

# PRIVATE

MAY 2024

# DENTISTRY

## *A perfect balance*

Zainab Al-Mukhtar  
on the importance of  
wellbeing

## **Consistency is the key**

Top tips on building  
your brand

## **Sense and sustainability**

How can practices meet  
eco-conscious demand?

# *From doubt to delight*

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# Sustainable smiles

Patrick Ward  
Editor

**D**ental professionals have plenty on their plates. It's not a line of work for people wanting an easy life, is it? It's like spinning plates, rushing around to ensure you're paying the bills on time, complying with regulations, keeping your equipment up to date, attracting new patients and, of course, providing a high standard of care.

So, voluntarily throwing something else into that mix – something as weighty as saving the planet – won't necessarily be top of your agenda.

But the climate crisis isn't something we can just ignore in the hope that other people will deal with it. It's up to us all to make a difference, however small. It's also something that consumers are increasingly taking into consideration when choosing what to spend their money on. Would your practice pass their test?

There are hundreds of things the average practice could do to reduce their carbon footprint. You could switch to a renewable energy supplier, introduce a cycle-to-work scheme for staff or start a recycling scheme for used toothbrushes.

For many of us, this might look like a confusing – and costly – endeavour. But greening up dentistry has some hidden advantages – not least what you can save on your energy bills.

It's a challenge – but the dental sector faces, and learns to overcome, a constant barrage of challenges.

That's where *Private Dentistry* comes in. We want to help readers on the journey towards sustainable dentistry, starting this issue with a brief introduction to the subject and a discussion about the importance of being transparent and honest about your eco-friendly actions. We'll be following this up with more sound advice in the months ahead.

One thing that we can be sure of is that this is our future, and early adopters will be leaders in the field.

It's also something we take seriously here at FMC. For the past 15 years, we have tried to ensure the magazines we print are produced responsibly. Our paper, for example, comes from sustainably managed forests, and the plant that produces it runs almost completely on biofuel. Plus, you'll notice that this magazine came in a paper envelope rather than plastic.

There's also the opportunity to read it digitally.

And while we think about what we can do to look after the planet, let's think about what we can do to look after ourselves as well. I'm sure many readers will take inspiration from our interview with Zainab Al-Mukhtar, who talks about how she learned to balance hard work, personal growth and mindfulness.

We also have a wonderful How I Did It, as Louise McGuigan charts her path from suddenly inheriting a dental practice from her late father to leading a first-class endeavour built with real passion and determination.

And finally, it's hello from me! I can't tell you how excited I am about being editor of *Private Dentistry*. Be sure to get in touch to say hello and pitch any ideas. I look forward to hearing from you!



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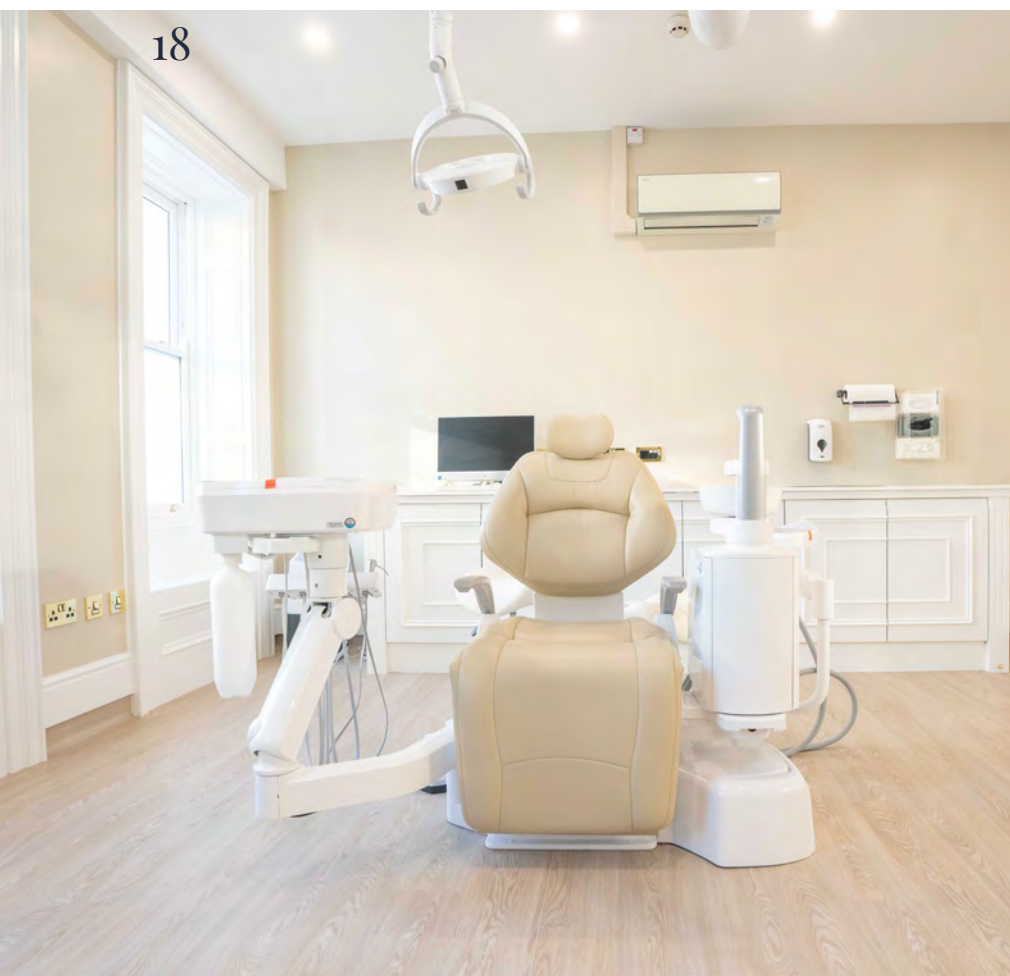
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# PRIVATE

## 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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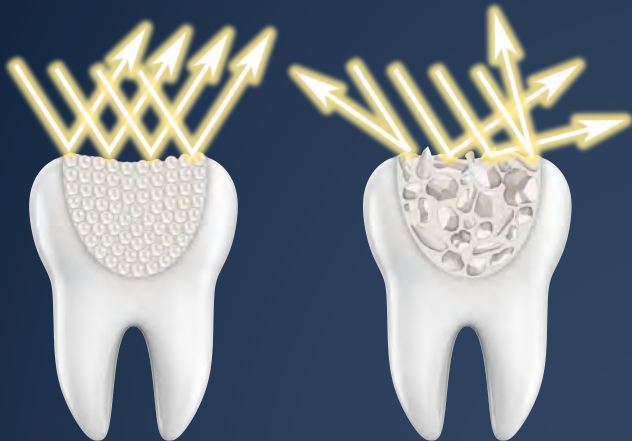
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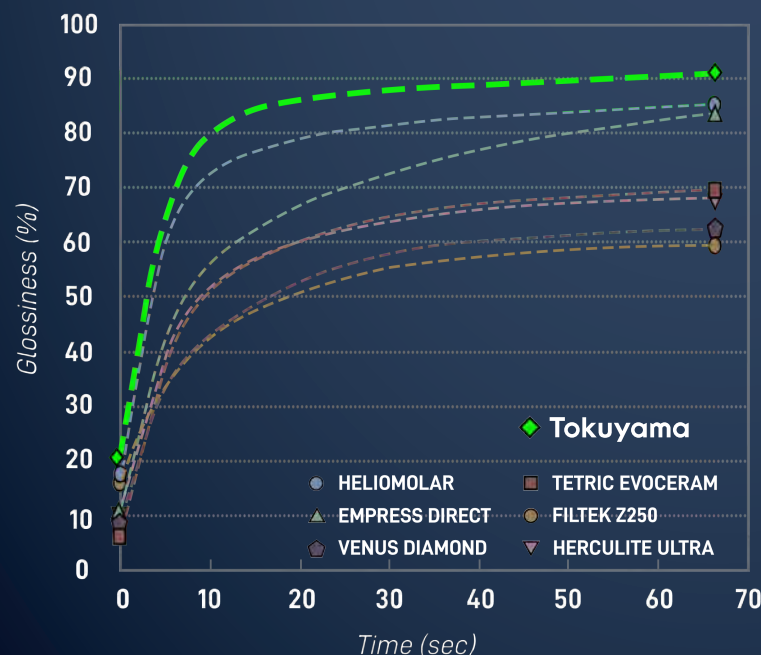
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# PRIVATE DENTISTRY

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### VINNIE ATTARIANI

BDS, owns an award-winning practice in Leamington Spa. She has developed her career in general dentistry, while also specialising in cosmetic dentistry with a particular interest in facial aesthetics. She is a member of the BACD.



