint – specifically in her embrace of discontentment as a motivator. (Or, to coin her great phrase, 'blessed dissatisfaction'.)

Andrea argues that we need enough dissatisfaction in our lives to keep us striving for more, lest the concept of forever becomes 'a prison'.

I love this viewpoint. As a perfectionist who embraces it in much of my work – but who also struggles to jump without the safety net of the familiar more often than I'd like – it resonates powerfully with me. As the dust settles after putting this issue together, I'll certainly be trying to find the beauty in my own discontent.

Will you be doing the same?





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# Working together

Andrea Ubhi

Guest editor, multi-award-winning business entrepreneur, director of three companies, author, co-founder of an organisation inspiring women, chair of Asha Nepal and motivational speaker

As dental professionals, we often find ourselves navigating a competitive landscape. The race to attract patients and maintain a thriving practice can be intense. However, I think that it's time to shift our perspective – from competitors to collaborators. How much more fun would this be?

The art of cooperating with competitors holds great promise. Look at Apple and Samsung, who were once fierce adversaries and now collaborate on critical components. Similarly, DHL and UPS share logistics infrastructure.

As dentists, we can learn from these examples. When we unite, we amplify our impact. Let's explore joint initiatives, knowledge exchange and strategic partnerships.

Our commitment to excellence goes way beyond individual practices. Study clubs, webinars and peer mentoring sessions foster collective growth. By discussing complex cases, sharing clinical insights and staying abreast of advancements, we elevate the profession of dentistry as a whole.

Let's break down silos and create a culture of continuous learning.

Rather than competing fiercely, let's identify complementary strengths. Imagine two practices providing implants: one provides general implant

solutions, while another treats complex implant cases. These two practices may appear to be in competition with each other, however actually they complement. Just as my lead implant dentist, Dr Adam Glassford, receives as many referrals from other implant dentists in the north of England as from general dentists.

When everyone does the thing that they excel in, then the patients receive exceptional treatment by all clinicians within their skill set.

By collaborating on specific cases or services, we enhance patient offerings. Strategic alliances allow us to provide comprehensive care without compromising our unique advantages.

Our ultimate purpose is patient wellbeing. When we prioritise patients over territorial battles, everyone benefits. Let's embrace a patient-centric mindset, where cooperation overcomes competition.

In this era of rapid change, dentistry faces challenges – from technological advancements to evolving patient expectations. By working together, we can alter our profession's future and identity. Let's celebrate each other's successes, learn from setbacks and build a resilient community.

Remember, our strength lies not only in individual achievements but in our collective impact.



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# PRIVATE

## DENTISTRY

### MISSION STATEMENT

*Private Dentistry* is an essential reference for dental practice development in the 21st century, focused on helping practices evolve sustainably, operate innovatively, and thrive.

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BDS MClintDent (Prosthodontics) PhD MFGDP (UK) FICOI FICD, has been in private practice in London for over 30 years and is the programme director for the MSc in Aesthetic Dentistry at King's College London Dental Institute.



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BDS, co-owns Rothley Lodge Dental with his wife Dr Meghan Chard. He is immediate past president of the BACD, lectures nationally and is a co-founder of Pärla toothpaste tabs, an eco-friendly and plastic-free oral healthcare brand.



### RACHEL DERBY

BDS MS, is an award-winning dentist and a partner and founder of Chapel Dental in Buckinghamshire. Rachel also sits on the board and executive committee for the BAPD.



### MERVYN DRUIJAN

BDS (Rand) DGDPRCS (Lon), is one of the pioneers of cosmetic dentistry. He is one of very few UK dentists to be on the distinguished AACD President's Honour Role.



### ELAINE HALLEY

BDS (Edin) MFGDP (UK), is principal of Cherrybank Dental Spa Ltd.



### SUNIL HIRANI

BSc BDS FDSRCS FDS(Orth) RCs Eng MOrth MSc, is a specialist in orthodontics and practice principal of Smilelux, a dedicated orthodontic practice in Milton Keynes.



### MARTINA HODGSON

BChD MJDF, is owner and principal dentist at The Dental Studio in Wakefield and is also known as the Dental Architect. She has an interest in orthodontics, Invisalign and facial aesthetics.



### NEEL JAISWAL

BDS, runs a multidisciplinary practice at Neel Dentistry. He founded PDI-Professional Dental Indemnity Ltd. He is a judge on the Private Dentistry Awards. He founded the British Academy of Microscope Dentistry and is a founder of the BAPD.



### SAM JETHWA

BDS, is the founder of Bespoke Smile Clinic & Academy, which trains dentists on occlusion, porcelain veneers, and rehabilitations. Sam is on the board of directors at the BACD, and has been a judge for the Private Dentistry Awards.



### PHILIP LEWIS

BDS, is in private practice on the Isle of Wight. He is a lecturer with a special interest in postgraduate education, oral medicine and dental aesthetics.



### ANGELA LY

BDS, is an award-winning dentist who has featured on *BBC Breakfast*, *ITV's Save Money Good Health* and *Channel 5's Gadget Show*.



### HANNA MIRAFTAB

BDS, is owner of Kiln Lane Dental practice and an actress in *Real Housewives of Cheshire*. She has completed a master's degree in prosthodontics and has qualifications in non-surgical treatments such as anti-ageing injectables.



### ASHISH B PARMAR

BDS, is a cosmetic dentist offering smile design, comprehensive dental care, laser dentistry and implants. He is a national and international lecturer.



### KISH PATEL

BDS MSc, is a director at Smile Clinic Group and director of Smile Dental Academy. Having successfully completed training in Invisalign in 2011, he offers a range of clear and cosmetic orthodontic treatments.



### KREENA PATEL

BDS, is a specialist in endodontics. She taught on the specialist endodontics programme at Guy's. She works at Brigstock Dental Practice and Oaktree Dental Practice. Kreena runs an online endo course, The Endo Course.



### MANRINA RHODE

BDS, has a skincare line DRMR, runs courses on porcelain veneers, Designing Smiles and recently opened DRMR, a superclinic in Knightsbridge, London. She has completed over 13,000 porcelain veneers over 20 years.



### JASON SMITHSON

BDS (Lond) DipRestDent RCS (Eng), qualified at the Royal London Hospital in 1995, achieving a number of awards.



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### ANDREA UBHI

BChD, is principal of the referral practice, Andrea Ubhi Dentistry, in York. She is also chair of the charity Asha Nepal, supporting survivors of trafficking.



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CBE DSc (hc) FDS FFGDP (UK) FFD FKC, is emeritus professor of dentistry at King's College London. He was previously dean and head of King's College Dental School (2001-2010), dean of the Faculty of Dentistry RCS Edinburgh (1995-1998), and president of the GDC (1999-2003).

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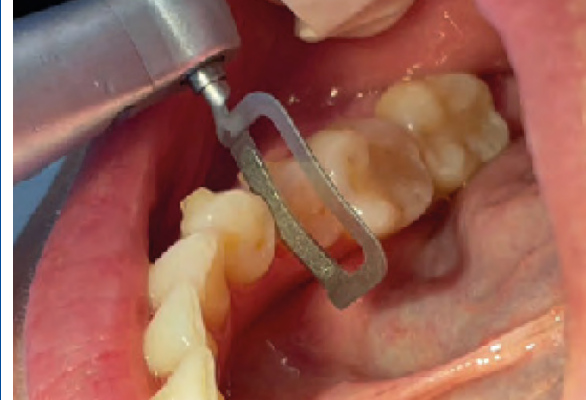
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## Essay writing contest aims to engage young dentists with legal aspects of profession

Young dentists have been invited to take part in an essay-writing competition exploring the ethical and legal dimensions of the profession. The Dental Law and Ethics Forum (DLEF) is offering a prize of £250 in each of three categories.

First-year students are asked to write an 800-word essay with the title: 'Is it ever acceptable for a qualified dental professional to discuss their religious beliefs with a patient?'

First-year registrants are invited to write up to 1,000 words on: 'Discuss how the standard of record keeping expected of a dental professional can be maintained in a busy workplace.'

Registrants qualified for two to five years have up to 1,500 words to write about: 'Can images of patients taken during dental training be used to promote the work of a dental professional in general practice?'

Along with the cash prize, winners will be invited to speak at the December meeting of the DLEF. The deadline for submissions is 31 July.

The contest, which is now in its third year, aims to encourage young dentists to engage with the dentolegal aspects of the profession.

DLEF president Chris Morris, who is qualified as both a dentist and a lawyer, said: 'The standard of entries last year was very high, and all three winners gave excellent presentations at our December meeting.'

'The 2024 essay titles are again designed to explore reflection on contemporary issues that can arise in dental practice and are the kind of topics that the indemnity providers regularly deal with.'

Further information is available at [www.dlef.org.uk/essayprize-2024](http://www.dlef.org.uk/essayprize-2024).

## Only 15% of dental practices are now fully NHS

Only 15% of dental practices are fully NHS, according to new statistics, while three in five dentists work 30 hours or fewer each week.

The new data, revealed by the General Dental Council (GDC), investigated the working patterns of dentists. Most dentists (85%) spend at least 75% of their time in clinical practice, and a further 10% say they undertake a mix of clinical and non-clinical work. In addition, 19% said they provided only private care, with no NHS, and a further 14% said they predominantly provided private care (more than 75% of their time).

Only 15% are fully NHS, with no private care, and a further 27% said they are predominantly NHS (more than 75% of their time).

The data also revealed that 42% of dentists worked 30 hours a week or fewer, 38% regularly work in more than one location and 9% are working as specialists.

As part of their annual renewal, 25,159 (57%) of dentists responded to the work patterns survey, of which 24,152 (55%) were working in the UK dental sector. A similar collection of work pattern data for dental care professionals (DCPs) is planned as part of the DCP annual renewal process later this year.

GDC executive director of strategy Stefan Czerniawski said: 'This new data provides a firm foundation for better understanding how dentists are working across the UK.'

'It provides important insights into the issues affecting dental professionals and patients. We are confident that it will support planning and decision-making by health services, governments, dental providers – and, of course, dental professionals themselves – to help ensure that patients get the care they need.'

## Upcoming events

Key dates for FMC's unmissable dental shows and awards. Visit [dentistry.co.uk](http://dentistry.co.uk) for more details!



### UK Dentistry Golf Championship 27 June – Hadley Wood Golf Club

Sponsored by Braemar Finance, Belmont, DD and EMS, the UK Dentistry Golf Championship is a Stableford individual competition open to all abilities.



### South West Dentistry Show 29 June – Bristol

Be part of all the South West Dentistry Show action at Ashton Gate in Bristol this summer! Dozens of presentations will be on offer as well as leading dental companies in the exhibition hall.



### Irish Dentistry Show 7 September – Dublin

This unmissable free one-day show brings together hundreds of professionals from across the dental sector and promises more than 15 talks from industry leaders.

A banner for Orascoptic. On the left is the Orascoptic logo, which consists of a stylized globe with blue, yellow, and green segments. To the right of the logo is the word 'ORASCOPTIC' in large, bold, blue capital letters. On the far right is a square QR code. Below the QR code is the text 'Book a Demo and See More Today' in white.

## Dental technology biases could harm patients' health, review finds

The health of ethnic minorities, women and people on lower incomes could be in jeopardy due to biases in dental and medical technology, a review has found.

The independent review into equity in medical devices, which was commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care, has led to calls for 'system-wide action' over concerns about devices such as pulse oximeters and technologies relating to artificial intelligence (AI).

The research was prompted following concerns that pulse oximeters gave less accurate results when used on patients who were not white.

The review confirmed the suspected bias. It found 'extensive' evidence of pulse oximeters overestimating oxygen



levels in people with darker skin tones.

The use of AI within dentistry has raised concerns following previous research, which highlighted the potential for bias during diagnostic assistance. Affluent populations are often over-represented in data sets due to their greater degree of dental access.

Review chair Professor Dame Margaret

Whitehead said: 'Our review reveals how existing biases and injustices in society can unwittingly be incorporated at every stage of the lifecycle of AI-enabled medical devices, and then magnified in algorithm development and machine learning.'

'Our recommendations therefore call for system-wide action, requiring full government support.'

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for ensuring that all medications and medical and dental devices are safe for the public. The results of the review have prompted the agency to request that approval applications for new devices describe how they will address biases.




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## Nine in 10 patients are satisfied with their dentist, survey suggests

Nine out of 10 patients would recommend their dentist to others, according to a new survey.

The research, conducted by Which?, asked 7,422 people if they had visited their dentist over the past three years and then to rate their experience.

Of those surveyed, 57% were private patients.

Patients of independent dentists gave an average satisfaction rating of 86%, while those attending a branch of a corporate chain gave an average score of above 60%. Of the corporate groups, Portmandentex scored best at 75% (the group was listed simply as Portman in the Which? survey).

The survey also revealed that a key complaint among private patients was a lack of price transparency ahead of treatment. The best score relating to value for money across all dentists was three stars out of five.

Participants also widely accepted that NHS dentistry was in decline, which proved to be a general area of concern.

Which? members were surveyed in September 2023.



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General Dentist and Kois Mentor



**Dr Akim Benattia**  
Specialist Orthodontist  
and Graphy Speaker

Very Enjoyable, I loved the energetic presentations, Steffen is clearly highly knowledgeable and experienced. I wrote so much my pen ran out!  
—David Heads UK—

Although it was quite an effort to come here - it was beyond my expectations!  
—Christine Manske, Germany—

The past 2 days have been extremely eye opening and thought provoking. Steffen's passion is clear and infectious! It was such an enjoyable and collaborative experience in a beautiful venue.  
—Anonymous—

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## A ‘jam-packed’ North of England Dentistry Show!

The highly anticipated North of England Dentistry Show 2024 opened its doors on Saturday 9 March.

More than 1,200 people were in attendance to network, enjoy an array of high-quality lectures and take advantage of the exclusive show deals from 100s of trusted brands from across the dental industry... all under one roof.

Delegates were treated to more than 85 lectures across 11 lecture theatres, all of which were CPD verifiable.

Offering something for everyone – with three Clinical Dentistry Theatres, Dental Nursing Theatre, Laboratory Theatre, Dental Hygiene & Therapy Theatre and much more – the North of England Dentistry Show really was the show for all dental professionals.

Highlights included a no-holds-barred panel discussion with some of dentistry’s leading women – Martina Hodgson, Catherine Rutland, Anushika Brogan, Morven McCauley and Angela Auluck – at The Celebrating Women in Dentistry Lounge. They discussed inspiring inclusion in the profession to make dentistry a more equal and equitable place for all.

Craig Broughton, clinical dental technician and owner of CMB dental laboratory, shared a recent case of a partial denture for a patient with combination syndrome. He discussed the techniques he used and adapted for the case, which made for a fascinating listen.

Ben Marriott, a dental hygienist and dental nurse, gave an insightful lecture on trans inclusion in dentistry, explaining how small changes can make a big difference in ensuring your practice is a safe and welcoming space.

Another crowd-pleaser was the ever-popular Milad Shadrooh, aka The Singing Dentist, who gave attendees some of his top social media tips.

The exhibition hall provided delegates with the chance to meet the experts behind the biggest brands in the industry and discover the new products and technologies on display. With face-to-face discussions and live demos, the atmosphere was vibrant.

Julie Dale, global sales manager at Boutique Whitening, said: ‘The stand has been packed and the day has been absolutely brilliant.’

Dr Jin Vaghela and Dr Kish Patel from Smile Academy and Smile Clinic Group said: ‘It’s been jam-packed all day. We’ve had an amazing day, for those who have not come this year, you’ve missed out!’

The show will be returning to the Manchester Central Convention Complex next year on Saturday 8 March.