### SUBIR BANERJI

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.



### COLIN CAMPBELL

BDS FDS RCS Ed, is a specialist in oral surgery. He is clinical director of The Campbell Clinic and director of The Campbell Academy.



### ANDREW CHANDRAPAL

BDS MFGDP(UK) DPDS (Bris), is practice principal at Bourne End Dental and UK programme director for the Californian Centre for Advanced Dental Studies.



### SIMON CHARD

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 DRUIHAN

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.



### KOMAL SURI

BChD, owns Smile Design Dental Practice. The focus of her work is aesthetic and restorative dentistry.



### PROFESSOR PAUL TIPTON

BDS MSc DGGP UK, is a specialist in prosthodontics, president of the British Academy of Restorative Dentistry and an internationally renowned dental lecturer.



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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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# THE Skin Diary



## HOW TO INTEGRATE MEDICAL SKINCARE INTO DENTAL PRACTICES

### Introducing Chapters

"Chapters," from The Skin Diary, delivers a personalised 7-day AM/PM prescription routine, freshly compounded to assure peak efficacy. Integrated seamlessly into both patients' lives and affiliated clinics, this full-scale program embarks each patient on a carefully tailored journey. Adjusted continuously through dermatological support, these treatments evolve to match the changing conditions and responses of their skin.

Emerging from groundbreaking research at the University of Manchester, The Skin Diary represents a fusion of scientific rigour and personalised dermatological care, aimed at redefining treatment standards in an ageing society where health and appearance are increasingly intertwined. Founded by prominent dermatologists Dr. Clare Kiely, Professor Chris Griffiths OBE, Dr. Tamara Griffiths, and Dr. Richard Barlow, this innovative approach is transforming patient care and clinic workflows across aesthetic practices.

The concept for The Skin Diary was sparked by Dr. Kiely's observations in her practice, where she noted the overwhelming confusion faced by patients sifting through a plethora of skincare options. This insight led to the creation of a product that not only demystifies skincare routines but also personalises them with potent, medical-grade ingredients. More than just offering generic solutions, The Skin Diary establishes an ongoing "dialogue"—a proactive, responsive 'diary' of the skin's needs—guided by dermatological expertise. At the heart of this initiative is "Chapters," a comprehensive prescription program targeted at managing and mitigating photodamage, responsible for about 80% of skin ageing concerns.

*"My patients love the products and are delighted that they are noticing a positive impact on their skin. They have noticed less wrinkles, less pigmentation and glowing skin."* Dr. Sarah Riaz



Dr. Clare Kiely  
Founder, Chief Medical Officer

### Simplified Integration into Dental Practices

"Chapters", is designed to seamlessly complement a clinics' cosmetic treatments, enhancing both skin health and the overall portfolio of aesthetic services. The integration process is streamlined through an intuitive online portal allowing dental clinicians to refer patients effortlessly, maintain oversight of their progress with regular updates, and trust in expert skincare management by top dermatologists. This simplicity in the engagement process boosts clinic offerings, elevates patient care standards, and allows clinicians to focus on core treatments while providing advanced, complementary skincare solutions that enhance patient satisfaction and loyalty.

The Skin Diary sets a new standard in aesthetic medicine. It offers dental practices a unique opportunity to elevate their services, promising to exceed patient expectations for integrated skincare solutions.

For more information or to discuss partnership opportunities, please contact [becky@theskindiary.com](mailto:becky@theskindiary.com)

## UK dentistry is third most expensive in G7, study says

Research comparing the average cost of dental treatments in G7 countries has found that the UK was the third most expensive.

The study, published by *Healthnews*, focuses on five key procedures: cleaning, crowns, root canals, tooth extraction and fillings. Data was taken from 50 dental and oral health websites in each country to create the averages.

The United States topped the list with an overall average cost of \$518 (£416). Canada was second at \$414 (£332), with the UK in third place at \$331 (£266). The most affordable dentistry was found in Italy, where the overall average cost was \$173 (£139).

However, some procedures were cheaper in the UK relative to other countries. The average price of a cleaning, for example, was found to be \$92 (£74) in the UK, beaten only by Germany (\$89/£71) and Italy (\$78/£63).

The cheaper price of dentistry in Italy is said to be partly due to an overall lower cost of living and operational expenses. However, Italy's national health service also provides certain dental treatments at a lower cost or for free. Study author Nadzeya Sankovich notes that the UK figures encompass both NHS and private dentistry. The inclusion of NHS fees is likely to have lowered average prices.

## Lives could be saved using pre-treatment antibiotics, research shows

Administering antibiotics to vulnerable patients with heart conditions before dental treatment could save up to 78 lives per year, according to new research.

Up to 261 people develop infective endocarditis (IE) each year, and the condition can kill up to 30% of those with the disease within a year. According to the authors of the study, nearly 400,000 people in the UK are at risk of developing IE following invasive dental treatment. Incidents of IE in Europe have reportedly doubled over the past 20 years.

Guidelines set by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) do not currently recommend the use of antibiotic prophylaxis (AP). The study's authors claim this policy puts patients' lives at risk, suggesting there is 'considerable scope' to allow dentists to administer the antibiotic to at-risk patients before treatment.

Unlike NICE, the American Heart Association and the European Society of Cardiology both endorse the use of AP in high-risk cases. Those behind the new research also argue that AP is safe and cost-effective, and would deliver 'significant cost savings and health benefits'.

Larry Baddour, one of the authors of the paper, said: 'We have concerns that there are high-risk individuals in the UK who are at risk of infective endocarditis related to invasive dental procedures without antibiotic prophylaxis.'

'We believe a re-evaluation of [NICE's] position is needed in high-risk individuals undergoing invasive dental procedures, who should receive antibiotic prophylaxis.'



### 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 and DD, the UK Dentistry Golf Championship is a Stableford individual competition open to all abilities.



#### South West Dentistry Show 29 June – Bristol

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## Flavoured lollipops could be used to detect mouth cancer

A project that aims to use flavoured lollipops to detect mouth cancer has received new funding. Researchers at the University of Birmingham hope the study will allow for faster, less intrusive and earlier identification of the disease.

The lollipops would be made using hydrogel designed to capture proteins from saliva. The hydrogel concentrates and labels proteins using a fluorescent marker, which then attaches to the hydrogel with a photocleavable bond.

The hydrogel would be taken to a laboratory, where it will release its captured proteins when exposed to a specific colour of light, allowing any proteins produced by mouth cancer to be observed.



The cancer-detecting lollipops would make the process of diagnosis far less invasive. It can currently involve taking biopsies using flexible cameras, which are often

painful for the patient. Early detection would also give patients a greater chance of successful treatment.

Each year, around 12,400 people are diagnosed with head and neck cancers in the UK. The lollipops could make such

diagnoses faster and cheaper.

Cancer Research UK and the Engineering and Physical Services Research Council are behind the £350,000 grant, which will provide the project with three years of funding.

Dr Ruchi Gupta at the University of Birmingham is leading the project. 'Smart hydrogels have really exciting potential for diagnosing mouth cancer,' she said. 'They can be easily moulded into shapes as a solid to "catch" proteins in saliva.'

The process of capturing the protein currently takes 12 hours, but researchers hope to cut this down to just 10 minutes.

Further tests are also needed to accurately detect the complex proteins associated with mouth cancer among the many other proteins found in saliva.

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## Poor oral hygiene boosts risk of serious head and neck infections, study suggests

The risk of severe infections of the head and neck increases as a result of poor oral hygiene, according to new research. The study, authored by Jarno Velhonoja, also found that investment in oral health and dentistry can reduce the mortality rate of such infections, along with their treatment costs and complications.

Severe deep neck infections often arise after the onset of dental or throat infections, which then spread. Treatment can involve the use of intravenous antibiotics and surgery of the mouth, jaws and neck area.

The study revealed that there was a growing number of deep neck infections and a significant increase in odontogenic infections. One in five patients suffered complications and there was a mortality rate of 1.4%. With poor oral hygiene and lack of access to dental care significant factors behind the occurrence of infections requiring hospitalisation, the study suggests investment in and improved access to dental services could reduce the mortality, costs and complications associated with the disease.