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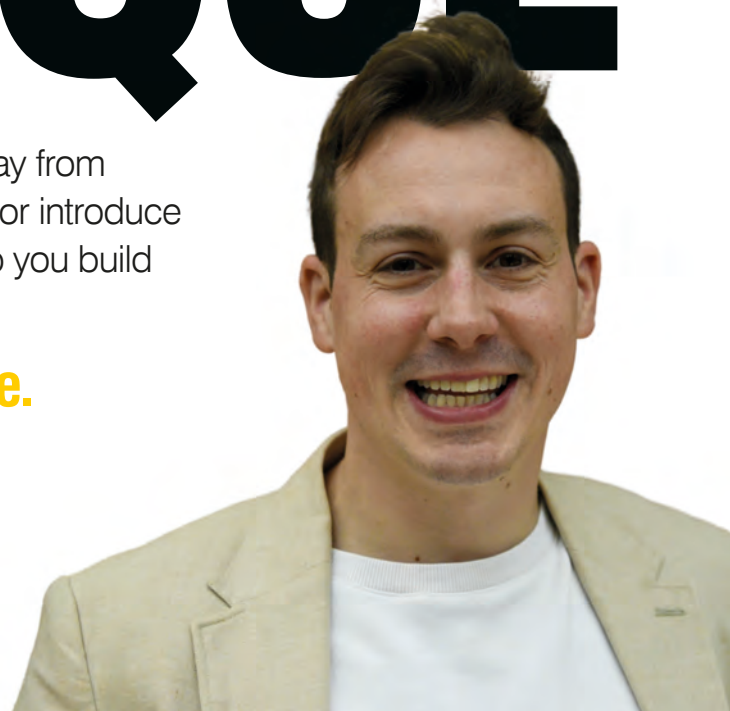


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# It's all about the money

Columnist **Chris Barrow** on why you can't spend what you haven't got



My email inbox and messages are the primary means by which I'm able to feel the pulse of what's going on in the business world of dentistry.

We have a saying in my own business that 'nobody ever messages me because they are happy'. It's not entirely true, but it is fair to say that most of my incoming correspondence is about what's going wrong, not what's going well.

## WHAT'S WRONG?

Over the past six months, the winner of the 'what's wrong?' competition was clearly: 'What's wrong with my cash flow?'

However, as we end the first quarter of the year, the 'what's wrong?' theme is slowly changing to: 'What's wrong with my team members?'

The seasoned reader may respond: 'There's nothing new about that.' But the causes of the current challenges feel unique and sinister.

I use the word 'sinister' because employers are between a rock and hard place. Over the years, team members may well have had good cause to complain about things like working conditions, lack of appreciation and, latterly, the challenges of working in the post-pandemic climate. And, of course, justifiably for some, low wages.

However, at the moment, there is one subject that dominates the majority of conversations and disputes – money.

Support team members, both clinical and non-clinical, are tapping (or banging) on the door asking for an increase in their hourly rate or salary. Self-employed clinicians are joining in with demands for higher hourly rates and percentages.

'Thus, it always was,' some might say. But I'm measuring the quantity and severity of these pay demands by observing the frequency of the 'what can I do?' messages I receive from owners. It's suddenly and dramatically off the scale.

## DOMINO EFFECT

There are, of course, absolutely no prizes for identifying the deeper background to this phenomenon – that infamous cost of living increase that has affected all of us since Trussonomics became the final collapsing domino in a process that began with the Brexit own-goal and was accelerated by COVID-19.

Put simply, we are in a mess.

Economic philosophy aside, everyone reading this piece will be familiar with rising costs at home.

At the risk of pulling the age card, I've seen a few economic ups and downs:

1. 1974 and the three-day week
2. 1979 and 19% mortgage interest rates
3. 1987 and the stock market collapse
4. 1990 and the expulsion of Margaret Thatcher from Downing Street
5. 2008 and the global banking collapse.

How many of the above five events did your dental team live through as wage earners? I would suggest very few.

Here's my final GOM (grumpy old man) rant! When each of these five economic crises happened, I tightened my belt.

Cue rolling eyeballs and raised eyebrows from readers – because how many of you lived through those five catastrophes?

Here we have the makings of a perfect storm:

- Owners who have no experience or training in how to deal with pay demands
- Owners whose profit margins are evaporating
- Team members, both PAYE and self-employed, who have been taught a level of expectation that assumes 'the boss' will simply provide – that the concept of a tightened belt is alien.

Back in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, the tightening of a belt didn't involve much in the way of lifestyle changes – maybe a year of missed holidays and a deferred purchase of home improvements. We didn't have many direct debits.

Nowadays, even I'm embarrassed to think about just how many monthly subscriptions, standing orders, direct debits, online payments and digital deductions exit my bank account every month – and I'm an empty nester!

Given a serious economic downturn, I can live without all that 'stuff' again. Maybe many of those younger than I don't think they can.

So, we have an impasse – owners with less cash flow and team members demanding more cash.

Frankly, I find it a bit scary – but then I've been around long enough to know that market forces will prevail. It is going to be very interesting to see how those forces will forge a conclusion. There will be one, but I haven't got a clue what it is – all I do is advise my owner clients to hold their line, because (as my dad used to say): 'You can't spend what you haven't got.'

CHRIS  
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- Dr Chris Prange, Caring Dental



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# Oliver Aesthetics

Joe Oliver shares the journey of creating his new cosmetic dentistry practice in Mayfair, London

I qualified in 1987 and spent the first few years of my career in various London teaching hospitals, specialising in head and neck surgery. While dealing with victims of facial trauma, mainly from road traffic accidents, I noticed that while we were able to successfully reconstruct faces, the same emphasis wasn't given to oral rehabilitation. I realised this was a matter of key importance for my patients.

This sparked my interest in cosmetic dentistry. I went on to become one of the first cosmetic dentists in the UK and have since worked with many patients, including celebrities, to create their perfect smile.

In 1991, I joined cosmetic dental practice Dentix, where I started teaching other dentists new cosmetic dentistry techniques, mostly originating in the United States. I became its clinical director and remained at the clinic until 2000.

As my knowledge and portfolio expanded, I felt it was time to start my own practice. So, in 2000, I founded The Welbeck Clinic in London's Harley Street area. I remained at the clinic until it was bought out in 2015. At this point, I set up a cosmetic dentistry unit at another London practice. However, I found I preferred to be in control of my own practice.

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*Step inside...*

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London  
W1S 4PP

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020 7770 6441

**EMAIL**  
[info@joeoliverdentist.co.uk](mailto:info@joeoliverdentist.co.uk)

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When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, I, like many others, had time to reflect on my career and future and decided it was time to start up another practice of my own. The concept of Oliver Aesthetics was born.

## **THE PRACTICE**

When it came to choosing the location, I found it easy to settle on Old Bond Street. I wanted to remain in central London but had become disenchanted with the Harley Street area and its grandiose buildings and air of seriousness. I wanted to find another prime London location but one with a more relaxed feel.

Legislation around property class uses had recently changed and this increased the number and types of building available.

The Mayfair premises ticked all the boxes – its prestigious location in one of London's most renowned fashion and entertainment districts has a fantastic buzz and is conveniently situated.

## **THE BUILD**

As the practice has a relatively limited footprint, creating two decent-size surgeries plus a spacious waiting area proved to be one of the biggest challenges of the project.

I commissioned RPA Dental to design the practice and Apollo Interiors to do the build.

A photograph of a modern reception desk in a clinic. The desk has a white marble top and a light-colored wood-grain base. On the desk, there is a large, vibrant bouquet of roses in a glass vase, a small silver container, and a stack of magazines. A modern lamp with a white, ribbed shade and a gold base sits on the desk. In the background, a wall features the clinic's logo 'OA' and the text 'OLIVER AESTHETICS MAYFAIR / LONDON'. A doorway with a green exit sign is visible to the right.

OA  
OLIVER AESTHETICS  
MAYFAIR / LONDON

### *The ethos*

The new Oliver Aesthetics practice in the heart of London W1 aims to create a bespoke perfect smile for each patient in relaxed but stylish surroundings. The clinic offers a range of cosmetic dental procedures and smile makeover treatments, involving porcelain veneers (Dr Joe Oliver's specialism), crowns, implant crowns and bridgework, as well as Invisalign and composite bonding.

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## *The team*

**FOUNDER**  
Dr Joe Oliver

**BUSINESS AND OPERATIONS MANAGER**  
Anne Reynolds

**PRACTICE AND COMPLIANCE MANAGER**  
Kinga Kuniewska

**DENTAL HYGIENIST**  
Kelly-Ann Reed

**DENTAL HYGIENIST AND THERAPIST**  
Pan Phyu Hmwe

**LEAD DENTAL NURSE**  
Magda Caban

**SENIOR DENTAL NURSE**  
Daniela Santos

**WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT**  
Jenny Watts

We started designing the clinic in August 2022 and the build phase ran from late November to April.

I was happy with both the design and build process. Peter Higson at RPA Dental captured exactly what I wanted in the design and the Apollo Interiors construction team was very considerate.

I have an interest in interior design, so was keen to be fully involved in this side of the project. I'd previously been involved in a few residential renovation projects and have a keen eye for interiors – if I walk into a stylish restaurant or bar, I always notice how it's been designed and any key design features.

I didn't want the practice to feel clinical but instead homely and relaxing for patients. As Old Bond Street is a conservation area, it was important for the design to reflect this and complement our surroundings.





We achieved a luxurious feel through bespoke timber feature walls, a warm neutral colour palette and ceiling light features in both surgeries.

The finished result is both stylish and unique.

#### THE MARKETING

We are active on social media and have an agency on board to support us with our digital marketing. We also regularly run pay-per-click (PPC) and search engine optimisation (SEO) campaigns to promote the Oliver Aesthetics brand.

Our new website – [www.joeoliverdentist.co.uk](http://www.joeoliverdentist.co.uk) – features patient testimonials, celebrity reviews and press coverage.

#### THE RESULT

Our patients tell us how much they love the new Oliver Aesthetics clinic, particularly the location. In the heart of Mayfair, there is so much going on and they can enjoy a spot of shopping or lunch before or after their appointment.

It's not just the patients who love the new practice – I do, too! We've created a relaxed and unique boutique ambience, which is a far cry from the traditional Harley Street feel that I was trying to avoid. I am delighted with the new practice – it's exactly what I hoped to achieve.

#### *Who was involved?*

##### Architect/surgery design

RPA Dental

[www.dental-equipment.co.uk](http://www.dental-equipment.co.uk)

##### Build

Apollo Interiors

[www.apollointeriors.com](http://www.apollointeriors.com)

##### Dental equipment

Kavo Uniqa dental chairs

[www.kavo.com](http://www.kavo.com)

Dürr power tower

[www.duerrdental.com](http://www.duerrdental.com)

##### Practice management system

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# The architects of a grand design

**Harriet and Mishal Trivedi** share how the expectation to sympathetically blend heritage preservation with dental innovation drove The Dental Sanctuary, their squat practice project

**F**or Harriet and Mishal Trivedi, transforming a grade II listed building into a luxurious dental clinic was never just about their aspirations to own a practice.

Renovating the premises in the heart of Manchester came with significant responsibilities, and preserving its distinct features while adapting it for contemporary use was paramount to the success of their project.

But the result speaks for itself. The Dental Sanctuary stands on a busy road in Salford and has breathed new life into the historic three-storey Victorian house. In creating their new private dental practice, they have also managed to respect the 1840s building and its historical architectural interest.

The Dental Sanctuary is the result of a long-held shared vision. Harriet is the practice principal and Mishal is its business director. Their plan was to create a dental practice that could deliver high-quality general dentistry within a serene and comfortable environment.

## READY TO LEAP

The couple met at university, where Harriet studied dentistry and Mishal studied electrical and electronic engineering. Harriet qualified from Liverpool in 2009 and started in hospital

maxillofacial surgery. She continued her career in general practice, working as an associate – mainly in the NHS – but gradually transitioning into private dental care. She recalls: 'I was finding NHS dentistry less and less ideal as I wanted to offer patients the full range of treatments without time constraints.'

Mishal's role as business director brings a holistic angle to the practice with his extensive experience in leading and delivering major transformational infrastructure projects globally. And the couple's dedication to creating an all-encompassing and patient-centred environment is evident in the attention to detail.

So, what prompted them to choose 2023 as the opportune time to launch their practice?

Harriet explains: 'We had been thinking about owning a practice for years and decided on opening a squat. Although it initially felt risky, it was our preferred option over buying an existing practice. We wanted our business to reflect our vision – high-quality, affordable dentistry in a relaxing atmosphere.'

In the summer of 2022, the couple found a beautiful grade II listed building to lease and realise their dream.

'When we saw it, we fell in love with the bright, airy rooms and high ceilings. The layout was already perfect for a large

## Step inside...

**THE PRACTICE**  
The Dental Sanctuary  
122 Great Cloves Street,  
Salford M7 1RN

**TELEPHONE**  
0161 843 5711

**EMAIL**  
reception@thedentalsanctuary.co.uk

**WEBSITE**  
thedentalsanctuary.co.uk



## PRACTICE DESIGN

reception and waiting room, with two spacious surgeries and a decontamination room, with space for expansion when the time came. We felt the opportunity was too good to miss, and we had reached the point where we felt that if not now, then when?

'The location is in Salford, only five minutes from Manchester city centre and, although footfall is low, the practice is visible on the very busy A-road with lots of traffic surrounded by new residential apartment blocks. We are easily accessible from Salford and Manchester city centre, and having a car park definitely helps.'

### CHALLENGING BALANCING ACT

The building classification was already suitable for them to start a practice. Still, the grade II listed status prevented them from making alterations to the exterior of the building.

Consequently, the project was no ordinary endeavour, and they faced a challenging balancing act. Every aspect of the facility was meticulously considered – from the flooring and lighting to the cabinetry, decor and dental equipment.

The reception area is often patients' first point of contact, and the duo recognised its importance. The redesign of this space maximises seating, accommodates the clinic's need for functionality and creates an ambient atmosphere. The use of premium furnishings and a bold colour scheme sets the tone.

Inspiration can come from various sources, and for Harriet and Mishal the design of The Dental Sanctuary started with a dark navy Belmont chair.

Harriet says: 'We loved the colour and chose matching cabinetry. I have always used Belmont chairs, so I was familiar with them. Their solid reputation and good value reassured us. We went to the Belmont showroom and chose the Eurus S6 model for both treatment centres. We chose the Eurus S6 because it felt modern and efficient with a comfortable and luxurious feel, which fitted in with the ethos of The Dental Sanctuary.'

From there, the overall look developed.

'We wanted a neutral colour scheme that embraced earthy, relaxed colours with a botanical theme. We love plants and have a few in the waiting room, although we have tried to rein ourselves in and not put too many in there!'

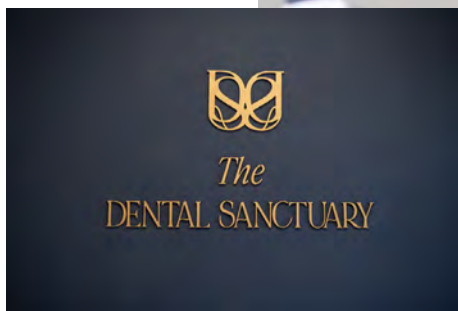
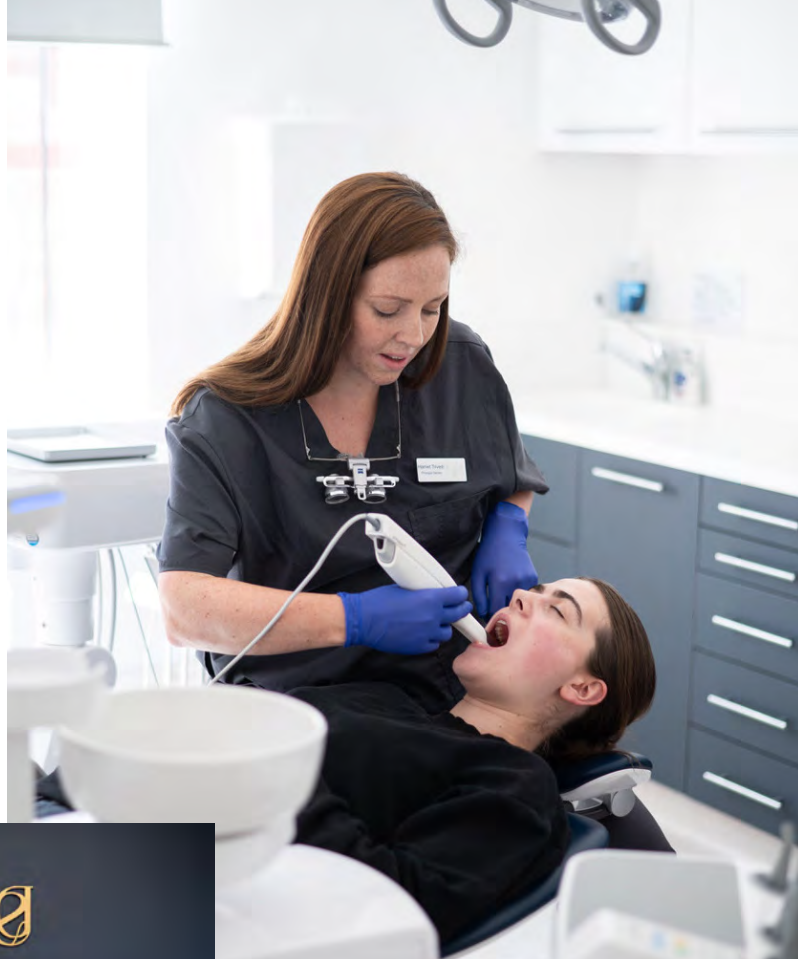
They worked with the team at Global Dental on the fit-out, who, she says, were 'amazing'.