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To find out more about a career at Colosseum Dental, get in touch with Lee on **07936 358 758**, at [lee.catlin@colosseumdental.co.uk](mailto:lee.catlin@colosseumdental.co.uk). Or visit the careers page on our website: [colosseumdental.co.uk/careers](https://colosseumdental.co.uk/careers)

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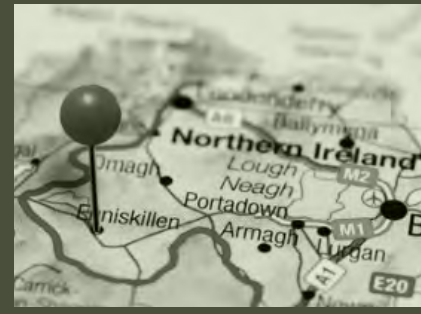
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Enniskillen was voted one of the most 'hip' places to live by the Times 2024. An island town full of stunning natural beauty, it is a haven for foodies and nearby Fermanagh is a magnet for physical and water sports enthusiasts with a pick of great schools for families.



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# We're looking for an Associate Dentist

ENNISKILLEN



## Dental therapists and hygienists to administer medicines under new plans announced by the government

Dental therapists and hygienists will be permitted to supply and administer certain medicines without sign-off from a dentist, under new plans revealed by the government. The move aims to streamline processes within dental practices, improve patient experiences and relieve NHS dental access issues.

This comes after two government consultations were held on its proposal to amend the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 (HMRs) to grant these powers. The government said the feedback from the consultations was 'overwhelmingly positive' and that it received 'widespread support' for amending the HMRs.

Allowing dental hygienists and therapists to give patients certain medicines, including painkillers and fluoride, without sign-off will free up dentists' time.

The plan also allows pharmacy technicians to supply specified medicines to certain groups of patients, without the patients seeing a prescriber.

The British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT) said: 'BSDHT welcomes plans to facilitate our professions within the four nations in working to the full extent of their skill set and giving them new powers that enable them to offer patients the care that they need.'

'The responses for the consultations were emphatic; that these highly-skilled professionals should be able to work on their own authority and be able to supply and administer a specific list of medicines directly to patients.'

'Everyone will benefit from an oral healthcare team that runs more smoothly and uses its time effectively. We encourage members of the profession to embrace this opportunity to do what is right for patients and the public who have been supportive in this process.'

The British Association of Dental Therapists said: 'We are delighted that following the General Dental Council permitting direct access in 2013, then 11

years of campaigning and over 10 years being involved in the Chief Professions Officer's Medical Mechanisms Project that dental therapists and dental hygienists will soon be able to supply and administer certain prescription only medicines to patients without a need for a patients specific direction or a patient group direction. This will allow dental therapists and dental hygienists to efficiently use their full scope of practice and deliver patient care as they have been trained and educated to do.'

'We would like to point out that this will apply to all four nations, not just England, and dental therapists and dental hygienists will still need to undergo education and training before they are able to use "exemptions" for the medicines that were consulted on in 2023. It is unclear, however, at the moment, the extent of that education and training and how it will be provided and if dental therapists and dental hygienists will have to fund it themselves to work in the NHS.'



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# Steps to ensure a smooth exit

Columnist **Chris Barrow** says selling up is a reverse engineering process

Every three months I tour the UK, presenting workshops to my clients. The theme for Q2 of 2024 is 'extreme exit strategy' – a full-day masterclass for owners on how to sell their dental business at the right time, for the right value, on the right terms and to the right buyer.

It's never too early to learn the top tips necessary to ensure a smooth exit from ownership. I even have clients with start-ups who want advance notice of how best to build and grow, so that, at some future date, their sale will be on the best possible terms.

Selling a dental business is a reverse engineering process made up of 12 steps:

1. Deciding when you want your pre-tax capital. Whether you are new to ownership or experienced, it is good sense to set a date or age by which you want to have the option to sell, whether or not you intend to stop delivering clinical dentistry before or after that moment
2. Deciding how much pre-tax capital you want. This may sound astonishing to the uninitiated, but there is no reason why you cannot choose a pre-tax number (no matter how many millions) and work to that number by the chosen date or age
3. Understanding earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA). I'm not an accountant and neither are my dental clients, but we must be able to calculate our EBITDA because, no matter how 'pretty' our practice, it will ultimately be a multiple of EBITDA that will determine the sale valuation
4. Understanding adjusted EBITDA. One of the most common mistakes when building a dental business to sell is for the owner to be the most prolific producer of revenue in the business. This narrows down your choice of buyers, unless you want to be locked in for long periods of time. Calculating adjusted EBITDA can identify just how expensive your own production can be and give you a steer on how to avoid this trap
5. Decide what percentage of production at the sale of your business will be your own. Many clients who want to sell will extricate themselves from the production figures over a planned period of time before the 'for sale' sign goes up
6. Assume a multiple of EBITDA. The market changes over time and assumptions must be made as to likely values at the proposed target dates
7. Reverse engineer production and EBITDA. Once all the relevant factors have been taken into consideration, a decision can be made to aim for a target date or age and then reverse engineer the numbers to get there over time
8. Allow for any potential earn-out period. Some owners cannot resist the temptation to remain the highest producer in their own business. If so, allowance must be made in both timing and valuation for the effects of an earn out package (which itself can change over time as markets change)
9. Allow for the time taken to sell. This can involve:
  - Appointing an agent
  - Preparing the sales prospectus
  - The waiting game
  - Showing people around
  - The offer and negotiations
  - Heads of agreement
  - Due diligence
  - Financial underwriting
  - Contracts
  - Exchange
  - Integration
10. Prepare financial systems to speed due diligence. You can save yourself a lot of pain and delay by implementing robust financial systems as early as possible
11. Understand the different motives of independent and corporate buyers. Owner-managed businesses are very different from those backed by institutional investment
12. Be aware of dangers and pitfalls in the sale process. Invest in the very best independent advisers as you move into the sale phase of your business career. You may be selling one business, one time only – a massive decision – and selling to people who may have bought hundreds of practices. Be sure to get the right team around you.

I believe that following these 12 steps will maximise value and minimise pain when the time comes to sell.

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CHRIS  
BARROW



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# Epic Dental

**Louise McGuigan's** professional focus was solely on her clinical dentistry. But when tragedy struck, it forced a change that took her on a journey from reluctant practice owner to creator of a stunning new clinic to make her father proud

I never saw myself as a businessperson, I just wanted to 'do dentistry'. But this changed with my father's passing.

I graduated from Queen's University Belfast in 2014 and worked as an associate at my dad's practice (Gransha Dental in Belfast) for a couple of years. He took a step back clinically when he fell ill but remained its owner. He was the heart of that practice, and his death (in 2019) was untimely, so it was a shock. I took a week off but returned to work the following week – and suddenly, I was the principal dentist.

I had no intention to own or run the practice, and we'd only had a few very short conversations about it. I was honest with my dad and said it wasn't for me, so he never pushed me.

However, when you lose that person who is your person, your role model and your 'everything', sometimes your views change. I couldn't envision anybody else running the practice – there was a big emotional connection. So, I decided, at least for now, that I wouldn't let anyone else take over. I flapped around for a year without a clue what I was doing – grieving, working and running the business.

## THE HAND OF FATE

Then the pandemic struck – and it was a paradoxical gift. Being non-clinical gave me a few months to sit down and try to figure out how to run a dental practice. COVID-19 gave

me time to step back and assess, which I hadn't done. To my surprise, I discovered I enjoyed being a business owner – but I don't believe I would have done it had fate not had a hand.

Fast forward, and things were going really well. Gransha was moving towards being almost fully private, and we were doing a lot of cosmetic dentistry. But I felt I had outgrown the practice. I needed to grow and create something more aesthetically pleasing. There were limitations, as I didn't own the building, and it wasn't in my ideal location geographically.

I felt like I was loosely on the lookout for something else to add to the

## OUR ETHOS IS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF A SPACE WHERE CLINICAL EXCELLENCE MEETS ARTISTIC FLAIR

existing practice, but I had no real grand ideas or major plans to do anything about it.

Then, one day, a building in my hometown of Lisburn came up for sale, and I fell in love. It's a 300-year-old three-storey building in Bridge Street. I don't know its initial origins or its entire journey over the years, but it dates back to mid 1700s and has been The Hat Shop since 1984 – it was iconic in the city. People would reference it for directions – it was just one of those places that everybody knew. It was also part of a heritage site, which meant it was in a conservation area. So it did have a lot of old features that had to be kept, which I absolutely adored because that's my style and décor preference. I bought it on a whim, and things snowballed from there.