'We're so happy with the result. We had an excellent relationship with them, and the whole team was quick and helpful with any queries. The project was very efficient, and they were also accommodating with everything we needed to pass our Care Quality Commission (CQC) interview. We can't believe how quickly the project went from concept to opening.'

There were a few sleepless nights. She says the sheer volume of tasks proved 'quite overwhelming at times'.

### BUNDLE OF JOY

Amid the chaos, the couple were delighted to discover that their long-awaited third daughter was due in July 2023. Her arrival only accelerated their business plans.



Harriet laughs: 'We embraced the madness, and now she is a reassuring presence in the practice. Having the baby around has meant we have appointed associates sooner than planned. But it has forced us to grow quickly, and we now have a team of three associates after just six months.'

She adds: 'Good organisation and communication was key. Being a husband and wife team helped. We naturally fell into different roles, Mishal sorting out the business and project management side of things and me handling all things dental.'

And she enthusiastically credits Mishal for conceptualising The Dental Sanctuary, an idea born after extensive brainstorming. 'It instantly felt right. "Sanctuary" perfectly encapsulates the intended ambience – a departure from sterile clinics.'

The plan was to create an inviting dental haven where a welcoming ambience replaced a more sterile, clinical environment. By re-purposing a building to intertwine past elegance with contemporary comfort, they have undeniably fulfilled their vision.

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# How to create a winning website

Dental marketing expert **Angela Homer** lists the essential topics that should always be up for discussion with a website designer... before hiring them

**F**rom branding and design to development and copywriting, your practice website must be aesthetically pleasing, technically sound and optimised to perform well, attracting the type of patient for your practice while adhering to GDPR and General Dental Council (GDC) regulations.

A robust digital presence will include a social media strategy across multiple platforms and paid lead generation, most commonly through Google and social paid ads. It should also support a great-looking and high-converting website. Organic and local search engine optimisation (SEO) are vital elements, which I hope to focus on in a future article.

But what are the methodologies and tools that create patient-centric marketing campaigns? How will your website designer personalise engagement strategies and utilise data-driven approaches to foster stronger connections between your dental practice and patients that will support a growing business?

It's not just about building a website; it's about nurturing a thriving online presence that reflects the excellence of your dental practice.

Asking the right questions can help clarify expectations, gauge the agency's expertise and ensure a

successful long-term partnership for creating a website that meets your practice needs.

This article presents some crucial topics you should consider when appointing your next website design agency – and why.

## EXPERIENCE AND PORTFOLIO

Experience, personality and flexibility are essential ingredients when choosing the right web design agency for you. What experience does the agency have in creating websites for dental clinics? Can the agency provide examples and evidence of successful results? Ask for references or case studies from previous dental clinic clients and check any testimonials or reviews.

It is essential that you choose an agency that works with you, actively listens and engages positively, and is honest and manages your expectations.

Communication with the agency is critical to keeping the project moving in a timely manner, so if you are a hands-on principal working in the practice, ask if they have flexible working hours to suit you.

## CUSTOMISATION AND BRANDING

Customisation, design and great function are all critical essentials in

website design. They must reflect you and your dental practice: an excellent website accurately represents the brand with language and imagery tailored and unique to you and attracts the right kind of patient.

Are you looking for a solid clinical design or a more fun approach? Do you want bold or subtle? How will the agency ensure the website design

aligns with your practice branding and identity? Can it accommodate specific design preferences or incorporate existing branding elements into the website?

Branding and design across all channels should be consistent, and a good design agency will

## IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT BUILDING A WEBSITE; IT'S ABOUT NURTURING A THRIVING ONLINE PRESENCE THAT REFLECTS THE EXCELLENCE OF YOUR DENTAL PRACTICE

help seed your personality into your website and marketing.

For most principals, the practice is an extension of them, and the online presence should reflect this. Ensure the agency team understands who you are.

You may already have a strong brand and excellent marketing skills, but now you need to hand over the reins to an agency to help you rebrand or bring the brand to life. Ensure you give them a strong brief and discuss whether they have an artistic licence or need to work within the guidelines; communication is critical.



**Angela Homer**

Angela runs the award-winning Elevated Dental Agency that won Website of the Year Midlands at the Dentistry Awards 2022, was highly commended in the same category in 2023 and was highly commended for the Website of the Year South category at the Private Dentistry Awards 2023. For more information, visit [www.elevatedental.agency](http://www.elevatedental.agency).

# WEBSITE WIREFRAME

## Key questions to ask a website designer...

- What experience does the agency have in creating websites for dental clinics?
- Can the agency provide examples and evidence of successful results?
- How will the agency ensure the website design aligns with the practice's branding and identity?
- Can the agency accommodate specific design preferences or incorporate existing branding elements into the website?
- How will the agency ensure the website is mobile-responsive and user-friendly?
- Will the website be a bespoke design, customised, or template version?
- Can the agency provide a detailed breakdown of the project milestones and deliverables?
- What is the agency's pricing structure for website design and development?
- Are there any additional costs, such as ongoing maintenance fees, that you should know about?
- What ongoing support or maintenance packages are offered once the website is live?
- Does the agency offer flexible working hours?

### FUNCTIONALITY AND FEATURES

A dental website design agency should understand the features and functionalities that will enhance a dental practice's website and the overall efficiency of its online presence.

Embracing tools that increase the patient experience – such as online scheduling and chatbots – demonstrates a commitment to staying current. It shows an awareness of evolving patient expectations and a willingness to adopt technologies that improve the patient online journey.

Therefore, a dental website agency should have a range of add-ons at its fingertips to create a user-friendly, efficient and competitive online presence for the dental practice.

These features all help to contribute to improved patient satisfaction, streamlined operations and a positive overall image of the dental practice.

### CONTENT MANAGEMENT AND UPDATES

The website should allow your team to update and manage content independently. Most agencies provide training or support for maintaining the website after it's launched.

Ensure a dedicated person within your team can access the website to update staff members, change opening times, or access the fees page, for example. This will save you incurring charges and, more importantly, time waiting for amends to be actioned.

### DESKTOP AND MOBILE VERSIONS

How will the dental website agency ensure the website is mobile-responsive and user-friendly? Will your website be a bespoke design, customised, or template version? With approximately 80% of your patients looking on a mobile device, it is more important than ever to ensure

a great user experience by being quick to load and easy to navigate, especially the mobile version.

Some web designers will build with a mobile-first approach, allowing you to influence the mobile layout; this means you can decide where on the screen the most important, converting content appears and can limit the amount of text scrolling that can sometimes turn off prospective patients.

### SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE

Ensure the website is kept updated to avoid any vulnerability in the site and safeguard your patient's data.

GDPR laws were introduced to keep the patients' data safe, and your agency will guide you to ensure the website is compliant.

GDC requirements are more about providing information to ensure patients can make an informed decision when choosing the practice; this includes information about

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dentists, including GDC number and qualifications, contact details and complaints procedures for the practice, which are easy to access online.

**TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES**

Establish an estimated timeline for the project. Can the agency provide a detailed breakdown of the project milestones and deliverables?

Asking these questions helps establish a clear understanding between you both, fostering a smoother development process and ensuring the final product meets your needs and expectations.

Understanding the estimated timeline helps plan other business aspects, such as marketing and operations. It also allows the dental practice owner to align the website development process with their overall business strategy.

Proactive problem-solving ensures the project stays on track with regular check-ins at critical milestones. And don't forget, if you want a job done well, it might be worth waiting for the right person.

**COST AND PAYMENT STRUCTURE**

What is the agency's pricing structure for website design and development? Are there any additional costs, such as ongoing maintenance fees, that you should know about?

A clear understanding of the costs – and how these are timed with the project's development – aids the project's budget management. It lets you plan and allocate funds accordingly, preventing unexpected financial surprises – and ensures the agency delivers on time.

**ONGOING SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE**

What ongoing support or maintenance packages are offered once the website is live?

There will always be a few snags, functionality, content, and imagery amends, so make sure you know what timeframe you have to proof and amend post-launch.

**WORK PATTERNS AND SUPPORT AVAILABILITY**

Is the agency available at the right time? This is important as many practice owners are so busy working 'in the business' that very often, the only time they get to work 'on the business' is outside of their practice's opening hours.

An accommodating agency will work around your hours and may even have late-night working hours to accommodate their clients.

**AND FINALLY, LOOK TO THE FUTURE...**

Where do you want to be in 12 months – or five years? At the start of your journey, share your business plans with the agency so they can build a website on the right platform. This is a significant investment for your business, so making sure it can scale with you is crucial.

You may have a modest, small practice right now, but big development plans to change the site and build the website that represents where you are going so it has longevity.

If you have plans to expand, will this be by acquisition and have multiple brands or set up squat practices? Will the website become a multi-site, and can the site you are developing accommodate that?



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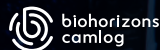
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# Navigating the online world of reviews

**Simon Chard** discusses why reviews are ‘incredibly important’ to your brand, how to increase the number of positive reviews and how to deal with negative ones

**I**n this sixth part of my building a brand series, we’re going to talk about a very interesting topic, which is navigating the online world of reviews.

Whether written, video, positive or negative, reviews are such a powerful part of building your online presence and building your own brand, whether that be your personal brand, your practice brand or even a start-up brand.

## PEOPLE TRUST PEOPLE

People buy from people, and people trust other people. There’s no point in me going out there and telling everyone that I’m the world’s best dentist because, obviously, I’m going to say that and nobody’s going to believe me.

What people are going to believe is other people who say that they’ve come to see me, or my team, and they’ve had a wonderful experience. And this is something that’s been really powerful for me over my whole career.

I’ve done a lot of work on video testimonials over the years, right back from when I just qualified. If I’d done a good filling or a little anterior composite, I would always set my SLR up on a tripod and get that patient to record a video testimonial.



**Simon Chard**

Simon is an award-winning cosmetic dentist, international lecturer and British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry board director. He co-owns Rothley Lodge Dental with his wife, Dr Meghan Chard, where he practises minimally invasive restorative dentistry utilising cutting-edge technology and techniques. Simon is a co-founder of Pärila toothpaste tabs, an eco-friendly and plastic-free oral healthcare brand.

Often, they weren’t that confident in front of the camera, and sometimes those testimonials can feel a bit awkward and don’t really resonate. But you never know, and I think the best practice, for me, has always just been to ask the question.

Some people will say no, some people will say yes but not really engage, and then you’ll be really surprised that about 25% just absolutely fly. And it’s those that can be so powerful for building your brand.

## THE KEY TO RECEIVING REVIEWS

Now, with the world of online reviews, Google reviews are a really, really powerful way for you to grow your search engine optimisation (SEO) and for people to review the services that you’re providing.

All of us who own practices know the importance of Google reviews. We’ve tried everything at the practice with

regards to building online reviews. We’ve done QR codes in the clinic, we’ve asked patients to do them when they get home, we’ve tried to get them to do them there – those will work to varying degrees.

But what’s worked the most instrumentally and the most powerfully is an automated email that goes into their inbox when they get home with a little incentive – a £50 Amazon voucher or something like that – to leave a positive Google review.

That has probably created five times the number of the reviews that we were getting on a monthly basis.

I’d really recommend that you implement that in your own practices. Or equally, if you’re an associate and you’ve got your own personal brand and your own personal website, you can encourage them to write a review directly on that.



## DEALING WITH NEGATIVE REVIEWS

The reality of the world is that we're not going to please everyone. We're always going to have some negative reviews that pop up online. And this can be really, really traumatic for you to deal with. I'm a people pleaser; I want all my patients to be happy, the ones that have seen me or even the ones that have seen my associates or the rest of the team.

We've got seven surgeries in our practice. So, there is a lot of people going through it. But you're not going to please everyone, and some will feel the need to write bad reviews about you online.

The first thing to say is take a deep breath. You're not going to please everyone. Accept that the review has been put there and don't respond with aggression or anger; you need to manage this in a way that is most positive for the future of your brand.

The way that you do that is by acknowledging the feedback – obviously don't reveal any personal information because these sort of interactions can be quite litigious sometimes. Try to be very clear about what you and your brand represents, how you try to look after your patients.

Always respond to them if you can, because other people who see that review will also look at your response to it.

I always recommend responding to both the good and the bad feedback on your social pages and on your Google pages, because that will also improve your performance on the algorithm.

## WHAT'S WORKED THE MOST INSTRUMENTALLY AND THE MOST POWERFULLY IS AN AUTOMATED EMAIL THAT GOES INTO THEIR INBOX WHEN THEY GET HOME WITH A LITTLE INCENTIVE

## REVIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reviews are incredibly important. You need other people to recommend your services – you recommending them alone is not going to do the job.





Remember to leverage video testimonial where possible. Video is far more engaging than the written word. It seems so much more authentic, and always ask all of your patients who you feel are happy with your services whether they'll do one for you. You'd be really surprised how some people really come out of their shell on camera when you put them in a position to tell the world about the services that you provided.

Lastly, always respond to your reviews – the positive and the negative. And don't take it too personally when you do inevitably receive negative feedback.



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# Dental groups: market overview

**Tom Morley** outlines what a dental group is and the level of market appetite for such businesses

**A** dental group is usually defined as a dental company that has three or more locations under one collective umbrella.

In some cases, it will have unified branding across all locations, however, some groups like their practices to have their own identities and not be known as part of a group.

Dental groups typically operate on a fully/partially associate-led basis and, for these to be viable in the long term, would have an average minimum turnover range of between £800,000 and £1,000,000 per site.

Dental groups can also operate on a national or a more localised level with some also incorporating their lab offering within the group to streamline their internal services.

## BUYER APPETITE

Dental groups typically command larger asking prices, so buyers are often corporates, other acquiring dental groups, or private equity platform purchasers as, quite often for an individual, purchasing a group can be out of reach financially.

Groups are always sought-after and will be considered nationwide. However, where a group operates predominantly in more rural areas where recruitment can be a challenge, you may find that the buyer pool narrows.

Groups that are established in major



urban or market town locations tend to be the most sought-after within the market.

## WHAT TO CONSIDER IF YOU'RE THINKING OF SELLING YOUR GROUP

The sale of a dental group is often complex, especially where you have multiple locations and large numbers of staff, so accurate financial modelling is paramount. It is always advisable to engage with a reputable agent to assist in the initial appraisal and eventual marketing of the opportunity.

If you're looking to sell a group, it is important to seek advice on the right target market as some groups will have a predominantly NHS focus as opposed to some having a mainly private or indeed specialist focus, so targeting the correct buyers is key to achieving the best results when navigating the offer process.

Some corporate operators inform their targeted groups that they are the 'only buyers for this opportunity' attempting to stifle competition but, in my experience, this is not the case. Approaching a multiple buyer pool leads to competition from purchasers, allowing the seller to make an informed decision from multiple competitively achieved offers.

Group opportunities, though they can be few and far between, are sure to attract considerable interest. Christie & Co has handled some of the largest dental sales in the UK, and it's our experience that the information must be presented clearly, professionally and in a manner that potential buyers would expect. This will make the sale process much smoother and hopefully, by eliminating anomalies in financial due diligence, will avoid a potential price reduction midway through the process.