I viewed the property in 2021, and it took a whole year to get the sale through based on a change of use and all the conservation area's limitations. Then it took just over another year for renovations. The builders and the architect would joke

### *Step inside...*

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## *The ethos*

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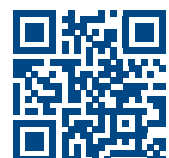


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## *The team*

### CLINICAL LEAD

Dr Louise McGuigan

### COSMETIC AND RESTORATIVE DENTIST

Dr Janice Brown

### IMPLANT DENTIST

Dr Ernest Lucas Taulé

### ORTHODONTIC SPECIAL INTEREST

Dr Ariadna Colom

### ENDODONTIC SPECIAL INTEREST

Dr Albert Casamayor

### DENTAL HYGIENE

Dr Alfa Yu

### TREATMENT COORDINATORS

Louise McConville, Danielle McCann, Chara McCafferty and Debbie Cupples

### DENTAL NURSES

Joey McCafferty, Debbie Cupples, Lisa Henry and Cassandra Munce

### BUSINESS MANAGER

Andrew Moorehead

### PRACTICE MANAGER

Debbie Adams

that there wasn't a single right angle in the place, so it threw up a few obstacles, but it was a lot of fun.

After purchasing the building, I thought hard about what I wanted from this space, and I knew it had to be somewhere where people felt calm, safe, looked after and well-treated.

### RELAXING AND ENRICHING INTERIORS

I loved the building, but it needed a lot of love. We essentially ripped out the interior, and there were plenty of struggles, reorganisations of plans and changes of decisions along the way. Much of the time, I had to take the initiative and think outside the box.

The builder is a very good friend and has a similar style. I'd draw or describe what I wanted regarding décor, cabinetry, doors and glass, and he would bring it to life. With the renovation complete, nothing shouts 'dental practice' or 'all we think about is teeth' when you walk in.

It is a level up from what is generally seen in an average dental practice. But this called for a lot of interior prep work. We kept some original hand-carved mahogany cobbles, and I stripped them back and had them restored. We also refurbished the building's original staircase and some original tongue and groove walls to respect its heritage. I also kept some very beautiful hats to display as a homage to The Hat Shop.

My husband and I spent an evening 'spitballing' names and stopped on 'epic'; it's short and to the point, we liked it, and it stuck – it's borne out of my love for dentistry and interiors. If I couldn't do dentistry, I'd be an interior designer.

I wanted something that reflected the level of aesthetic dentistry we were providing and a space where it could be enjoyed in absolute luxury. We have done as much as possible to make it feel relaxing and enriching, and we have created what is, I hope, an enjoyable dental experience.

Waiting rooms are typically sterile, dark and dingy places with hard chairs. Ours is flooded with natural light, open and airy. It is a big, beautiful, open-plan patient lounge with refreshments, calming music, gorgeous scents and books of lovely smiles we have completed to inspire people.

Patients can relax on a sofa or in a window chair or bring their laptops to work on while they are waiting. Apart from check-in at a small desk in the patient lounge, all other communications occur in our treatment coordinator (TCO) rooms. This means all payments are private, and there are no phone calls to interrupt the conversation or rush anyone.



## HOW I DID IT

### PATIENTS COME FIRST

In developing the business, I did as much as possible to facilitate families and young children because, as a mum, I understand the challenges. We have toys, baby-changing facilities with a vast bathroom, sanitary products, nappies and wipes – all designed to take the stress out of a dental visit for busy parents with their kids. If they forget their changing bag, that's no problem!

We also have a shower facility for patients who may have come a long way and wish to freshen up or are going out after their appointment. We have an implant suite, a CBCT machine, Itero and Trios and a photo suite. There are heated blankets and TVs in every surgery.

The flagship surgery is mine, which is situated at the front of the building and has three beautiful large sash windows, so it is open and airy. We have Belmont chairs in every room – I have a new Eurus.

And then there is my favourite bathroom in the world, which is a complete juxtaposition to the rest of the practice, which is very opulent, luxurious and traditional. It is earthy with cement walls and has an entirely different vibe, and it's the room most people comment upon.

### MORE THAN JUST A SERVICE

The patient journey is critical. We have five TCOs who look after patients throughout their journey, building rapport and being their point of contact. We are responsive on emails and Whatsapp, and people feel well looked after. The team shares this vision. It is about dental and whole health excellence. No matter what, the patient comes first.

The team must be a family. That was what made Gransha so popular, and we have definitely created that. Recruitment is challenging, but I have some incredible team members who are all fundamentally helping to change the dental experience. We deal with multidisciplinary cases, and the team works together holistically. Of course, the cosmetic aspects of dentistry matter, but we focus on how people view their mouth and its connection with their body, so there is always an option for people to feel confident, get that promotion, get that job or whatever it is they feel is missing in their lives.

Lisburn has a quiet high street, and we are located at one end. I love the location as it is close to my family home and where I live now, so it's an easy commute. The area has a natural community feel, so it is essential when building trust that we are part of that community. As dentists, we should always be more than just a service.

I have made a massive investment in the business. I hope this demonstrates to the community that I take their health and wellbeing seriously, especially those who want to invest in themselves. Our ethos is based on the principle of a space where clinical excellence meets artistic flair, which we have achieved in a short time. We are only four months old, but it is a beautiful and professional business.

### STRONG SUPPORT

I started the project when my son was four months old and my husband was working overseas. I was a single mum, essentially running one business and building another. Raising a child genuinely takes a village, and I couldn't have done it without my mum and wonderful nanny.



I am a champion of women. My advice to other mums looking to embark on a similar business venture is that it is only possible with strong emotional support from those around you. It's nice to see other incredibly successful powerhouse women creating businesses and building their brands. It is inspiring that so many women continue to do it. We are often the primary caregivers and sometimes have more on our minds regarding balancing business ownership with a family. It's not easy, but it is enjoyable, and we should all be proud of ourselves.

### MOMENTOUS AND EMOTIONAL

Opening the doors to Epic Dental was a momentous and emotional occasion, as the one person I would have loved to have experienced it was my late father. I have to pay homage to Gransha because, as well as providing the backbone of my clinical journey, it has also funded this project and created a business that wouldn't have happened without it. It is so lovely to be able to do beautiful dentistry in such a stunning space, and I had dad at the forefront of my mind the whole time. But my mum and little boy were here, although my husband was still working overseas. I have a great support system and loving and enthusiastic people around me.

### *Who was involved?*

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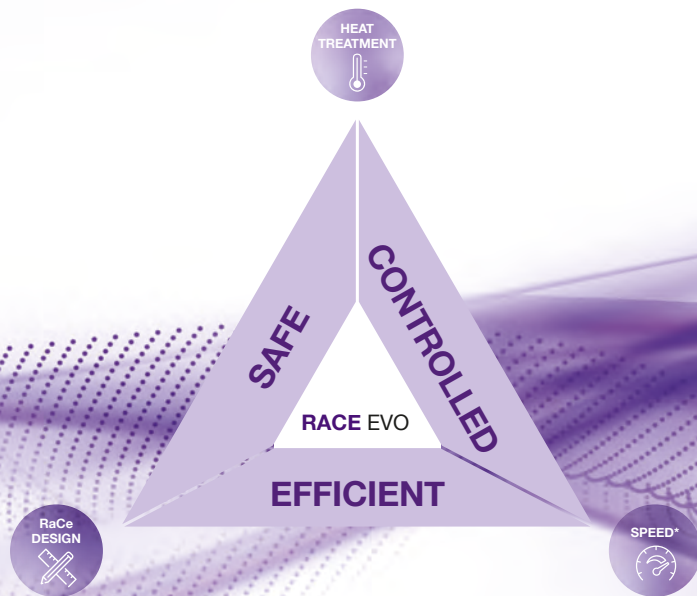


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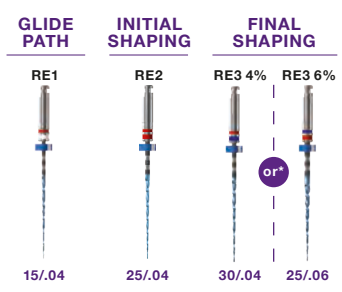
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# Structural integrity

**Jenna Taylor** explains how a poorly structured dental limited company can become a costly mess

**D**entists who opt to run their dental practice through a limited company should be ready to invest in good advice on its setup. Structure your company in the wrong way and you may later find you are involved in a costly and complicated mess, with the penalty of additional tax.

If you are new to incorporation, there are important questions to be answered. Among them are:

- What kind of status should the company have?
- Is it a trading operation or an investment company?
- Who will the shareholders be?
- What percentage of shares will you allocate to the people you nominate as shareholders?

Remember, all assets held in the company belong to the company, not to the dentist.

We make sure our clients structure their companies in their long-term interests to allow for a streamlined sale of the business when the time comes.

By contrast, there are dentists who have opted to set up an 'off-the-shelf' company without taking any advice.

When they decide to sell their dental practice, they discover that their lack of forethought means their dental practice may need to

restructure. We have taken on a few such dentists, who we refer to as our 'in extremis' clients while we get them sorted.

Here are two case studies that reflect the two polar extremes.

## **DENTIST A: THE SMOOTH EXIT**

Because dentist A incorporated her practice with our help some years ago, she structured her company correctly from the outset.

It was a trading company in which she owned the majority shareholding while her husband was also a significant shareholder.

We had already discussed her exit strategy and knew her priorities. We had also worked with her independent financial adviser, so we understood the bigger picture. More

recently we had made her aware of business asset disposal relief (BADR). This allows capital gains tax to be paid at 10% on the first £1m of lifetime gains on business assets rather than the

usual rate of 20%. There are strict requirements for BADR, one being the business must be a trading business and not an investment company.

When dentist A sold her practice, she went straight to market and promptly found buyers.

## **DENTIST B: 'IN EXTREMIS'**

A problem can occur when a dentist uses surplus cash in the company to make investments. This was the case with dentist B, who had some spare funds in their limited company and

decided to buy a residential property as an investment. Surplus cash had also been placed in an investment bond within the company.

It was only when their incorporated dental practice was on the market that their practice sales agency realised that the company needed restructuring, or the dentist would have to sell the investment property and investment bond along with the practice.

This was doubly problematic, as the dentist had planned to retain both the investments into retirement.

Also, if the two investments stayed within the company, their entitlement to BADR would be compromised and they would incur additional tax.

We were happy to assist, of course. It was not as simple as just removing the properties from the business, as the restructuring had to be undertaken correctly and observe certain time restrictions.

We managed to sort out the dentist happily, but had their company been properly structured from the outset, they would have avoided costs and stress and a potential delay to their practice sale.

## **STRUCTURE CORRECTLY AT THE START**

As business advisers, our view is that our dentist clients should ideally plan and structure a company at the outset to achieve considerable tax savings and a smooth and well-managed exit.

Those that did not structure their company correctly should take steps to do so at least five years before their intended retirement to avoid a stressful and costly last-minute restructure.

## **PLAN AND STRUCTURE A COMPANY AT THE OUTSET TO ACHIEVE CONSIDERABLE TAX SAVINGS AND A SMOOTH EXIT**



**Jenna Taylor**

Jenna is a tax specialist and certified dental accountant with Ross Brooke Dental.

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# Don't get caught out by tax rules

Locums working through their own companies, and the practices they work for, need to ensure they are on top of off-payroll working and IR35, says **Adam Bernstein**

**O**ff-payroll working rules are intended to ensure that locums and the self-employed, and those they work for, are unable to reduce the taxes they pay by introducing an intermediary into their contractual arrangements.

For example, a practice wishing to take on a locum could choose to engage the individual directly. If classed as an employee for tax purposes, the practice would have to operate pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) and would also be liable for employers' national insurance contributions (NICs).

Alternatively, it could contract them via a company owned by the locum (often referred to as a personal service company or PSC). In the absence of the off-payroll working/IR35 rules, the locum could end up with a lower tax and NIC bill, and the practice would not need to worry about employer NICs or PAYE.

To tackle such arrangements, the government introduced IR35 more than 20 years ago. Emma Rawson, technical officer at the Association of Taxation Technicians (ATT), explains that under this 'a contractor has to decide if, ignoring their PSC, they would have been an employee of their client. If they would, the PSC has to account for the appropriate payroll taxes and NICs to HMRC.'

However, following longstanding concerns over the level of non-

compliance with IR35, new rules (referred to as off-payroll working) were introduced for the public sector in April 2017 and the private sector in 2021.

Under off-payroll working, Rawson says that the responsibility for deciding whether a contractor should be taxed as an employee is taken out of their hands. Instead, 'it is up to the client to determine whether the rules apply and ensure that the correct payroll taxes and NICs are deducted from payments made to the PSC'.

## WHICH RULES?

Despite the off-payroll working rules applying across both the public and private sectors, IR35 did not disappear.

Rawson says that locums still need to consider IR35 if the end client they are working for is either based wholly overseas or classed as 'small'. For these purposes, unincorporated clients such as sole traders or partnerships will be small if their turnover does not exceed £10.2m.

Clients that are companies or limited liability partnerships (LLPs) need to meet the Companies Act definition of a small company. This broadly requires any two of the following: their turnover does not exceed £10.2m, their assets do not exceed £5.1m and that they have no more than 50 employees.

## WHEN THE RULES APPLY

The off-payroll working and IR35 rules work in very similar ways. The key difference is who makes the decision and is responsible for deducting tax and NICs.

Rawson says that, under both regimes, there needs to be an individual worker performing services for a client, services provided through an intermediary and, if the worker was

contracted directly by the engager, they would have been regarded for tax purposes as an employee.

'The first two of these conditions are relatively straightforward, but the third is much trickier,' says Rawson.

'In effect, you have to imagine there is a direct contract between the worker and client and consider whether that contract would have been one of employment. If the worker would have been self-employed, then off-payroll working/IR35 do not apply. If they would have been an employee, then they do.'

## WHAT PRACTICES SHOULD DO

The first thing Rawson recommends that practices should check is whether they qualify as 'small'. If they are, they have no further obligations and it will be up to the locum to worry about IR35.

But if they are not, she says, 'they need to carefully check their contracts. If any of these aren't directly with the individual or an agency, but instead through a PSC or other intermediary,

## FOLLOWING LONGSTANDING CONCERNS OVER THE LEVEL OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH IR35, NEW RULES WERE INTRODUCED



**Adam Bernstein**

Adam is director of Abfeatures and a business-to-business literary agent.



then the off-payroll working rules need to be considered.'

For each contract, the practice needs to consider whether, if the locum was engaged directly, they would be considered an employee for tax purposes. HMRC's Check Employment Status for Tax tool may help with this.

Rawson says that practices then need to 'issue a document known as a status determination statement (SDS), setting out whether or not they think the off-payroll working rules apply and their reasons.

'A copy needs to be given directly to both the individual locum and any agency the practice contracts with for their services.'

And, if off-payroll working applies, then whoever pays the locum's PSC will need to operate PAYE and deduct tax and NIC from those payments.

### WHAT LOCUMS NEED TO DO

The advice from Rawson to locums is to check whether the practice is 'small'. If it is, the locum 'will have to consider whether IR35 rules apply and ensure their PSC accounts for PAYE and NICs accordingly'.

If they are not small, then the locum should receive an SDS from the practice setting out their conclusion as

to whether off-payroll working applies and the reasons for this. This should be checked carefully for accuracy.

Rawson says that if the rules do apply 'payments made to the locum's PSC will be net of tax and NICs. However, on the plus side, the PSC won't pay corporation tax, and the locum is free to extract the funds as a dividend or salary without paying any additional tax or NICs.'

### IF THE LOCUM AND PRACTICE DISAGREE

There's a risk of a locum disagreeing with the practice's conclusion. In this instance, Rawson says 'they can ask it to reconsider. The practice then has

45 days to either uphold their original decision or issue a new SDS.'

Her advice to practices is to 'have procedures in place to handle such disagreements and turn them around within the deadline, or they will remain liable for deducting tax and NICs'.

And, with a note of caution, she warns: 'If the locum and practice continue to disagree there is little more that can be done. HMRC will not intervene, and the locum and practice will have to decide whether they wish to continue or walk away from the contract entirely.'

This area of tax law is riddled with mantraps so, in doubt, good advice is not just necessary – it's essential.

### Top tips

1. Check the size of the practice – if it counts as 'small', the locum will have to decide on whether IR35 rules apply and make sure PAYE and NICs are considered by their PSC
2. Locums should carefully check the details of SDSs provided by clients to ensure they are accurate
3. Practices should have procedures in place for a rapid turnaround should the locum dispute an SDS.

If in doubt, seek expert help – tax law is complicated, and getting it wrong can be costly.



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# Consistency is key to building a successful brand

In the first of two articles, **Simon Chard** shows how consistent work can transform your business

Over the next couple of issues, I'm going to be doing a deep dive into what I think is the most important part of building a successful brand and a successful company – consistency.

This month, I'll be explaining how consistency can improve your brand directly.

## RECOGNITION

The first thing to consider is recognition, so brand colour, brand logo brand style. All of those are incredibly important for brand recognition and familiarity.

If I ask what brand the colour red is associated with, you will probably say Coca-Cola. If I ask what brand a tick is associated with, you're going to say Nike. All of these brands have been built over many, many years. A lot of thought has gone into them and there's a real science behind it.