**Tom Morley**

Tom is associate director – dental at Christie & Co. Email Tom at [tom.morley@christie.com](mailto:tom.morley@christie.com).

# Setting up a squat practice

**Harmy Bains** explores some of the considerations when setting up a squat practice

**A** squat practice is operated by a dentist who has started it from scratch, rather than one where an existing practice is bought and continued to be operated.

The main reasons to set up a squat practice are to be independent, make decisions, and meet your longer-term ambitions within dentistry. There is also the element of financial gain; owning your practice means potentially earning more income, but the practice's growth can realise a value upon its sale.

There is much to consider when setting up a squat practice; this article will explore some of the key issues.

## RISKS

As an associate, you don't take any of the risks a practice owner takes. For instance, opening a squat practice requires capital up front to pay for the building, fit-out, marketing and legal costs. It can take around two to three years before the practice makes a decent profit, while in that growth phase, financial expenses still have to be covered.

There has to be a balance between growing your practice and growing too quickly that the cash flow can't keep up.

Opening a squat gives you a level of independence 'to be your own boss', but it can be lonely managing a business on your own.



### Harmy Bains

Harmy is a chartered financial adviser with more than a decade of experience. He specialises in the dental sector, helping associates and principal dentists achieve their financial goals. Connect with Harmy on Instagram @Harmy\_Bains\_IFA\_Dentistry.

Dr Veerinder Nazran, owner of Birmingham Dental Excellence, says: 'I opened my own practice to have more control, but I have mentors that have helped me make good decisions since I set up'. Consider reaching out to fellow practice owners who have been there and done it for valuable advice.

## BUSINESS PLAN

Creating a business plan is the first step to setting up a squat practice.

Having realistic goals and milestones you want the business to achieve allows you to maintain a direction for your business.

You could think about how many patients you want to have by the end of months three and six. You also want to ensure the services and providers you will use are clear in your mind, so they fit in with the image you want to portray for your practice.

## LOCATION

Having the business plan is one thing, but ensuring the practice's location is right is imperative.

Look at:

- The local competition
- Whether the local area's demographics align with the services you wish to offer
- The footfall
- Parking for patients.

These factors will define how successfully you can implement your business plan.

Planning laws mean converting an existing property into a dental practice is easier than ever. For example, you can open a dental practice in a former retail outlet, and applying for a change of use isn't a requirement.

Lena Thaker, a partner at Carter Bond Solicitors, specialising in property law, says: 'Agreeing the commercial terms at the outset with the landlord is so important to have a smooth legal process'. Employing an excellent legal team is vital to help you through

this stage of the process to make sure the terms are to the benefit of your practice in the long term.

## SECURING FUNDING

Funding your dream practice will be another

step you may need to take.

You will need a robust business plan and cash flow forecast for your first year in business. Creating this cash flow is usually based on how many patients you expect to bring in, the average value of each treatment and other revenue, such as product sales.

You will also need to assess whether to buy equipment or lease it. Again, this decision will impact the amount of money you will have to cover the costs of the business in the first months of opening.

## RECRUIT EMPLOYEES

Although you may wish to do as many of the roles within the practice yourself while you start out, having a

good practice manager can be worth the costs to ensure you can focus on generating revenue and bringing in new patients.

Your practice manager can look after the day-to-day so you can focus on maintaining the business plan you set out.

You also will need to learn how to manage your employees and ensure that the business complies with employment laws, which you can do through consultation with a specialist in this area.

### MARKETING

In this age of social media, marketing should be at the forefront of your mind on patient acquisition. This area is fraught with competition, so your brand and values must be solid with a broad reach to ensure the patients you want to attract will see your messaging.

Your business's marketing takes up a fair amount of time, which is why many practices outsource it to an external individual or agency; this does create extra costs, so understanding the financial return on that cost is essential.

### CHOOSING PROFESSIONALS TO HAVE AROUND YOU

Having the right professionals around you as you start this journey is critical. It is helpful that those professionals are specialists in how dental practices work. You can look to trusted sources such as Private Dentistry or associations such as the British Dental Association to see who they work with and shortlist those professionals.

The relationships you have with professionals such as accountants, solicitors, independent financial adviser etc, are ones you will have throughout the life of the business, so choosing the correct one is paramount.

### LEGAL

You must also have your shareholder agreement written up properly and outline who owns what and what percentage they own if you set up a practice with a business partner.

You should have something to deal with unforeseen events such as death, illness or injury. Implementing provisions for these potential issues protects the business you are building and your beneficiaries from a sudden change in circumstance, meaning you cannot meet the financial goals you set or the fixed cost of running the business.

### INSURANCE

Something that can be overlooked is having the correct insurance for your practice. You need to ensure the building is insured, much like your home, where you include the building but also insure the contents.

Furthermore, you will need to take out other insurance policies, such as employer's liability and professional indemnity insurance. These are only a few examples of the insurance you need to take out; finding a professional who understands dentistry to source the correct insurance policies and help you implement them is an excellent step to take some of the weight.

### THE FUTURE

All the hard work of those first months and years does mean you learn lessons along the way. Dr Manrina Rhodes, principal dentist at DRMR Clinic located in Kensington, says: 'I can't go through the process of building my practice with all the learning that comes with that, and not open another practice. But I won't do it until the DRMR clinic is established to confidently replicate it when I expand.'

The lessons of setting up a practice from scratch give you valuable learning to impart knowledge to aspiring associates or plan to expand your own portfolio to multiple practice ownership.

Setting up your own squat practice is challenging and a labour of love. You will have to learn to love the process and remember that you are building a legacy that can provide you with financial stability and, eventually, a level of financial comfort that not everyone will be afforded when you retire.

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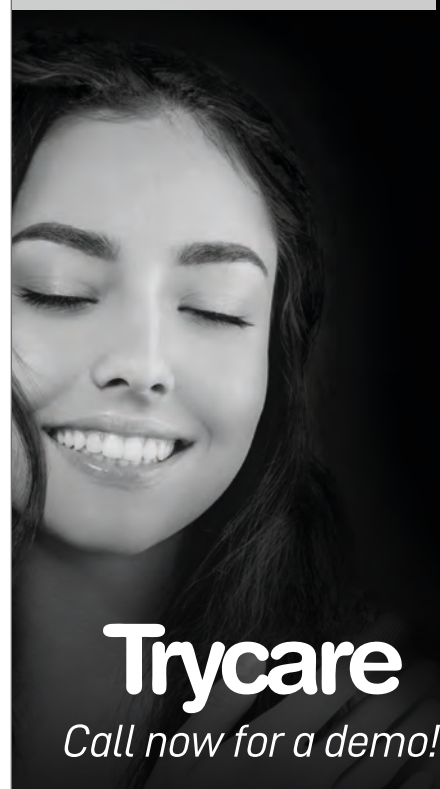
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# Who are your *key people?*

**Graham Hutton** highlights the importance of understanding the value of key people in your practice

**A**s a dental specialist financial planner, I provide advice and guidance on some of the more complex aspects of business planning. For example, business agreements, continuity, legacy planning and practice sale. During a financial review of a dental practice, I cover these areas in detail.

Most practice owners have given careful consideration to what would happen if the dentist were unable to work. However, it often transpires that other key members of staff, who may be crucial to the day-to-day running of the practice, have not been considered.

This may be a member of staff with a specialist skill set, or a practice manager who perhaps couldn't easily be replaced. When this occurs, I would ask my clients the following question: what would happen to your business if these members of staff could not work for any extended period of time?

Identifying key people in the practice might vary depending on the type of business.

## **SMALL PRACTICES**

Many of the practices that I come across are operated and managed by families. A family-run business can be highly successful and offer many advantages. However, if the right planning is not in place, any issues

with the business can very quickly move from impacting the business's finances to the finances at home.

To give an example, I was recently contacted by a dental practice run by a husband and wife – the husband was the dentist and the wife was the practice manager. Both were key to running the business.

If the husband were unable to work, a locum or replacement dentist would be required – the practice had already made provisions for this eventuality.

The wife was responsible for the day-to-day running of the practice. She administered the diary, knew how to use the bespoke software used by the practice and paid the wages, the overheads and so forth.

During one conversation, the husband made it very clear that he did not know how to run the practice. When I asked what would happen if his wife were unable to work, he replied: 'If it was going to be more than a couple of weeks, you would probably have to lock the doors as I wouldn't know what to do.'

Clearly, the role of the practice manager was key to the business. As this partnership was a couple, any long-term absence would impact not only the business but also their personal finances.

## **ABSENCE COVER**

Let's now imagine that the dentist and the practice manager are completely unrelated and the impact of a long-term absence doesn't follow the practice manager home. The practice owner needs to consider the potential financial impact on

the business of bringing in a locum practice manager, while also paying the absent practice manager sick pay. This could very quickly eat into the profitability of a practice.

While many practices don't offer sick pay to their practice staff, it is important to also consider what the value of this might be as part of a benefit package to help retain a key staff member. Could this be provided in a way that doesn't have a large impact on the finances of the business in the event of absence?

## **SMALL DENTAL GROUPS**

It is becoming increasingly common for small group dental businesses with multiple practices to have a senior business manager who sits outside of the practice but runs several practices with practice managers who sit beneath them.

This dental business manager overseeing several practice managers and practices is a relatively new role in dentistry and one that needs to be carefully considered in terms of their risk to the business if poached, absent or away.

Outside of this business manager role it is likely that there may be several key people within the group of practices, which will include the clinicians. However, it should be remembered that for the dentist to generate income by treating patients, the business needs to be able to run smoothly behind them.

It could be that without key clerical staff, there would be an impact on the business both in terms of operational efficiency and ultimately income.



**Graham Hutton**

Graham is an experienced dental specialist financial planner at Wesleyan Financial Services, supporting dentists, their families and their practices with financial planning to secure their financial future.



### KEY PERFORMERS AND SKILL SETS

A theme common to all practices is that there will often be an imbalance in the income generated by the different performers within the business.

As part of any review of the risks within a dental business, consideration should be given to which performers are key to the overall turnover of the business and ultimately profitability.

In a well-run dental business, you should have a sufficiently forensic level of bookkeeping and accountancy to easily identify which performers being absent would make a noticeable dent in the business profits.

Another factor within this could be that some members of staff may have specific skill sets.

The most obvious examples of these may be a dentist who specialises in orthodontics or aesthetics. They may generate a proportionately higher portion of the business income, but what about other key members of staff who may be less obvious?

### CONSIDER ALL THE COGS

To give an illustrative example, several months ago I was approached by a practice owner for support on retirement and estate planning.

During the financial overview, I noted that the dental practice had its own laboratory onsite with a skilled technician supporting the practice. This practice did all their own lab work in house and were also starting to take work from other dentists to generate more business.

One thing that they hadn't thought of, however, was what would happen to the business if their laboratory technician were unable to work for whatever reason.

To train a new technician would take time, and to find someone else with a matching skill set at short notice is likely to be not only challenging but also costly. For that reason, it is important to consider all the cogs within the business, not just the clinicians.

### SEEKING SPECIALIST ADVICE

A dental specialist financial planner can help practice owners to

effectively gauge and measure which members of staff are key to business operation and how their extended absence could financially impact the business.

Having taken out a significant loan to purchase the practice, it is important to ensure that you have carefully identified who the key people are in the business and the risks that their potential absence could pose.

During a financial review of the business, I would encourage my clients to think not only about protecting the income generators – the dentists – but also protecting the other key people. This ensures that income generators can concentrate on practising dentistry rather than being pulled away into other tasks in which they have little or no experience.

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*For more information, you can book a no-obligation financial review with a dental specialist financial planner at Wesleyan Financial Services by visiting [wesleyan.co.uk/lifes-journey](http://wesleyan.co.uk/lifes-journey) or calling 0800 316 3784.*



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**SWALLOW**

# Let's talk menopause

**Sarah Buxton** sheds light on the legal framework related to menopausal employees and offers practical advice for creating a supportive workplace for all team members

In the modern world of workplace diversity and inclusion, addressing perimenopause and menopause has become increasingly important, especially in professions like dentistry that demand high levels of empathy and understanding.

Statistics from the General Dental Council (2022) reveal a significant trend within the dental profession: 52% of dentists and an overwhelming 92.8% of dental care professionals (DCPs) are female.

Furthermore, approximately 35% of DCPs and 43% of dentists fall within the age bracket commonly associated with menopause (Bell, Garlick and Stevens, 2022).

This data highlights a crucial consideration for the sector, as a substantial segment of its workforce is likely to experience menopausal symptoms, underscoring the importance of addressing this issue in dental practices.

The reality is that dental professionals across the board must navigate the complexities of legal obligations while fostering an environment that supports employees experiencing menopausal symptoms.

## LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The Equality Act 2010 (which covers England, Scotland and Wales) does

not specifically list menopause as a protected characteristic.

However, the intersection of menopause with anti-discrimination laws indicates that treating employees less favourably because of their menopausal symptoms could be seen as discrimination if it relates to a protected characteristic. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, and sex.

For example, unwanted remarks, banter, jokes or teasing regarding someone's perimenopause or menopause symptoms may constitute harassment, or even sexual harassment, depending on the context of the behaviour.

This means dental practice employers must be vigilant to prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation related to menopause, underscoring the importance of a well-informed and inclusive approach to employee welfare.

Recognising the broad impact of menopause on workplace rights and wellbeing is essential for dental practices committed to upholding legal and ethical standards.

## SUPPORTIVE PRACTICES

Creating a supportive environment for perimenopausal and menopausal employees involves a multifaceted approach that extends beyond

## *Supporting perimenopausal and menopausal employees: a multifaceted approach*

- Staff training and awareness: educating staff about menopause can build empathy and understanding, making the workplace more accommodating for affected employees
- Open dialogue: encouraging transparent communication helps in addressing menopausal concerns sensitively and effectively
- Clear procedures: for handling complaints related to menopause discrimination, ensuring a safe and respectful workplace for all
- Reasonable adjustments: adjusting workplace policies and practices to accommodate the needs of menopausal employees can significantly improve their working day experience
- Wellbeing policies: developing policies that explicitly support menopausal employees sends a strong message of inclusivity and support
- Health and safety assessments: ensure these consider menopausal symptoms, alongside establishing in-house and local support networks with other practices.



**Sarah Buxton**

Sarah is a dental employment and HR solicitor and director at Buxton Coates Solicitors, a full-service, independent law firm providing bespoke legal services for dental professionals. For further details, email [info@buxtoncoates.com](mailto:info@buxtoncoates.com).

legal compliance to include cultural and procedural changes within the workplace. This may include:

- Staff training and awareness
- Open communication
- Reasonable adjustments to workplace practices
- Updating wellbeing policies.

Moreover, ensuring that health and safety assessments consider menopausal symptoms, alongside establishing in-house and local support networks with other practices, can play a crucial role in accommodating menopausal employees. It is also important to cultivate the expertise to guide employees towards more information and support options.

#### A TEAM APPROACH

Dental practices must also consider the balance between supporting menopausal employees and the expectations of other staff and patients. Promoting an open and inclusive culture where menopause is not taboo encourages everyone to engage in constructive dialogue,

enhancing understanding and support across the board.

It is also important for employers to have clear procedures for handling complaints related to menopause discrimination, ensuring a safe and respectful workplace for all. Training and awareness can help prevent behaviours that might be considered harassment, safeguarding against discrimination and fostering a positive work environment.

#### VALUING EVERYONE

For dental practices, supporting menopausal employees is not just about legal compliance; it is also about creating a workplace culture that values diversity, inclusion and empathy.

By weaving supportive practices into the fabric of workplace policies

and culture, dental professionals can ensure their practices are welcoming and accommodating for everyone, enhancing workplace

morale and productivity in the process.

This holistic approach benefits not only menopausal employees but the entire dental practice, contributing to a more positive,

empathetic and inclusive working environment.

## 52% OF DENTISTS AND 92.8% OF DENTAL CARE PROFESSIONALS ARE FEMALE

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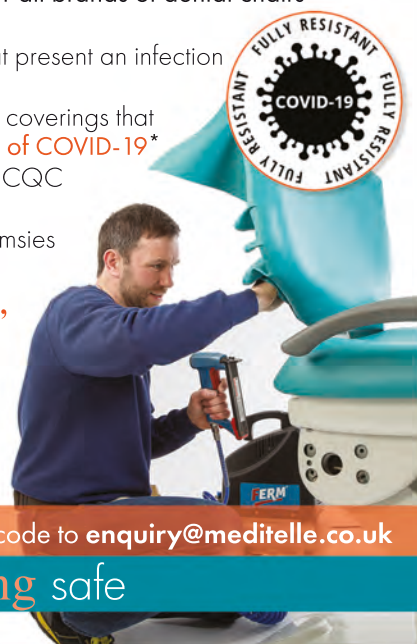


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# Crafting a modern dental practice

Alan Clarke shares his strategies and insights for 2024 and beyond

**S**o much change has occurred since I launched Paste Dental almost three years ago, and it is definitely a different industry to that which I entered as a clinic owner. As we move towards 2025 and beyond, the dental industry feels like it is moving forward at an unprecedented pace, and I find it so exciting!

Patients' expectations are changing, technology is accelerating and to be successful we must stay ahead of the curve. For many, this can feel overwhelming, with a fear of being 'left behind'.

Don't lose hope. If you embrace change, it can spark creativity and ignite new-found passion within your business.

In the words of Bumble founder Whitney Wolfe Herd: 'If you want to be good, do what they say you should, but if you want to be great, you innovate!' With that in mind, here are some forward-thinking strategies to help you stay ahead in an ever-developing market.

## EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

Dental technology is advancing rapidly, it's time to embrace it. Your patients are quickly gaining knowledge of the market and are aware that a private level of care is now the accepted global standard.

Things like Pearl AI for diagnosis through imaging, Chairsyde animations to promote patient consent, digital smile design and

facial scanning are advances that you should consider incorporating – don't fear change!

I am excited as to how we will bring spacial computing into the industry. This is something I will be an early adopter of at Paste Dental – I love looking forward to future technologies and embracing them, it makes my job so exciting!

## FOCUS ON PATIENT COMFORT

A modern dental practice should prioritise patient comfort and create a relaxing environment.

Consider upgrading your waiting room with comfortable seating, calming decor, and entertainment options like TVs and iPads – free wifi is necessary too. Offering amenities like blankets, noise-cancelling headphones and sedation options to help ease anxiety really go a long way to show patients that you care and always have their best interests at heart.

Listen to feedback about what people really want in your practice and act on it.

## PRIORITISE SUSTAINABILITY

More and more consumers are choosing environmentally-conscious businesses, so if you want to win favour it is becoming increasingly important to incorporate sustainability throughout your own business model.

Choose eco-friendly materials

and practices in your design and operations where possible, such as using low-VOC paints and finishes and LED lighting when refurbishing, implementing recycling programmes and switching to more sustainable products and materials for your daily practice. Then celebrate your green credentials by telling patients your story and how you are conscious of your impact.

## FILM EVERYTHING

Video is a prerequisite now. From your clinical work and patient testimonials

to staff behind the scenes and your community activities, get comfortable filming as much content as possible.

This can be used on your website and social media

**TRAIN PEOPLE WELL ENOUGH SO THEY CAN LEAVE, TREAT THEM WELL ENOUGH SO THEY DON'T WANT TO**

channels to help make your team human, show your practice as a space that people want to be in, display your treatments as 'must-haves' and build a real connection with new and existing patients.

Nothing dispels fear more than a genuine rapport, which you can build through real footage. Remember, connection and trust will always win over any fad, style or aesthetic, so use video content to build respect and stay relevant in 2024 and beyond.

My top tip is to remember that captions are king – they mean people can consume your content with and without sound. You'll lose 50% of your audience if you don't include captions!



**Alan Clarke**

Alan is a cosmetic dentist and the owner of Paste Dental.

### PERSONALISE PATIENT CARE

Modern patients expect personalised care and communication.

Implement technology like patient portals and communication apps to make it easier for patients to schedule appointments, access their health records and communicate with their dental team.

Let's start to redefine what the experience is from their terms, not yours. This does not mean being accessible 24/7 – you will need to create boundaries for yourself and the team in order to make the system sustainable. Instead, gather feedback from your patients to understand their needs and their lifestyles, and work out how you can use technology to fit into that. It's time to innovate and change the status quo!

### CREATE A STAND-OUT BRAND

Developing an individual brand identity can help your practice stand out in a crowded market. What is your unique selling point (USP)?

In 2024, this is so necessary to define. Consider your practice's style, personality and target audience when crafting your branding strategy, and incorporate it into your office design, marketing materials and patient communications.

Consistency is key. Once your brand is defined, weave it into everything you do – from the colours in your practice décor to staff uniforms. Think of little touches where you can be 'on brand'. It's the smallest things that are often the most memorable, as it shows your commitment to the fine details.

Remember, the sky is the limit! Within two years, Paste Dental was featured in HELLO! and the New York Post. It just took a dedication to our brand and never giving up on the dream!

### START WITH YOUR 'WHY?'

A key part of defining your brand is understanding your 'why?'. Why did you go to work this morning? If you could work anywhere in the world and do anything, what would it be? Why did you decide to walk into your practice? What comes from that joy of helping?

When you start with the big questions and really nail down your purpose, you often realise that your dental brand is an extension of yourself and your life –

# 8 *key takeaways*

1. Embrace technological advancements. Stay up-to-date with the latest dental technologies, such as AI diagnosis, digital smile design and facial scanning to meet evolving patient expectations and maintain competitiveness
2. Prioritise patient comfort and experience. Create a comfortable and relaxing environment for patients by upgrading waiting areas, offering amenities like blankets and entertainment options and listening to patient feedback to continuously improve services
3. Incorporate sustainability: Integrate eco-friendly practices and materials into your dental practice to appeal to environmentally-conscious consumers. Don't forget to communicate your commitment to sustainability to patients
4. Utilise video content. Leverage video content for various purposes including showcasing clinical work, patient testimonials and behind-the-scenes glimpses to build trust and connection with patients. Ensure inclusivity by adding captions
5. Personalise patient care and communication. Implement technology like patient portals and communication apps to offer personalised care, enhance accessibility and understand patient needs and lifestyles better
6. Develop a stand-out brand identity. Define your practice's unique selling point (USP) and create a consistent brand identity that reflects your practice's personality, style and values across all touchpoints
7. Start with your why. Understand the purpose behind your practice, communicate your values and motivations effectively to your team and patients and let it guide your decisions and actions to thrive in the evolving dental market
8. Get your team on board. Investing in staff training and development is crucial for delivering exceptional care and maintaining a happy, skilled team.

your values, motivators and the good you want to put out into the world.

It's your story. If you can communicate this to your team, your patients and the market, then you will thrive in 2024 and beyond.

### INVEST IN STAFF TRAINING

Keeping your team up-to-date on the latest dental technology, techniques and patient care strategies is crucial to delivering exceptional care. Upskill and delegate, you have a wealth of talent under your roof, find out how best to use it.

Start by asking each team member what they love or would like to get more involved in. You will find some hidden gems you didn't even realise you had! Offer regular training and professional development opportunities to ensure your team is knowledgeable and skilled.

I love this quote by Richard Branson: 'Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they don't want to.' It's a formula I use at Paste Dental, and I find it really effective. It means that I have a fantastic team, which makes me happy, but they also have an excellent work life, which makes them equally happy – it's a win-win!

Crafting a modern dental practice and brand requires a strategic approach that incorporates the latest technology, focuses on patient comfort and experience and emphasises your own brand, all underpinned by a truth that you are here to help people in the best way you can. Money and financial rewards will follow if you hold firm to the principle that got you here in the first place. Finally, get your team on board, and I promise 2024 is going to be a great year!



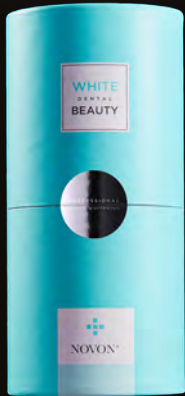
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# Building a mission-driven dental practice

**Barry Oulton** provides a blueprint for success in the UK dental market

**I**n the bustling landscape of the UK dental market, success isn't solely measured by the number of patients served or procedures completed. Instead, it hinges on a deeper responsibility – a commitment to a mission-driven approach that prioritises patient care, promotes overall health and ensures unwavering patient satisfaction.

As a dental coach deeply embedded in the UK dental industry, I've witnessed first-hand the transformative power of aligning your practice with a clear mission and values.

## BE MISSION-DRIVEN

Your mission statement should be more than just a collection of buzzwords; it should serve as a guiding light, illuminating every decision and action taken within your practice. These are not just words; they form the cornerstone of a thriving dental practice.

Sit down with your team and craft a mission statement that reflects your shared commitment to excellence in oral care, health promotion and patient happiness.

In the UK dental market, where patients have a myriad of choices, standing out requires more than just technical expertise. It demands a genuine dedication to the wellbeing of those we serve. By clearly defining your mission and values, you set the stage for a practice culture that resonates with both your team and your patients.

Exceptional oral care lies at the heart of every successful dental practice. However, true success extends beyond mere clinical proficiency. It encompasses a holistic approach to patient health and wellbeing.

As a dental coach, I urge you to embed this ethos into every facet of your practice – from treatment planning to customer service interactions.

In my experience, patients value authenticity and transparency. By aligning your practice with a mission

centred on exceptional care and patient satisfaction, you cultivate trust and loyalty within your patient base.

Make it a priority to communicate your mission to every patient who walks through your doors. Let them know that they're not just another appointment on your schedule but a valued participant in their own oral health journey.

Promoting overall health goes hand-in-hand with providing exceptional oral care. As dental professionals, we understand the interconnectedness of oral health with systemic health.

Use your platform not only to treat dental issues but also to educate your patients on the importance of oral hygiene in preventing broader health concerns.

Moreover, your commitment to patient satisfaction should permeate every aspect of your practice. From the moment a patient schedules an appointment to their post-treatment follow-up, prioritise their comfort, convenience and wellbeing. Remember, satisfied patients are not just loyal patrons but enthusiastic advocates for your practice.

As you navigate the complexities of the UK dental market, keep your mission and values at the forefront of your decision-making process. Evaluate every opportunity, partnership and initiative against the yardstick of your mission statement.

Does it align with your commitment to exceptional care, health promotion and patient satisfaction? If the answer is yes, proceed with confidence. If not, reassess and realign.

Discovering and clearly defining the mission and values of your dental practice is a crucial step towards establishing a strong foundation for success. Here's a systematic approach to help you navigate this process.

## REFLECTION AND BRAINSTORMING

Begin by reflecting on the core purpose of your dental practice. Gather your team for brainstorming sessions where everyone can contribute ideas and insights. Consider questions such as:

- Why did you choose dentistry as a profession?
- What values do you hold dear in patient care?
- What do you aspire to achieve beyond providing dental services?



**Barry Oulton**

Barry is a practising dentist and the founder of The Confident Dentist, a communications training company aimed specifically at the dental sector. Barry is a qualified coach and experienced trainer, certified in hypnotherapy and a master practitioner in neurolinguistic programming (NLP), a method of communication that uses language to re-educate the brain in patterns of mental and emotional behaviour.



### **IDENTIFY CORE PRINCIPLES**

From the brainstorming sessions, distil key themes and ideas that resonate with the team. These could include principles like compassion, integrity, excellence in care, patient education, community involvement etc.

### **MISSION STATEMENT CRAFTING**

Use the identified core principles to craft a succinct and meaningful mission statement. Keep it clear, concise, and memorable. Your mission statement should encapsulate the purpose and values of your practice. It should answer the question: What does your practice stand for? For example: 'To provide compassionate, high-quality dental care that enhances the overall wellbeing of our patients and fosters lasting relationships built on trust and integrity.'

### **VALUE DEFINITION**

Once you have a mission statement, delve deeper into defining the specific values that underpin it. These values should guide every decision and action within your practice. Examples of values might include:

- Excellence: striving for the highest standards of clinical and service excellence
- Integrity: conducting all interactions with honesty, transparency and ethical integrity
- Empathy: demonstrating empathy and compassion towards every patient's unique needs.

### **TEAM CONSENSUS**

Share the drafted mission statement and defined values with your team for feedback and input. Ensure that everyone understands and aligns with the proposed mission and values.

### **MISSION INTEGRATION**

Once finalised, integrate the mission and values into all aspects of your practice:

- Treatment planning: align treatment plans with the mission of providing compassionate, high-quality care
- Customer service: train staff to embody the practice's values in every patient interaction
- Marketing: communicate your mission and values in marketing materials to attract like-minded patients
- Internal culture: foster a positive workplace culture that reflects the practice's values, leading to greater team cohesion and morale.

### **REGULAR REVIEW AND ADAPTATION**

Periodically review your mission and values to ensure they remain relevant and aligned with the evolving needs of your practice and community. Be open to adaptation and refinement as necessary.

### **SET FOR SUCCESS**

By following these steps, you can embark on a journey to discover and clearly define the mission and values of your dental practice, laying the groundwork for long-term success and meaningful impact.

Being mission-driven is not just a strategy; it's a philosophy that sets the stage for long-term success. By defining your mission, promoting exceptional care and prioritising patient satisfaction, you lay the groundwork for a practice that not only thrives but also makes a meaningful difference in the lives of those you serve. So, I urge you, fellow dental professionals, be mission-driven, and watch as your practice flourishes in the competitive landscape of the UK dental market.



## *Andrea Ubhi*

Andrea is the director of Andrea Ubhi Dentistry, a private practice she opened in 2002 with a comprehensive referral service for dentists in Yorkshire. She started an NHS practice, Clock House Dental, in York in 1996 and sold it in 2014. She is chair of Asha Nepal, a charity supporting survivors of trafficking and severe violence.

[www.andreaubhi.com](http://www.andreaubhi.com)  
[www.asha-nepal.org](http://www.asha-nepal.org)

# Into the unknown

This issue's guest editor, **Andrea Ubhi**, shares her perspective on finding contentment with dissatisfaction, life after a cancer diagnosis and the bedrock of equality

Cancer is often a catalyst for change and introspection. The acute realisation of our mortality tends to sharpen perspectives and focus endeavours. For award-winning dentist Andrea Ubhi, having a non-Hodgkin lymphoma diagnosis crystallised her thoughts on two things. First, if she had her time again, she'd choose dentistry – albeit with a business degree under her belt before the clinical journey. And second, a tight-knit family means the world. Her diagnosis has propelled her to an exciting next chapter.

Andrea chose to devote her time to business, replacing clinical time, 12 years ago and is the director of Andrea Ubhi Dentistry, the highly-acclaimed private practice she opened in 2002 with the award-winning referral service for Yorkshire dentists.

She opened her first practice – Clock House Dental – in York in 1996 while on maternity leave with her first child. This practice grew from ground zero to become one of the largest NHS practices in the city. She sold it in 2014 as a 10-surgery practice.

## BACK TO BUSINESS

She was the first person in her extended family to do A levels and subsequently attend university. 'Going to university in 1987 [the year of Black Monday and the stock market crash], my focus was: What was a recession-proof career? I enjoyed working with my hands and loved being with people, and I visited a few dentists to get a steer on the prospects. Most of them said "don't do it", and perhaps that is why I did,' she jokes.

'Dentistry is an amazing field, and you can do anything you want within it. Everyone needs a dentist, so it is definitely resilient to recessions. It also allows us to be who we want and can lead to many different career pathways.'

But her extensive experience grants her a deeper perspective, and she tempers her enthusiasm with a single caveat.

'If I were to embark on a career in dentistry again, I'd approach it differently. I trained as a dentist, knowing I wanted to run my own business. Dental school doesn't and can't give you that background, so I'd have begun with gaining a business qualification first.

'There is not enough time after dental school because, as clinicians, we need immediate clinical experience; if it were included in the BDS course, it would be an eight-year investment. It is a tricky road to tread.'

## FULL CIRCLE

In July 2020, Andrea, troubled by some discomfort, presented herself at A&E only for a CT scan to reveal non-Hodgkin lymphoma. She began chemotherapy with sessions every three weeks. It wiped her out.

Mid-treatment and mid-pandemic, her practice manager left. She says: 'There was only one hour every three weeks where I was in any position to make decisions, but I had to make them.'