Try and implement some of what you see with the most well-known legacy brands. Try and bring those elements into your own personal and business brands.



**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.

## TRUST AND RELIABILITY

When you are repeating the same message and providing the same customer service over and over again, you become known for that.

Let's say you're a cosmetic dentist and you want to be known for high-end aesthetic dentistry. The only way to achieve that is by consistently showing up and displaying your work. You need to be showing high quality work time and time again over a number of years.

This can't be rushed – consistency takes time and effort. People like Michael Apa, for example, have been doing this for many, many years – even before I started. They're known for high end cosmetic dentistry with their personal brand.

## BRAND EQUITY

Brand equity is where your brand has more value than the core products that it provides.

Look at Red Bull, for example. Red Bull sells an energy drink – probably not one that you'd actually want to drink when looking at the ingredients. But what Red Bull actually sells is a whole image and persona of adventure: Red Bull gives you wings.

It's linked with Formula One, the X Games, snowboarding and skydiving.

For all these exciting things that people are super passionate about, Red Bull is always there. The link with Red Bull is not just about selling a product, it's about how it makes you feel, what's associated with it and its brand equity.

This is something that you can build into your own brands as well.

## COHESION

Most brands nowadays live both online and offline. Creating consistency across both of those environments will help to improve

the way that your brand turns up.

We call this 'phygital', or physical and digital.

It's really important in dentistry because a lot of

our first customer touchpoints are online. We want to make sure that we're delivering an online presence and an in-person presence with the same degree of care and consideration.

## STRONG CULTURE

The final point is about developing a strong cultural system. This means building up consistencies through the way you deliver your services or that you deliver your products in a way that means

**BRAND EQUITY IS WHERE YOUR BRAND HAS MORE VALUE THAN THE CORE PRODUCTS THAT IT PROVIDES**

# MAXIMISE THE VALUE OF YOUR PRACTICE!

As the new financial year begins, now is the ideal time to review the value of your practice. Despite operational challenges, there continues to be significant demand across all practice types.

## SO FAR IN 2024, WE'VE WITNESSED...

- 33% increase in providing owners with pricing advice
- 40% increase in viewings
- 21% increase in offers
- 48% increase in dental practice sales

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whoever the customer speaks to within the business is singing off the same hymn sheet.

This comes from core values and having a strong brand culture, where everyone in the business knows why that brand exists. For instance, at Pärila, we aim to eradicate single-use plastic from oral care. That's our brand mission.

Everyone in the business knows it, and we have core brand values around that as well.

Building that system means that whether you speak to the operations executive or me as a founder, you're going to get the same degree of passion, intensity and drive. This will leave you with the feeling of what that brand is all about.

**CONSISTENCY  
ACROSS THE BOARD  
IS SO IMPORTANT  
WHEN IT COMES  
TO BUILDING A  
PERSONAL BRAND**

*Building a brand: top tips*

1. How recognisable is your brand? Think about how major corporations build their brand recognition and incorporate these ideas into your own
2. Build trust through visibility – show off your good work over and over again, and you will become recognised for it
3. An effective brand is not just about selling a service or product, it is about how it makes people feel and the things associated with it
4. Deliver online and offline experiences with an equal level of care and consideration
5. Develop a culture with your business of providing people with a consistent message about your mission and values. Make sure every member of staff reinforces these ideas when talking to patients.

It's the same with your dental practice. If you have a new dentist and you have a really clear core value system in place, even a new employee is going to be able to deliver in a way that reflects how your brand wants to show up to that patient.

Consistency across the board is so important when it comes to building a personal brand.

Next month, I will explain how building consistent habits in your own life can help you to deliver on your brand growth aspirations.

# Break down costs into bite-sized pieces

Dental implants are a great solution for many patients, but patients can be put off by the price. **Lesley Turner** makes some suggestions as to how to overcome cost objections

Over the past few years, cosmetic dentistry in the UK has seen a surge in demand. Motivated partly by social media and turbocharged by the so-called 'Zoom boom', more patients than ever want to improve the look of their smile.

An effective cosmetic procedure growing in popularity is dental implants. Most patients will be unaware that implants have been around for centuries. As far back as 600CE, the Mayans used shells as implants and, since then, we have been researching and refining secure ways of replacing missing teeth. Nowadays, the technology has progressed well beyond shells to achieve long-lasting, natural-looking replacements that feel and behave like genuine teeth.

So, let's remind ourselves of the benefits of implants to patients:

- **Secure:** implants are a great option for most patients. Unlike dentures or bridges, once fitted with a crown, they look and behave like natural teeth. From a patient's point of view, they can have a hugely positive effect upon their self-confidence. With implants they can eat, speak and laugh without fear that they may come loose and allow them to smile with confidence again
- **Easy care:** another great benefit of implants is that caring for them is as easy as looking after natural teeth.



**Lesley Turner**

Lesley has been a business development manager at Medenta for more than six years. She has worked in dentistry for many years, including 10 years as a practice manager, during which time she won a Practice Manager of the Year Award.

Unlike dentures, they stay in place so can be cleaned in the same way as someone with full dentition. So, as long as patients follow a good oral hygiene routine of brushing and flossing twice a day, and having regular oral health examinations, they should remain healthy

- **Retaining facial appearance:** when any teeth are missing, it can also lead to bone loss in the jawbone through reabsorption, which can result in faces having sagging skin and taking on a sunken appearance. It can also affect the bite, causing it to become misaligned. By replacing the missing teeth with implants, bone loss can be prevented, lessening the risks of changes to facial appearance. Implants also prevent the teeth next to them from moving, which also protects the alignment of the bite
- **Durability:** compared with dentures, implants can last longer. Most sets of dentures would be expected to last around 10 years. However, French and colleagues (2021) showed a survival rate for implants of 94%

after 15 years. This is impressive and means that, despite having a limited lifespan, it is longer than dentures in most cases.

## OVERCOMING THE COST OBJECTION

However, despite the benefits, one of the main inhibitors to patients saying 'yes' to implants is the initial cost.

Prices can range from around £2,000 for a single tooth and prosthetic to more than £10,000 for full arch implants. That can be a lot of money to find in one go, and this sort of treatment is often not covered by health insurance companies.

That's where patient finance comes into its own.

Someone who comes across patients facing this dilemma frequently is Medenta customer Sarah Mann, who is treatment coordinator manager at the Courtyard Dental in Huddersfield.

As a practice, the team places between 300 and 400 implants per year, so she is well versed in their benefits and how patient finance helps people afford them.

## *How patient finance can help your practice*

- **Quicker decisions:** patients who spread the cost often agree to take up treatment plans sooner, without going away to think about it
- **Cashflow:** the full cost of the treatment is paid by the finance company once it begins, helping your cashflow
- **Fewer missed appointments:** patients will be more likely to attend appointments, as they will already have budgeted for them.

'Patients often think implant treatment may be outside of their financial reach,' explains Sarah. 'But following a comprehensive consultation process with a series of finance options – with or without a deposit – we are able to make the treatment affordable to almost everyone.'

By offering patients an opportunity to pay monthly, rather than all at once, they need only be concerned about the cost of the monthly payment, not the total overall price of the treatment. By offering a way to spread the cost, a treatment plan that appeared to be out of reach becomes something they can take up.

As you would expect, helping people to have something they believed was unaffordable is popular with patients. 'Patients love being able to spread the cost with up to 24 months' interest free finance, which is our most popular choice,' Sarah says. 'However, for patients who want to keep the monthly repayment at its lowest, we can offer finance packages over 36 or 48 months. All finance packages have the

option to make overpayments or pay the loan off at an earlier date without penalty, and patients love this flexibility.'

#### **BENEFITS TO THE PRACTICE**

Offering patient finance as well as encouraging more people to say 'yes' also means they will agree to take up a treatment plan sooner. If there's the opportunity to spread the cost with interest free credit, then the decision becomes easier. Fewer patients will need to go away and think things over, which is much healthier for the practice.

Aside from increasing treatment uptake, there are other benefits to using a patient finance provider, such as Medenta. Working with a patient finance company can benefit cashflow as the full cost of the treatment is paid to the practice once treatment has started.

## **AS YOU WOULD EXPECT, HELPING PEOPLE TO HAVE SOMETHING THEY BELIEVED WAS UNAFFORDABLE IS POPULAR WITH PATIENTS**

So, instead of the payments coming in dribs and drabs, the full amount is paid at the beginning. It also reduces your exposure to debt, as the finance company underwrites the debt, not you.

Patients are also more likely to attend

their appointments if they are using finance. They know they have budgeted for the payment so not attending saves them nothing, which is not always the case with pay-as-you-go patients.

There's no disputing that implants are a great option for many patients and have a positive effect upon their self-confidence. However, they are costly. Patient finance is an easy way for more patients to say 'yes' to them and reap their life-enhancing benefits.

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# Is your ‘scale and polish’ mindset costing you patients?

**Claire-Louise Berry** reveals why systemic health should be at the heart of your business right now

**T**here’s been a notable shift towards recognising the crucial link between systemic and oral health. However, regrettably, only a minority of dental clinics actively embrace this connection.

This isn’t merely a passing trend; it underscores the profound reality that the mouth’s condition reflects the body’s broader health.

Every clinician must commit to reconsidering traditional practices to truly integrate systemic and oral health. However, initiating and implementing change in the practice’s language, narrative and mindset is difficult. So, we often get stuck in the comfort of just continuing to do what we always did.

Another reason for failing to embrace what can be a profitable shift in approach to dental care is a lack of understanding of the links between oral health and systemic health or a lack of confidence in discussing them. Even with the right knowledge, changing current practice comes with its own challenges that most won’t want to take on. For example, it might mean making investments and increasing appointment times. Increasing the conversation to include systemic health takes time, and

patients have questions because it’s a really interesting topic. With limited treatment time, this can be seen as another stressor in an already full appointment.

## **BIOFILM BUSINESS MODEL**

However, many dental practices recognise that incorporating systemic health is a vital component of a hygiene visit and will allow the hygienist time to ensure this is done effectively. In the long run, this means increased recalls and added value to the appointment, potentially justifying an increase in the cost per visit. Preventing hygienists from integrating this as part of our treatment is incredibly short-sighted and possibly harmful to business, especially as our patient base becomes more aware of these concepts.

So, how do we transition to a different business model to keep patients on side and a dental business profitable? My model centres entirely around biofilm and its role in disease and potential to initiate systemic inflammation. The first change you need to make is the language you use. By using terminology like ‘scale and polish’, you are pinning the hygienist down to treating the patient with a scale and polish, which deals with things that don’t cause disease (calculus and stain). Scale and polish also sounds like a stand-alone treatment – it is done once it is done! The patient feels they only need to return when the stain and calculus

return, leaving them to believe it is up to them to decide if or when that will be.

Biofilm, however, is what causes disease, and it starts to accumulate minutes after its removal. Within weeks, it can initiate disease if left to mature, which will be in the nooks and crannies patients cannot access. If the appointment concerns health and biofilm, the control is back in the clinician’s hands. We determine a recall based on individual risk of disease and their level of biofilm control at home. It’s not that we don’t trust patients to do a good job, it’s just that biofilm is so complex to remove from all the hard-to-reach areas that patients need us for professional prophylaxis (the prevention and control of disease).

## **A BETTER EXPERIENCE**

Does discussing these systemic health factors help dental clinics create

**CHANGE IN LANGUAGE, NARRATIVE AND MINDSET IS DIFFICULT. SO, WE OFTEN GET STUCK IN THE COMFORT OF CONTINUING TO DO WHAT WE ALWAYS DID**



**Claire-Louise Berry**

Claire-Louise is an experienced dental hygienist. She is the lead dental hygienist at The Yorkshire Dental Suite in Leeds, a key opinion leader for Oral-B and a Swiss Dental Academy trainer for EMS. She is co-founder of The Contemporary Hygienist.

**PATIENTS ENJOY  
DISCUSSING  
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IN MY OPINION,  
THIS HAS REALLY  
IMPROVED THE  
OVERALL PATIENT  
EXPERIENCE**



a better patient experience? And will patients appreciate this? In my experience, dental patients are much more informed now, especially post-COVID-19, when health and wellness were hot topics. In 2024, patients are increasingly aware of optimising oral health for general wellbeing.

Contemporary practice means integrating these concepts into our treatment, which adds value to the health and hygiene department. Believe it or not, patients enjoy discussing systemic health factors, and, in my opinion, this has really improved the overall patient experience.

**THE BIG FOUR**

Some of the conversations may be challenging or are considered taboo by specific demographics, such as erectile dysfunction (ED) and HPV. So, how can a practice ensure the whole team uses the best approach to

communicate any risks with patients?

Firstly, I'd never advocate starting a conversation about ED with a patient outright. That's a difficult one to navigate. I'd recommend a subtle approach. For example, you could have information on a TV in the waiting areas or patient leaflets. Have a conversation about how systemic inflammation can initiate endothelial dysfunction in minor and major blood vessels, but maybe don't mention the penis!

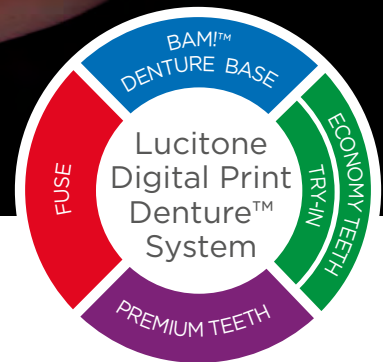
Using waiting room material can spark interest and hit a nerve with the taboo subjects we may not feel comfortable raising and then keep face-to-face conversation for the more appropriate discussions. I often talk to patients about what I call the 'big four' – diabetes, heart disease, pregnancy/fertility and Alzheimer's.

We should always ensure inclusivity in patient education and make it part of an entire discussion. The health

belief model suggests that patients won't change their behaviour if they don't believe they are susceptible to disease, which makes sense, as behaviour change is hard. If it were easy, every one of us would be flossing daily.

So, how can we expect patients to change? It is crucial to empower them with the knowledge of what happens in the disease process, what biofilm is and how this is related to disease. Teaching them about their susceptibility to some form of biofilm-related disease so that they can make more informed decisions about their oral health is doubly important. This often leads to a 'penny drop' moment and then behaviour change. I think it's more than necessary; it's imperative.

By addressing systemic health factors such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and autoimmune disorders, clinics also reduce the risk of oral complications



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## BEST PRACTICE

and improve treatment efficacy. Systemic and oral health are often intrinsically linked; sometimes, there is a bidirectional correlation. This is especially recognised in the case of diabetes. Teaching our patients how diabetes can impact their period risk and disease process and then explaining how this plays into a vicious circle to affect their diabetes can help them see how we need to control both systemic and oral health factors to benefit the stability of both. Collaborating with other healthcare practitioners can improve treatment efficacy outcomes and reduce oral health complications.

## MARKETING ADVANTAGES

So, are there marketing advantages to this change in approach? As health-related topics become more widely discussed in mainstream media, we can leverage this and incorporate it into the patient experience, making visiting the hygienist a whole new concept. Creating appointments where patients can learn so much more about themselves and how to prevent severe health conditions can be a vital marketing tool in the practice armoury.

Not all practices have this mindset, so adopting it will set you apart. You'll be seen as being ahead of the curve and empowering the health and hygiene department to push what they can offer. Being a trendsetter and an early adopter of these new ideas of what a health department can offer is a fantastic marketing opportunity.

A robust referral system that supports the model is key, and collaboration

with the relevant outside agencies is essential. At the very least, having protocols in place for referring, if needed, to the right healthcare professionals is necessary. You can't have these

systemic health discussions and finish by shrugging your shoulders if a patient asks: 'What next?'

Being an oral health expert and having the confidence to incorporate systemic health conversation into



# *7 reasons to incorporate systemic health into your business model*

1. It fosters a comprehensive approach to patient care
2. It leads to better overall patient outcomes and satisfaction
3. It promotes preventive care and early intervention
4. It identifies underlying conditions that may manifest in oral symptoms
5. It enhances interdisciplinary care via collaboration with medical professionals
6. It educates patients about the oral-systemic link and empowers them to take control of their health
7. It positions the dental practice as forward-thinking and proactive in addressing holistic patient health.

your practice also means knowing the steps a patient may need to take to escalate what you have taught them. It's worth looking into what local private practices, centres and hospital services are around you. If you carry out health-related checks, like blood pressure, have referral templates if you spot anomalies in results. We cannot diagnose, but we can spot an anomaly and refer.

Dental clinics improve community health outcomes by addressing systemic health, potentially reducing the overall burden on healthcare systems.

The average person in the UK sees a dentist a lot more frequently than they would see a GP. Post-COVID-19, seeing a GP is much more difficult, too.

We could reduce the burden on the NHS by spotting health anomalies sooner and getting patients referred

earlier. This is particularly important for things like blood pressure and diabetes risk. Also, by helping prevent systemic inflammatory markers chronically circulating

for years caused by issues like periodontitis, we can prevent them from causing systemic disease in other areas.

We play an important role in optimising general health.