Her beloved team – including leading implant surgeon Adam Glassford – kept the practice running during this tumultuous period while Andrea spent time reading up on the constantly changing COVID-19 regulations hooked up to a chemo drip.

'After my treatment, I came full circle. I considered what I wanted to do with my life. Besides rushing around less and no longer saying "yes" to everything, I decided I was very happy with where I was but also felt I needed to raise the bar to continue to deliver high-quality, market-leading dentistry.

'Many of my peers are now retiring or preparing to retire, but I want to continue for a few more decades. I came out of being ill, ready for the practice team to push forward and for me to support them.'

The result is a stunning £400,000 practice refurbishment. She says: 'If we are to propel ourselves into the future, we must be ready to do exactly that.'

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## PROMOTING EQUALITY

In a post on Instagram celebrating a reunion with an old friend and dental nurse at the newly designed clinic, Andrea writes: '27 years of friendship! Welcoming the amazing Rosie Taylor, my first-ever dental nurse, to see the new refurbishment. Rosie said she was proud of me – "Look how far you have come since you walked in with a three-month baby under your arm and started your first dental practice 27 years ago." Thank you, Rosie, for believing in me and trying out every hair-brained idea. You laughed with me when they fell flat and celebrated with me when they worked out. It is my privilege to know a woman like you with such a love of life. You are our inspiration.'

Women lifting women comes in the smallest of gestures. Indeed, it has long been a facet of Andrea's career. At the time of her qualifying, the leadership in the field of dentistry was dominated by men. She grew to become an advocate for equality. Frequently vocal about the under-representation of women in the profession's leadership roles, she was instrumental in organising various women-led conferences, seminars and study days.

In 2020, she noted: 'The upper echelon of dentistry under-represents women. This is largely because we [as women] fail to grasp that equality and take on leadership positions and those higher-paid roles.'

So, has anything changed in a little over three years? Today, her approach is much more nuanced. 'Are we still interested in women's events? Are they still relevant? Gender is now socially, psychologically, culturally and behaviourally determined, and the issues are complex. I have always known I am equal to anyone, regardless of sex, and never needed events specific to women. However, I understand some continue to feel the need to find a voice, and we still need to talk about it.'

## FAMILY BONDS

For Andrea, the bedrock of equality lies closer to home. She believes it stems from our everyday relationships, where equal partnerships involve sharing responsibilities in a way that best suits both parties.

'Equality begins at home. There has been generation after generation of presumptions, with each benign, mildly



sexist nuance giving subconscious signals. For example, why is "mankind" an acceptable phrase? Why is it commented on if men cook, clean or provide childcare? Why do many women go on maternity leave only to return to work part-time while their male partners continue working full-time? This isn't fair for either party. The men are missing out on bonding time with the children, and the women are missing out on pushing forward with their careers.

'Why not split the division of labour? Why can't we share parenting equally? We remain rather antiquated in our attitudes, and lessons are still to be learnt – really cool lessons that will make all genders thrive.'

Her argument is compelling.

Now, with her children in adulthood, the family plays a central role in her life. She has three children, who work in medicine, engineering and marketing.

They have provided her with unwavering support through triumphs and tribulations. These close bonds served as a source of strength during challenging times, particularly in her battle with cancer.

'We're very close, and the best thing coming out of me being ill was an awareness of that closeness. Any time I

have gone through difficult times, they have been there. We may think parents and children go through life in their dedicated hierarchical roles forever. However, there can be a crossover into real equality.

'Our pivotal family moment of equality came when they supported me while I was on chemo. I could barely take 10 steps, and mentally, my mind and memory were slow and blurred. I was like an old lady, and my children were there to support me and help me make decisions.'

She says: 'Life is all about learning to live and love whatever situation you are in. If you want to, you can change it; if not, learn to love that moment. You choose what is important to you. As a family, we can opt to spend time together and let our children be our friends – or not. Our kids are equals, but we must allow them to be.'

## REWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Andrea has amassed numerous accolades, including prestigious awards and recognition for her contributions to dentistry. However, she remains grounded, recognising that awards are not an endpoint but a testament to the relentless pursuit



of excellence. For Andrea, ultimate validation comes from providing exceptional patient care.

'The first award I won was the Dentist of the Year award at The Probe's Dental Awards in 2005, and I was shocked. I felt I was just a small-town dentist who had submitted an award application, but at the time, it made me feel I could become anybody I chose to be. While awards may seal patients' approval, I knew that clinical excellence needs to be strived for daily, and we cannot rest on our laurels.

'Clinical excellence is the most important thing for patients. We must focus on giving them the best service and treatment. Perhaps do the Instagram page at the end of the day, but firstly, strive for high-quality clinical care.'

She remains focused on her passion for dentistry, tempered with a newfound appreciation for life's simplicity. Her diagnosis and recovery have prompted introspection, leading her to prioritise quality of life over relentless growth. As she embarks on this new chapter, she seeks contentment and fulfilment, embracing life's journey with open arms.

Andrea was recently nominated for Inspiring Mentor of the Year by her daughter. She says: 'I can only dream of being as clever, smart, kind and inspirational as her. I think the mentee has become my mentor.' It's a role she respects and welcomes the opportunities to fulfil it.

In her role as chair of Asha Nepal, a charity in Kathmandu that supports survivors of trafficking and severe violence, Andrea has provided mentorship for their local leadership team of Nepali women.

'When we are empowered, we can make decisions and lead, even if there have been generations of thought and teaching that women cannot be leaders. True empowerment is the key to equality and freedom.

'Regarding dentistry, I believe that it can be a hidden profession; without anyone commenting directly on your clinical work, we can lose focus on development and quality, so I believe a lifelong clinical mentor for clinicians is key. You need someone to look at, critique and analyse your work.

'Finding the right person can be difficult as it takes up clinicians' time, so it's worth considering reverse mentoring, where a younger or more junior clinician mentors a more senior practitioner and vice versa. Becoming a younger mentor, swapping knowledge and skills with a more experienced clinician, and giving equal time to each other can be hugely rewarding.'

#### **TAKING THE LEAD**

When it comes to her style of leadership, integrity and transparency are integral. Those around her know and understand this ethos. 'My mantra is don't listen to what I say, watch what I do.'

This enthusiasm for lifelong learning,

development and reinvention has been a continuous characteristic over the years – and not just within dentistry and business ownership.

She says: 'Years ago, I learned to rock climb and experienced that feeling of stupidity that took me back to the early days at university, where you don't know anything and feel ridiculous. How often do older people shy away from that situation? We need to get into the habit of learning new things and go back to naivety. Being uncomfortable and out of our comfort zone makes us grow.'

With a legacy that began in the late 1990s, Andrea's influence on cosmetic dentistry continues to be transformative. She feels we should all consider our lives a work in progress. 'Once we think something to be forever, it can become a prison,' she says.

So, what does the future hold?

'There is a beauty in discontentment. This blessed dissatisfaction makes us strive and change our futures and makes us more alive. I want to move forward every day. We must find our own contentment at any moment.

'This is a new stage of my life, and this present journey is fun. However, I believe there should always be just enough dissatisfaction to motivate us. I don't want to conquer the world; I want a practice that is beautiful, with an amazing, forward-looking, and innovative team who deliver exceptionally excellent clinical dentistry every day.'

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# Practising ethical dentistry

Profitable dentistry doesn't have to be at the cost of ethics and duty of care, says **Alif Moosajee**

**S**uccessful, ethical dentistry should be based on great communication and empowering patients with the information and tools they need to properly take care of their teeth. That's according to Alif Moosajee, practice principal of Oakdale Dental.

Alif, whose multidisciplinary private practice has seven surgeries, stresses that he believes it is incumbent on the dental profession

to explain everything that dentistry has to offer in a 'simple, succinct and applicable way'.

He explains: 'One must not understate the fact that patients who come to us are often put in a vulnerable position.'

'There's a huge information inequality gap in a consultation and we have to tailor the information we give to patients to close the gap somewhat.'

Alif adds that sometimes when he speaks to young dentists, they tell him that they lay out treatment options for their patients but don't make recommendations, something he believes is not the right approach.

He believes that recommending the right treatment the patient needs, whether to improve their health or the way the teeth look and the mouth functions and feels, is incumbent on every dentist.

This, says Alif, includes helping patients to understand the necessity of good oral health in order to proceed with more complex procedures, such as implants – his area of special interest.

'Sometimes patients would like an implant treatment, when actually their whole mouth is crumbling,' Alif explains. 'It is my responsibility to be their coach, for me and my team to empower them and explain the



**Dr Alif Moosajee**

Alif is practice principal of Oakdale Dental, a multidisciplinary practice in Leicester.

**PATIENTS COME IN WANTING A PARTICULAR TREATMENT, AND IT'S UP TO US TO EXPLAIN THE UPSIDES AND DOWNSIDES OF EACH MODALITY AND ALLOW THEM TO CHOOSE WHAT WILL SUIT THEM BEST**



SPOTLIGHT

standard we need to attain and then give them a path in achieving that. So, by getting them to that stage, they're open to recommendations for the next stage of treatment.'

**EARNING THE RIGHT TO GIVE PATIENTS WHAT THEY NEED**

Alif admits that he sometimes has to give the patient what they want to 'earn the right to give them what they need'.

He offers the example of a patient who wants an implant to replace a knocked-out front tooth, and during the consultation, he discovers they have problems at their back of their mouth.

'I'll do the implant because that's what the patient really wants, but with the proviso that they understand that there are problems with the dentition and their oral health status at the back of their mouth, and we are going to put a strategy in place for managing those,' he says.

Alif also underlines that dentists should structure their business to ensure its financial success is not in

opposition to what patients want. He explains that sometimes he meets dentists who appear to view patients in an 'adversarial' way, particularly, for instance, if they choose dentures over implants.

'I think patients come in wanting a particular treatment, and it's up to us to explain the upsides and downsides of each modality and allow them to choose what will suit them best – and it's part of my responsibility to understand that it costs me X plus time to deliver an implant, Y plus time to deliver a bridge or denture. So, why don't I cost them in a way that I earn the same whichever one I provide? That way, my only incentive is to get it right for the patient.'

**TOOLS TO ENHANCE TREATMENT**

He is also an exponent of offering his patients services and tools that make it easier for them to maintain good oral hygiene, and removes treatment-associated stress for both himself and his patients.

He points to treatments such as Philips' Zoom whitening. 'I know it will work and I don't have to stress that my patients are going to have a painful experience'.

He adds that recommending Philips' Sonicare toothbrushes helps his patients to maintain better oral hygiene at home between appointments.

'My wife and I run our practice together,' he explains. 'Her background is in the beauty sector, and it annoys her if, as a customer, she has a beauty treatment and the therapist doesn't recommend the requisite products to maintain the results after a treatment. So, by recommending Philips' Sonicare, I'm helping my patients when they're at home, which we know is vital to the long-term success of the treatment, and sending the message that I feel what we accomplish for them was significant and worthy of their time, every day, to maintain it.'

He concludes: 'Profitable dentistry doesn't have to be at the cost of ethics and our duty of care to our patients'.

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# Set goals and take action

The **Dental Practice Accelerator** programme is up and running for winner Hannan Saleem and his practice – now, the crucial work of building a roadmap for growth begins in earnest

**T**he Dental Practice Accelerator programme – powered by sponsorship from Align Technology – is now well underway, with winner Hannan Saleem and his practice, the London Dental Centre, firmly on their journey to becoming a million-pound practice.

And with the introductions made, the next steps are to focus on the outcomes needed to take this business to the next level. We caught up with Hannan and his four mentors – Sameer Patel, Justin Leigh, Sandeep Kumar and Shaz Memon – to discover how that process is unfolding.

## THE ROADMAP

Hannan's key priorities revolve around building the practice brand, asserting a culture of clinical excellence and bringing the team on board with the new vision. His specific goals include:

- Doubling the number of team members
- Doubling turnover
- Refocusing on clinical excellence.

## EMBRACING LEADERSHIP

For Shaz, founder of Digimax Dental and pioneering charity Wells on Wheels, the first order of the day is clear. Hannan's job is firstly to embrace his role as leader.

'I think Hannan needs to learn how to be CEO of a business,' explains Shaz.

'He's doing everything himself right now. Whether it's dental practice or any other kind of business, you first need to master the arts of time management and delegation.



'All early business owners – including me – try and do everything ourselves. So first, we need to work on ourselves. We need to take ourselves out of the business so we can work on the business. I think if we can get Hannan doing that, he's going to exceed a million in turnover without an issue.'

Fortunately, after taking the time to look in more detail at Hannan's setup, Shaz is also clear on the potential within the business.

'We've got a lot to leverage,' he says. '[The practice] already ranks really well on Google: it's got great glowing reviews, and Hannan's motivation to make the practice do really well is high with it being a family business. So we've got a lot to work on. I think 10% improvements in all areas would have a significant impact on the bottom line.'

**I ENVISION SUCCESS AT OUR PRACTICE AS AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE PATIENTS FEEL AT HOME, OUR STAFF FEEL COMFORTABLE AND EVERYONE'S HAVING FUN WHILE DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY CLINICAL CARE**



## VISION AND GOALS

For Sameer Patel, the principal of award-winning Eleven Dental, Hannan is already well on his way to being a great leader.

'He's hungry,' says Sameer. 'He is committed, and I love that.'

For Sameer, the next step is to bring that commitment to the rest of the team, so everyone moves forward together.

That collective action needs to have clear outcomes to work towards, so Hanaan and the mentors have now begun the work of setting goals in earnest.

Justin Leigh, managing director of Focus4growth, has been pivotal in that process. His experience as a business coach is helping the group get a grip on the bigger picture and prioritise.

He says: 'We've helped Hanaan unpack everything that he was thinking about the business and get down to three key priorities, which are really what's going to make the big changes.'

'One is around the practice and the brand. The second is around clinical excellence. And the third is around mobilising the team, engaging the team and helping them to understand where the practice is going – what the vision is, and how they're going to get there together.'

## REALISING THE VISION

As the person responsible for driving the plan forwards, it's essential that Hannan has a firm grasp on what specific actions are needed to realise his vision. The Dental Practice Accelerator mentors' outside perspective is already powering that process.

He says: 'This is exactly what we needed to reset, establish some ground rules and agree on how we're

going to grow the practice from here on. We've discussed some action items, so that we can clarify and prioritise the tasks ahead, and we're using that to create a timeline of growing the practice and seeing where we can go.'

And there are clear goals in place that should have a profound effect – but feel achievable too.

He explains: 'In the next 12 months, I want to first double the number of team members. That would bring us to near to 100% occupancy at our dental practice, which hand in hand will also double the turnover. Those are my two primary goals, I believe.'

'Thirdly, it's to promote clinical excellence at the practice and ensure we're offering that. We want to move out of that "NHS mixed dentistry" mindset into private dentistry, and I think we should stop focusing on single tooth dentistry – we should be more catered towards full oral healthcare.'

## PICTURING SUCCESS

He's looking at bringing in a hygienist – 'something we've experimented with in the past' but without much success at making the workflow efficient. But Hannan realises that trying again will free up dentists' time to focus on more complex treatment and reduce waiting times for patients, so it's a big priority.

At the same time, increasing the profile of the business is high on the list.

The London Dental Centre began life in 2010. It is now a fully private practice

in the centre of London, offering everything from Invisalign to implants out of its two surgeries – though just one was in use at the start of Hanaan's journey. Refining the brand and giving patients a seamless journey

from social media through to the website and then visiting the practice should bring Hannan closer to his dream of maximising the potential of the practice and in doing so, help his parents to retirement.

So what does success in the Dental Practice Accelerator look like for Hannan? When will he know he's realised the practice's potential?

On this, he's very clear: 'I envision success at our practice as an environment where patients feel at home, our staff feel comfortable, and everyone's having fun while delivering high quality clinical care.'

'I want to create the aura that not only are these clinicians going to take really good care of you and offer you the best clinical care they can, but they also have the personal touch so patients can really enjoy their patient journey at our practice.'



*If you would like to accelerate your practice and clinical growth, Align Technology can help you get to the next level, leveraging the Invisalign system, Itero intraoral scanners and the Align Digital Platform. For more information about its education and growth support programmes, visit [www.invisalign.co.uk/gp/become-a-provider](http://www.invisalign.co.uk/gp/become-a-provider).*



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# A transformative experience

The **Private Dentistry Awards** is all about promoting excellence in private practice and recognising outstanding achievement in the dental profession. Here's how you can be part of it

**R**egistration for this year's Private Dentistry Awards is open! Of course, to be part of the 2024 celebrations, you have to be in it to win it!

The very first thing to do is check out this year's categories. Once you know which ones you'd like to enter, register online at [dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards](https://dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards).

To help with compiling the entry, each category has specific criteria, which must be followed to be in with a chance of success!

The judges will be looking for entries that satisfy all the criteria in 750 to 1,000 words.

Relevant supporting evidence, including photos, marketing material and testimonials, is also welcomed for each entry.

And, of course, entries must be submitted before the closing date of 11 September.

To download this year's entry guide and register for the Private Dentistry Awards, visit [dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards](https://dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards).

## GRANDEUR AND GLAMOUR

After last year's phenomenal success, the Private Dentistry Awards ceremony will return to Grosvenor House in London on Friday 8 November for what's sure to be an evening of grandeur and glamour.

The aim of these awards is all about promoting excellence in private practice and recognising outstanding achievement across the dental profession. And with more than 20 years of experience, the Private Dentistry Awards has established prestige that few can match.

Winning a nationally acknowledged Private Dentistry Award can set you apart from the competition and help your practice – as well as your profits – to grow!

However, it's not just winning a trophy that counts; entering the Private Dentistry Awards can be a transformative experience. From preparing the submission to attending the ceremony, being part of the event can yield invaluable opportunities for growth, networking and self-reflection.

## FEEL THE LOVE

To get a feel of the night, why not check out the 2023 highlights? Watch the video of all the action online at [youtu.be/FAZAsYiVlv8](https://youtu.be/FAZAsYiVlv8).

Over the coming months, we will be sharing more details about this year's awards, including the full criteria for each award category, the judges, the partners, the venue and even the dress code!

For now, mark Friday 8 November as a date to keep free – you never know, it might be the night you walk away with a Private Dentistry Award!

## PRIVATE DENTISTRY AWARDS 2024

### 2024 categories

- Young Dentist
- Team of the Year
- Practice Principal
- Treatment of Nervous Patients
- Child-Friendly Practice
- Charity or Community Project
- New Practice
- Most Improved Practice
- Referral Practice
- Digital Practice
- Website of the Year
- Hygienist, Therapist, Receptionist, Practice Manager and Dental Nurse
- Practice Design and Brand
- Patient Care
- Practice of the Year.

For further information, visit [dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards](https://dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards).

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*Leanna Ellis, FMC Events Director*

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# Behind the B!



Envisage Dental celebrates a full year of being B Corp certified

**W**hen Dr Sandy Dau and Harry Gill founded their business, they knew they wanted to use business as a force for good; helping people to be happier, healthier and more fulfilled. More than dentistry, it was about their teams, patients, local community and the positive impact business can have in society.

Dr Sandy Dau said: 'We didn't know much about group dentistry when we started, but we knew two things.

'We knew we wanted only the highest quality private clinics to join the group – this meant we can deliver the best care with excellent teams. Secondly, we knew we wanted to create a group that would set the gold standard – which meant a long-term view to everything.'

Our 'Culture of Care' became our guiding light to serve our purpose and every business decision. One year ago, Envisage became the first dental group to achieve B Corporation.

## WHAT WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON FOR THE PAST YEAR

Becoming a B Corp was a clear way for Envisage to evidence its commitment, using business as a force for good. It's a way for Envisage to hold ourselves accountable to improving standards.

Upon certification, Envisage was able to pinpoint where we could grow and improve even more. We're excited to look back at our efforts across the five pillars we are assessed.

### 1. PATIENTS

We are proud our clinics have a localised patient journey as we don't believe in a 'one-size-fits-all'. Our NPS score is an impressive 87, reflecting our high-quality clinics.

Whilst we are proud of the care each clinic provides, we recognised that we could unlock best practice across clinics through our new Patient Retention team. This team are focused on sharing best



Dr Sandy Dau

**WE WANTED ONLY THE HIGHEST QUALITY PRIVATE CLINICS TO JOIN THE GROUP. WE KNEW WE WANTED TO CREATE A GROUP THAT WOULD SET THE GOLD STANDARD**

practices to help improve the patient journey in a localised way, and the results are coming through improved patient scores.

### 2. ENVIRONMENT

We have taken steps towards carbon neutrality by offsetting the emissions of our support team – the first in the industry! We appreciate becoming environmentally friendly in dentistry has its challenges. We started by ensuring our support structure is carbon neutral. Every mile we travel or energy used is captured and our carbon footprint offset with our partnership with Ecologi. Every support member has made a financial commitment, highlighting how this also matters to us as individuals.

### 3. COLLEAGUES

Our colleagues are the heartbeat of our business. Therefore, every relationship we establish with our 1,000+ colleagues across the country is handled with

extreme gratitude and a culture of care. We go to great lengths to ensure our support teams are real experts in the area of support we offer. Our bi-annual Colleague Survey showed a 97% engagement score, but more importantly, gave us the feedback and steer to help ensure we keep on the right track as we grow.

### 4. TRANSPARENCY

Within the past year, we've doubled down on our commitment to transparency. Our bespoke 'Enights' platform gives clinics all their data in a simple and easy to understand dashboard. We're regularly sharing best practices about our patients, our colleagues, and our communities – and not hiding from the areas we need to improve on too. We know that to be trusted, we have to communicate and show what we are doing to improve.

### 5. COMMUNITY

We actively contribute to the communities we serve. Through community engagement initiatives, we aim to make a positive impact beyond our practices, fostering a sense of responsibility and care for the areas we operate in. Our clinics participate in many local initiatives as well as support Operation Smile, where we have delivered over 100 surgeries to date.

As we grow, we are looking to set up the 'The Foundation – envisage a better future' where our collective fundraising efforts can support multiple charitable initiatives both local and national.

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*If you would like to know more about us and chat about options when selling your practice, call Jon Toh, our Acquisitions Director, on 07881436719 or email [jon@envisage-dental.co.uk](mailto:jon@envisage-dental.co.uk).*

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# Zirkonzahn lecture tour: Dublin and Belfast

**Zirkonzahn's** 'Predictable and consistent results – common mistakes and solutions to overcome them successfully' heads to Dublin and Belfast on 14 and 15 May 2024

**T**he dental company Zirkonzahn (South Tyrol, Italy) has announced its 2024 lecture tour 'Predictable and consistent results – common mistakes and solutions to overcome them successfully' will be coming to several cities around the UK and Ireland throughout the year.

From May 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, the tour will reach Dublin and Belfast, answering some common questions that may arise when dealing with complex zirconia restorations, including:

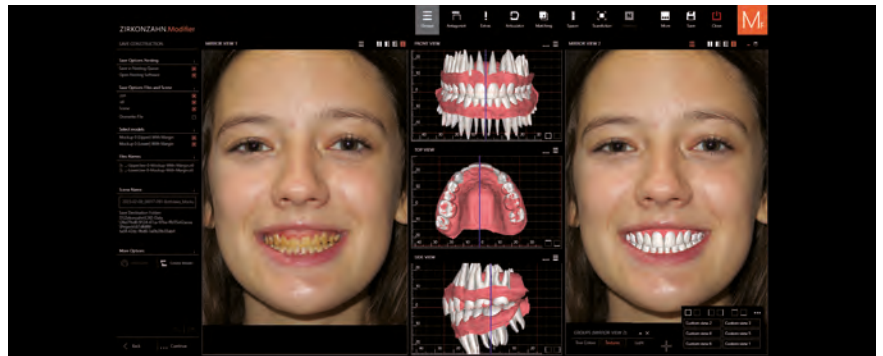
- How can I achieve a good predictable outcome when working with zirconia?
- What do I have to pay attention to in order to avoid common errors in the dental workflow?

The lecturer, DT Alexander Lichtmanegger (CAD/CAM expert, course instructor and member of Zirkonzahn R&D department), will draw attention to technical aspects and factors that influence the final result of a zirconia prosthesis.

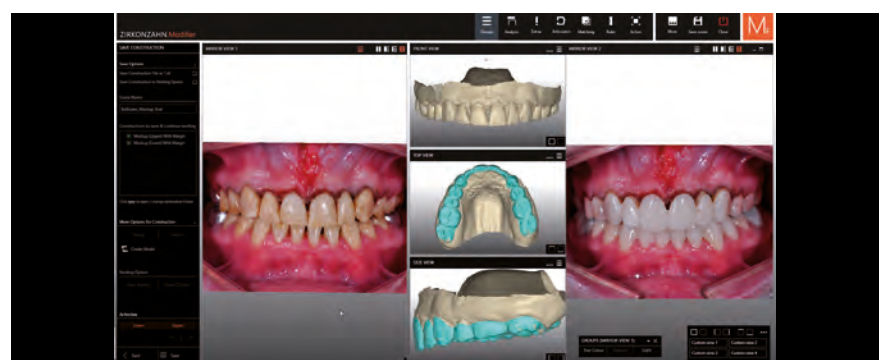
By showing a real, complex case restoration, he will illustrate the challenges faced during each workflow step, from patient diagnostic to characterisation, providing keys to overcome them successfully.

Special attention will be given to impression-taking, occlusion registration, passivity check and correct material selection.

The process of creating high-end, predictable zirconia solutions also involves a well-established communication between dental technicians, clinicians, and surgeons. For this reason, the lecturer will also focus on the latest digital diagnostic devices – a key aspect for improving communication within the treatment team.



*The lecture will focus on a complex restoration 100% digitally created, starting from diagnostic analysis and complete 3D virtual reproduction of the patient's oral and extraoral anatomy without loss in information. Initial situation (left) and first digital tooth setup (right)*



*Digital planning of the gingivectomy in the Zirkonzahn.Modifier software, definition of the new occlusion and design of the temporary mock-up which is a key tool for checking and reproducing all workflow steps up to the final restoration*

For more details and to register, scan the QR code, or contact Carmen Ausserhofer on +39 0474 066 662, or email [carmen.ausserhofer@zirkonzahn.com](mailto:carmen.ausserhofer@zirkonzahn.com).



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# Unlock the door to private dentistry

In the ever-evolving landscape of dentistry, the transition from NHS to private practice is a formidable journey. **Ahmad Nounu** has embarked on a mission to redefine this transition with the Private Dental Mentor course, offering a new pathway into private dentistry

**T**he genesis of Private Dental Mentor (PDM) can be traced back to the challenges posed by the post-COVID-19 landscape.

A surge in demand for private dental treatments created a pressing need for skilled dentists ready to address this upswing. While many practices grappled with this surge, the hurdle lay in finding dentists capable of navigating the complexities of high-level practices.

The struggle to seamlessly integrate new practitioners into these settings was evident, and the expectation for them to perform at a top-tier level immediately posed a genuine predicament for private practices nationwide. This issue underscores a notable contrast between NHS and private dentistry standards and anticipations.

In response, Dr Nounu envisioned a comprehensive training programme that went beyond cosmetic dentistry, focusing on foundational skills as the bedrock of private practice success.

PDM is not just a course; it's a transformative journey crafted by Dr Nounu, who brings his wealth of experience as the practice principal and clinical director of Black Swan Dental Spa.



**Ahmad Nounu**

Ahmad is programme director of Private Dental Mentor.

The ethos of Black Swan Dental Spa revolves around offering exceptionally high standards of dental care in a calming atmosphere – a concept that has earned it several FMC awards and an envied position in the industry.

His commitment to excellence and innovation is evident in the success of Black Swan Dental Spa, and he is now sharing his insights to empower the next generation of private dentists through PDM.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

The course operates on a monthly payment basis, with lower rates for recent FD or DCT graduates, making it financially accessible for those ready

to embark on a private dentistry journey. The PDM course spans 12 months, offering a structured curriculum covering essential topics each month.

Participants

receive a free digital SLR camera as part of the course, ensuring practical application and skill development.

Mentorship is a vital component of PDM, with Zoom mentor sessions providing ongoing support. Dr Nounu emphasises its significance in bridging the gap between theory and practical application.

This continuous support is crucial for dentists to confidently apply their newfound knowledge in real-world scenarios.

PDM is not exclusive to a specific age group, but particularly appeals to younger dentists who are willing to acknowledge gaps in their knowledge and invest time in structured training.

Dr Nounu believes that while older dentists can benefit from the course, it often requires more courage for them to admit areas of improvement and enrol in an organised programme.

He envisions expansion, with plans to start a second cohort for foundation dentists in the future, providing more flexibility and accommodating the growing demand.

The goal is to expand to different cities within the next two years, making quality private dental training accessible to a broader audience.

## THE NEXT GENERATION OF PRIVATE DENTISTS

In essence, Private Dental Mentor is a pioneering initiative designed to build the next generation of private dentists in the UK.

Dr Nounu's real-world experience, coupled with the success of Black Swan Dental Spa, serves as a testament to the credibility and impact of PDM.

It's an opportunity for dentists to learn from someone who has navigated the challenges, achieved excellence, and is now dedicated to shaping the future of private dentistry in the UK.

*To enrol in the Private Dental Mentor course and pave your way to excellence in private dentistry, visit [privatedentalmentor.co.uk](http://privatedentalmentor.co.uk).*

# The smile revolution

**Kiran Shankla** explores the changing demographics and consumer choices for tooth whitening in the UK and how dental professionals can play a role in educating people about legal and effective options

**I**n recent years, the quest for a brighter, whiter smile has become a significant trend. Tooth whitening has evolved beyond being a cosmetic luxury for a select few to catering for a diverse range of consumers. This shift is marked by demographic changes and the over-abundance of choices for those seeking a radiant smile.

Traditionally associated with celebrities and the affluent, tooth whitening has been democratised, reaching a broader spectrum of people. No longer confined to a specific age group or socioeconomic class, individuals across various backgrounds are seeking ways to enhance their smiles. One notable demographic shift is the increased interest among millennials and generation Z. Known for emphasising self-care and appearance, their desire for a perfect 'Instagram-worthy' smile has become a driving force behind the surge in teeth whitening popularity.

According to the Oral Health Foundation, four in 10 people under 35 have had tooth whitening, with 48% planning to have their teeth whitened within the next 12 months. In addition, 32% of Brits want whiter teeth, while 66% have actively considered it (Oral Health Foundation, 2020).

## TACKLING AN ABUNDANCE OF CONSUMER CHOICE

The expansion of the tooth whitening market has led to plenty of consumer choices, ranging from over-the-counter products to professional dentist-led treatments.

As a profession, we have a duty of care to inform and educate patients that tooth whitening can only be legally and safely carried out by a registered dental

professional. Combine this with the fact that none of the whitening solutions purchased on the high street, such as strips and toothpastes, will have a high enough concentration of the whitening agent to penetrate into the enamel and whiten effectively and suddenly our professional options seem all the more attractive to the end user.

The diversity of professional whitening options has evolved since the early days of high concentrated hydrogen peroxide and power lamps. In the past decade, the dental industry has had to advance its offering to not only meet EU laws that state that only concentrations up to 6% hydrogen peroxide (18% carbamide peroxide) must be used but also ensure it has a solution that allows individuals to tailor their tooth whitening experience to their preferences, budgets and lifestyles.

## AS TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES, THE FUTURE PROMISES EVEN MORE INNOVATIVE AND TAILORED SOLUTIONS, ENSURING A BRIGHTER, WHITER SMILE IS ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

When faced against prominent whitening brands with large marketing budgets targeting younger consumers through social media, convincing consumers to choose the safer and more effective professional alternative relies on being able to offer choice.

The emphasis on providing choice at all levels can assure patients of professional supervision in dental

practices. While acknowledging the appeal of over-the-counter options, dentists can highlight the advanced and reliable nature of professional products, ensuring patient trust in safety and effectiveness.

## ADVANCED SOLUTIONS

In such a competitive whitening market, quick results and ease of use are essential product 'must-haves' and take-home whitening products continue to lead the way. SDI Ltd contributes to this evolving market with the Pola Advanced tooth whitening system. Endorsed by tooth whitening expert Dr Linda Greenwall, the system is known for its proven research and clinical success for the past 25 years.

With changing demographics driving demand, brands like Pola are addressing the need for quick results and ease of use in take-home whitening treatments. Innovations such as the Pola Light (an advanced LED mouthpiece) and Pola for Aligners (perfectly formulated for orthodontic aligner trays) prioritise patient comfort, reduced sensitivity and increased compliance, setting new standards for safe and effective tooth whitening.

The transformative phase of tooth whitening in the UK reflects inclusivity and accessibility, making it a common practice for individuals of all ages and backgrounds. The wide array of products and services allows consumers to choose approaches aligned with their preferences, needs and budget.

As technology advances, the future promises even more innovative and tailored solutions, ensuring a brighter, whiter smile is accessible to everyone.

*Find out more about the Pola Advanced tooth whitening system at [sdipola.co.uk](http://sdipola.co.uk).*



**Dr Kiran Shankla**

Kiran is an award-winning dentist practising in Reading.

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**THE ORTHODONTIC CLINIC**

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**Winner**  
**Practice Principal** (North)  
Dr. Lisa Currie & Ivin Tan  
Private Dentistry Awards 2023



**Winner**  
**Team of the Year**  
The Dentistry Awards 2023 &  
Dentistry Scotland Awards 2023

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## Powerful and predictable Straumann

The success of immediate implant placement relies greatly on sufficient primary stability of the implant. Straumann BLX with dynamic bone management offers bone level implants that are designed for high primary stability and immediate treatment procedures.



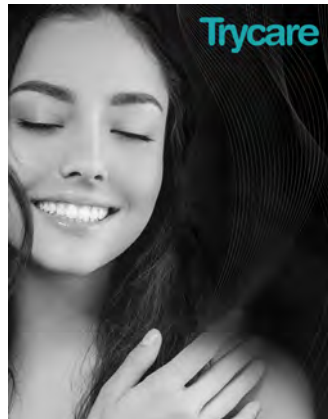
The BLX implant features a reduced neck diameter designed to decrease stress on the crestal bone, a slim and fully tapered implant core for a small osteotomy and deep apical threads to provide a large anchoring surface for stability. Plus, its slim and under-contoured profile encourages maximum soft tissue preservation.

All BLX implants have the same inner geometry regardless of the diameter of the implant, facilitating the use of just one set of prosthetic components for simple prosthetic steps.

[www.straumann.com/gb/en/dental-professionals/products-and-solutions/dental-implants/blx.html](http://www.straumann.com/gb/en/dental-professionals/products-and-solutions/dental-implants/blx.html)

## Tooth whitening in just 10 minutes! Trycare

The result of more than 15 years of research and available from Trycare, the UK's fastest growing dental dealer, Blancone typically produces an improvement of up to four to five shades of white at a very low price and in a comfortable session lasting only a few minutes. In as little as 10 minutes you can transform your patient's smile.



Due to its very fast action, Blancone treatments are not aggressive, do not dehydrate the enamel and do not induce pain or sensitivity, so no desensitising or remineralisation agents are required.

They don't require gingival barriers, which saves time and money, and can be combined within the dental hygiene appointment. They are the ideal add-on to EMS GBT and other forms of prophylaxis treatment.

Offering a new approach to tooth whitening, based upon new photochemical technologies, Blancone treatments can be repeated regularly and are the gateway to more intensive treatments if required.

Blancone's photochemical gels include two special components that break down the peroxide in such an effective way and at a speed that cannot be achieved by the chemical reactions of traditional whitening systems.

01274 885544

[www.trycare.co.uk](http://www.trycare.co.uk)

## The best of Touareg S and Closefit! Trycare

The ultimate embodiment of more than 30 years of implant knowledge and expertise, Adin's new Unifit unified conical connection implants combine the very best features of their tried and trusted Touareg S and Closefit implants in one.



Unifit spiral implants are tapered implants with a spiral tap that condenses bone during placement for immediate stability. It features two large variable threads to facilitate minimally invasive surgery and a bone condensing tapered self-taping tip for accurate placement, improved aesthetics and optimum load distribution. This design allows immediate function for all bone types.

Unifit also features Adin's Osseofix calcium phosphate blast surface treatment, built-in platform switch and back-tapered collar with micro-threads engineered to enhance bone regeneration, prevent bone loss and increase bone implant contact.

Comprising a friction grip 7° conical connection with six-position star shaped index, Unifit ensures solid abutment fixation that enhances the implant-abutment seal and minimises micromovements. Plus, it enables simple yet flexible implant and abutment alignment and supports self-guiding insertion for clear cut tactile feedback. Finally, Unifit's external geometry and surface is designed for immediate function and loading and optimal stability in all bone types.

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[www.trycare.co.uk/adin](http://www.trycare.co.uk/adin)



**BioMin®**  
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- ✓ Significantly **challenges sensitivity**.
- ✓ **Reduces** the risk of **White Spot Lesions**.








01274 88 55 44

Scan for more info now!

## Universal screwdriver set

### Zirkonzahn

The new Universal Screwdriver Set by Zirkonzahn is optimally designed for the daily workflow in dental practices and laboratories. Depending on the restoration, different available tools can be perfectly combined with each other.



**Zirkonzahn**  
Human Zirconium Technology



The set consists of the Torque Ratchet Wrench, the Screwdriver Zirkonzahn MUA for fixing and loosening Zirkonzahn Multi Unit Abutments Non Hex, the Adapter Ratchet Wrench and the Screwdriver Handpiece. The Adapter Ratchet Wrench is used with the Torque Ratchet Wrench to ensure a stable and secure attachment between the different tools.

All instruments can be safely and orderly stored in the Instrument Case Universal Screwdriver Set, which can be personalised with up to 25 Zirkonzahn screwdrivers or right-angle shank extractors, individually chosen by the user depending on the implant system. Screwdriver and extractor range is continuously expanded and can be used in combination with the Adapter Ratchet Wrench and the Screwdriver Handpiece.

In addition, for working on the model the Set Screwdriver Lab is also available, consisting of colour-coded screwdrivers depending on the implant system and supplied in different lengths with corresponding Screwdriver Holder Magprism for their safe and tidy storage.

[www.zirkonzahn.com](http://www.zirkonzahn.com)

## Continuous 12-hour fluoride protection!

### Trycare

Conventional 1450ppm and above fluoride toothpastes only deliver fluoride for a maximum of 90 minutes, whatever their fluoride content and provided the patient does not rinse.



Despite its lower 530ppm fluoride content, Biomin F remains active for up to 12 hours, continuously releasing fluoride to strengthen teeth and protect against decay, even if the patient's toothbrushing is erratic and inefficient.

Available from Trycare, Biomin F contains tiny bioglass particles made up of fluoro calcium phosphosilicate bioactive glass, which bonds to teeth and enters the dentinal tubules, where they gradually dissolve for up to 12 hours, slowly releasing calcium, fluoride and phosphate ions. These combine with saliva to form fluorapatite, which strengthens teeth, aids effective remineralisation of enamel and provides effective treatment for hypersensitivity.

Patients also report that teeth feel smoother and cleaner, that there is a noticeable absence of background oral sensitivity and that gums are healthier and less prone to bleeding.

A genuine practice builder, Biomin F enables patients to enhance their smile and improve their oral health and comfort. It is the only toothpaste approved by the Oral Health Foundation for sensitivity relief and remineralisation.

01274 885544

[www.trycare.co.uk/biomin](http://www.trycare.co.uk/biomin)

## Freedom from the cost and inconvenience of membranes and primary closure

### Hands-on Workshop

Predictable Surgical Protocols Using Bone Graft Cements

Bradford
 Sat 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024
 6 hours CPD

Presented by Dr. Lucio Faria

Scan me

**Early Bird Booking**

**£145.00** +vat

Offer ends 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

in association with:

## Bond Apatite hands-on course

### Augma

Augma is running a full-day bone cement hands-on course on Saturday 8 June at the Guide Post Hotel in Bradford, West Yorkshire.



It will be presented by Dr Lucio Faria, who has been a national and international speaker for Nobel Biocare since 2011, is a surgical master in regenerative implant dentistry and has undertaken extensive postgraduate studies in prosthodontics, bone and soft tissue grafting, and zygomatic implant surgery and rehabilitation.

Dr Faria will review four of the most common surgical protocols using Bond Apatite bone grafting cement, which sets immediately and is accompanied by minimally invasive surgical procedures that do not require a membrane.

Delegates will receive practical knowledge on how to perform socket grafting without flap reflection, lateral ridge augmentation and augmentation in the aesthetic zone.

The course includes a variety of resources, such as animated videos, recorded live surgery demonstrations and clinical videos. Evidence-based data histology shows how following the surgical protocols leads to clinical success and complete bone regeneration for the patient.

The course fee is £195 plus VAT (including all course materials and refreshments). An early bird price of £145 plus VAT is available before 31 March 2024.

01274 885540

[denise.law@trycare.co.uk](mailto:denise.law@trycare.co.uk)

[www.augmabio.co.uk](http://www.augmabio.co.uk)

## Full-day restorative hands-on workshops

### Trycare

Trycare Ltd is the UK distributor of Tokuyama Dental's range of spherical composites including Estelite Sigma Quick.

Featuring Tokuyama's patented RAP monomer and aesthetic spherical filler technology, Estelite Sigma Quick delivers an extended working time in ambient light yet cures in only 10 seconds! There is also less residual monomer and minimal after cure colour change for long-term aesthetic satisfaction.

In association with GC UK and NSK, Trycare is running a series of full-day workshops by Joan Mach, one of Europe's leading exponents in minimally invasive aesthetic and restorative dentistry. Joan will cover all the key points for achieving excellence in direct anterior composites using a biomimetic and non-invasive approach. This will include how to accomplish outstanding aesthetic results and long-lasting treatments in the anterior region using the latest products, including Tokuyama's Estelite Sigma Quick.

Featuring the use of silicon matrices, layering processes for complex class IV restorations, finishing and polishing, and much more, live demonstrations and hands-on practice will help delegates to recreate nature and achieve natural lifelike results. Offering six and half hours of CPD with learning objective C, the workshops will be held in Birmingham (Friday 14 June) and London (Saturday 15 June). Course fee, including all course materials and refreshments, £395 plus VAT (before 30 April 2024) and £495 plus VAT (after 30 April 2024).

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[www.trycare.co.uk](http://www.trycare.co.uk)



## A-dec partners with Anglian Dental

### A-dec

A-dec UK has announced a new dealer partnership with Anglian Dental, strengthening its existing network of dealer partners across the UK and ROI by supplying the dental profession with award-winning A-dec dental equipment.

A-dec UK has built an enviable reputation for working closely with its dealer partners, offering an unparalleled level of customer service and adhering to its core values around striving for excellence known as 'the A-dec way'. A-dec, renowned for quality and reliability, continues to grow its market share in the UK and ROI.

Anglian Dental based in Royston, Hertfordshire, is an established family-run dental equipment business with more than 30 years of experience in offering design, build, service and maintenance for dental surgeries in the UK.

A-dec UK general manager Matt Turner commented: 'We are delighted to partner with Anglian Dental and are confident that our shared values will form the basis of a strong and mutually beneficial alliance.'

Murray Welch, sales and marketing director at Anglian Dental, commented: 'We are proud to be partnering with A-dec, its commitment to quality and superior customer experience aligns strongly with our values and we look forward to working together.'

[www.a-dec.uk](http://www.a-dec.uk)

[www.angliandental.co.uk](http://www.angliandental.co.uk)



## Safer scaling

### W&H

Some electronic dental instruments like ultrasonic scalers can potentially interfere with some implantable cardiac devices, making them unsuitable for use on patients with pacemakers. Not so the Proxeo Ultra Piezo Scaler from W&H, which was developed in collaboration with prophylaxis professionals.



Its LED ring illuminates the treatment site, while its slim design and flexible hose allows for ease of use and enhanced user comfort. The handpiece features a patented quick connection system. With a single turn, the tip can be easily screwed on and off. It also boasts a generous capacity water tank – 750ml – one of the largest on the market.

Discover the advantages that the Proxeo Ultra Piezo Scaler could bring to your patients by visiting the W&H website today!

01727 874990

[office.uk@wh.com](mailto:office.uk@wh.com)

[www.wh.com](http://www.wh.com)

## Minimally invasive smile

### transformations

#### Coltene

As many patients continue to seek cosmetic dental treatment, be sure that you are equipped to provide them with a high-quality, minimally invasive solution, which is flexible for use across a range of applications.



**COLTENE**

Brilliant Everglow, the superior composite solution from Coltene, allows clinicians to effortlessly achieve highly aesthetic and long-lasting restorative outcomes.

The universal submicron hybrid composite offers convenient sculptability and form stability, as well as excellent polishability and high lustre. A versatile option, Brilliant Everglow has a sophisticated shade system that offers three translucency levels and enhanced Duo Shades, which allow clinicians to use it flexibly, meeting the needs of both single and multi-shade restorations.

0800 254 5115

[info.uk@coltene.com](mailto:info.uk@coltene.com)

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## IN THE HOT SEAT

Cosmetic dentist **Vinnie Attariani** on finding passions in life, her love of the outdoors and opening a cat sanctuary

**Q** When and where was your last meal out?

**A** It was a Persian restaurant in Birmingham. We went last weekend with my husband's parents. I love Persian food. If you haven't tried it, you must: you don't know what you are missing!

**Q** What song is guaranteed to make you want to dance?

**A** Whitney Houston's 'I wanna dance with somebody'.

**Q** What's the best advice you've been given?

**A** It's not a sprint, it's a marathon. Take your time and enjoy the journey.

**Q** What's your guilty pleasure?

**A** It has to be peanut butter – but only crunchy! Or Nutella. Both together is sinful!

**Q** How do you relax and unwind?

**A** I most enjoy just curling up on the sofa with my hubby, watching rubbish TV or laughing at random Tiktok videos!

Also, I'm learning to play the piano. I find I can easily lose myself on it for hours without realising the time.

**Q** Who would play you in the movie of your life?

**A** Angelina Jolie – she's overjudged, underestimated, strong, independent, successful, beautiful and a mother.

**I LOVE BEING OUTDOORS, EXPLORING THE EARTH AND ITS BEAUTY**

**Q** If you won the lottery, what would you do with the money?

**A** I would tell no one. Then I would start making small changes in all my loved ones' lives to make life easier for them.

I would continue to help and support charities. Also, as I have a soft spot for cats, I would open a cat sanctuary, so they all have a home!

**Q** What's your all-time favourite book/movie?

**A** I'm not a book person. I lack the ability to be able to sit still long enough to read one!

I have many favourite films – one of which is *City of Angels*, which highlights how vulnerable life and love is and to cherish every moment.

**Q** Describe your perfect holiday...

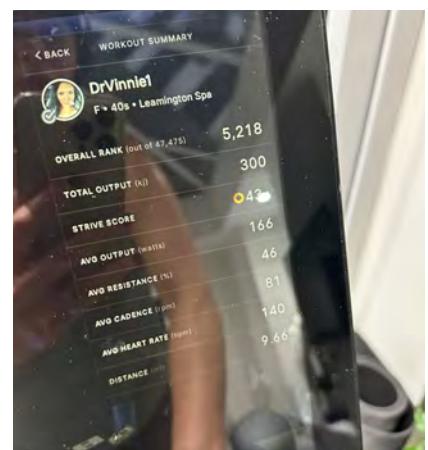
**A** Somewhere where I can be outside, away from the world. Like the top of a mountain, a hill or a on remote beach with the warmth of the sun on my face and the fresh air with just the sound of nature all around me. To just rest and breathe without any thought other than the peacefulness of the surroundings. I love being outdoors, exploring the earth and its beauty with my loved ones.

**Q** What keeps you up at night?

**A** My husband Martin!

**Q** What was the last photo you took on your phone?

**A** Haha, this was it! After my spin class!



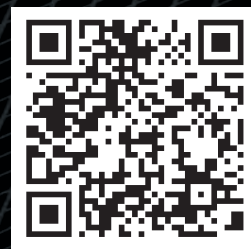


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## Career Pathway

### STEP 1

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### STEP 2

PG Cert in Advanced Contemporary Restorative & Aesthetic Dentistry

### STEP 3

PG Dip (Restorative Aesthetic Dentistry)

### STEP 4

MSc University of Kent



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