## AHEAD OF THE CURVE

With an increasing emphasis on integrated healthcare and patient-centred approaches, dental clinics must incorporate systemic health as a significant part of their patient experience. This also ticks boxes in meeting patient expectations and being ahead of the curve in delivering high-end dental care.

When the hygiene profession started 70-plus years ago, we introduced scale and polish. Roll on to 2024 and many practices still use the same mindset and tools. This way of treating patients is becoming progressively more archaic.

We know more about periodontal disease, biofilm and how systemic disease links with the mouth. We know we need to focus our attention in the clinic on biofilm control for professional prophylaxis and good home care. We understand this benefits the body and prevents dental disease and tooth loss.

High-end dentistry means a premium comes with a commitment to maintaining high levels of knowledge and understanding and heavy investment in technology to bring our patients the highest levels of care based on contemporary practice and justify the prices we set to deliver this level of care. This is also what a patient expects. Therefore, incorporating systemic whole-body health and integrated healthcare into our practice meets that expectation.

I know I'm biased because I am genuinely passionate about this topic, but I think it must become integral to performing oral health optimisation.

## **BEING AN EARLY ADOPTER OF THESE NEW IDEAS IS A FANTASTIC MARKETING OPPORTUNITY**



# Zirkonzahn Caninus opens its doors

**Zirkonzahn** opens a new entire factory dedicated to Prettau® zirconia production overlooking the Dolomite Mountains

**A**fter Premolaris and Molaris I & II, Caninus is Zirkonzahn's most recent factory located in the heart of the Dolomite Mountains, built specifically to broaden their Prettau® zirconia production. Prettau® zirconia takes its name from the farthest village of the Aurina Valley in South Tyrol and was conceived for aesthetic restorations, from single crowns to monolithic full arches – the so-called Prettau® Bridges. The Prettau® line includes different zirconia typologies, available in white blanks for further characterisation, pre-coloured and with colour gradient for optimal aesthetics. Blanks are available in different heights (from 5 mm to 40 mm) and diameters – Ø 95, Ø 98 with step, Ø 106 mm, as well as mini blanks to mill single crowns in hardly used colours.

Zirconia restorations are meant to stay in the mouth for long times, or in most cases permanently, which makes the matter of quality even more important. This is why Zirkonzahn's work philosophy dictates that nothing has to be produced under economic or time constraints. Prettau® is manufactured with no compromises, using raw materials accurately selected from reliable suppliers. Upon arrival, the powder undergoes strict controls for quality assurance and much time is dedicated to the development of the most refined working processes, in close collaboration with the in-house R&D department. In order to achieve high homogeneity, the raw material is pressed biaxially and/or isostatically, and the most advanced technologies



*Caninus, the newest Zirkonzahn production facility overlooking the Dolomite Mountains*



are used to obtain the best aesthetic and mechanical properties.

In the last few years, the company's range of zirconia has embarked even more on the path of monolithic design with the new Dispersive® line, which includes materials that are already characterised with a natural colour gradient during the manufacturing process, making manual colouring no longer necessary. The gradient is provided through a specially developed technique that does not blend colours into layers but disperses them evenly, lending restorations a

beautiful and natural aesthetic.

A perfect example of the company's constant strive for quality and sophistication is the innovative Gradual-Triplex-Technology, which provides the new Prettau® 3 Dispersive® material with a triple gradient of colour, flexural strength and translucency, achieving a perfect balance of resistance and aesthetics. Each production batch is checked after every step, via specific tests and measurements. In this way, the blanks' properties of hardness, dimensions, density, milling, colour and translucency are controlled, as well as the materials' shrinkage factor, using close-tolerance instruments. Once the production step is concluded, final controls are run on each blank.

Being the sole process owners allows Zirkonzahn to have a complete understanding of their products, ensuring that they form an optimum match in the complete workflow. The in-house R&D team works to improve and fine-tune solutions to create a reliable planning and working environment, where hardware, software, tools and materials fit together according to a perfect dental-technical logic. The full control over the testing and production procedures gives the company the possibility to react very quickly to the customer's needs, not only through constant product optimisation but also through their wide range of comprehensive education courses ('Die Zirkonzahn Schule' – The Zirkonzahn School), where participants are trained on the usage of equipment and materials with no knowledge gaps.

*Zirkonzahn's doors are always open to visitors. Contact Zirkonzahn to arrange a guided tour of their premises in South Tyrol and learn more about the company work philosophy! Email [info@zirkonzahn.com](mailto:info@zirkonzahn.com), visit [www.zirkonzahn.com](http://www.zirkonzahn.com) or call +39 0474 066 660.*

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- Milling the structures in the M6 Teleskoper Blank Changer milling unit; sintering with the Zirkonofen 600/V4
- Handover of the final Prettau® Skin® veneers to the dentist after characterisation with ICE Stains 3D by Enrico Steger and minimal layering with Fresco Enamel Fluo; cementation in the patient's mouth



# Authentic sustainability and the pitfalls of greenwashing

As more consumers than ever demand services that are environmentally friendly, transparency and honesty are key, says **Mark Topley**

**I**t seems that virtually every consumer brand on the planet is keen to align itself with the growing consumer demand for sustainability – and for good reason.

The desire for sustainable practices is not just a trend, but a commitment from consumers and businesses alike.

A recent survey by Accenture highlights this shift, with 77% of consumers considering a company's social and environmental efforts before making a purchase and 76% ready to turn their backs on businesses that neglect environmental and employee welfare.

This growing demand for responsibility has pushed brands across all sectors, including dentistry, to reflect on their impact and strive for genuine sustainability.

However, amid this pursuit, some companies have stumbled, presenting an image of environmental friendliness that doesn't fully match their practices – a misstep known as 'greenwashing'.

The story of Volkswagen's entanglement in the 'dieseldate' scandal serves as a stark reminder of the risks involved. Volkswagen faced immense legal and financial challenges after it was discovered the company used software to falsely lower emissions data for its vehicles. This deception not only led to recalls and fines amounting to billions of dollars but also damaged Volkswagen's reputation significantly.

The term 'greenwashing', which originated in the 1980s, describes the practice of falsely portraying products or services as environmentally friendly.

As we find ourselves in an era where such practices have become more sophisticated, it's essential for those

in the dental profession and industry committed to real sustainability to communicate their efforts and achievements transparently, setting themselves apart from misleading claims.

**THE TERM  
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SERVICES AS  
ENVIRONMENTALLY  
FRIENDLY**

## NAVIGATING MURKY WATERS

To navigate the murky waters of greenwashing, it's helpful to understand its common forms:

- **Greencrowding:** using eco-certifications and logos to obscure a less-than-stellar environmental record. The key here is to look beyond the surface and evaluate the actual environmental impact of practices
- **Green lighting:** highlighting one green feature to distract from broader environmental harm. True sustainability involves a holistic approach that addresses all aspects of environmental impact
- **Green labelling:** using vague terms like 'natural', which imply sustainability without concrete backing. Authentic claims should always be supported by credible, independent certifications
- **Green shifting:** placing the onus of environmental responsibility solely on consumers, thereby avoiding corporate accountability. Businesses must own their part in environmental care
- **Green rinsing:** making superficial changes that appear green but don't significantly alter the environmental footprint. Real change requires a deep, impactful revision of products and practices



**Mark Topley**

Mark is the founder of [responsible dentistry.com](http://responsible dentistry.com) and the Great Boss Academy – businesses that provide coaching, consultancy and training for leaders, owners and managers who want a more successful, positive and sustainable business.

## Top tips

1. Be open and honest: transparency builds trust
2. Set targets: but be realistic about what you can do and when you can do it
3. Get verified: third party certification boosts consumer confidence
4. Educate others: promote genuine sustainability among your staff and patients.

- Green hushing: underplaying genuine green achievements for fear of being accused of greenwashing. Transparency and confidence in communicating real progress are vital.

### PRACTICAL STEPS

To ensure your dental practice not only strives for but also communicates sustainability authentically, consider the following strategies:

- Avoid vague language: terms such as 'eco-friendly' are too broad. Be specific about your sustainable practices and their impact
- Honesty is key: if you're in the process of achieving environmental goals, share this journey with your audience. Transparency builds trust
- Set realistic targets: focus on environmental objectives that are measurable and attainable, ensuring you can deliver on your promises
- Seek third-party verification: sustainable certifications from reputable entities can bolster your credibility and reassure consumers
- Audit your supply chain: since supply chains can be significant sources of emissions, auditing them helps verify your environmental claims
- Support claims with evidence: use data and concrete examples to back up your sustainability claims, giving them weight and reliability
- Share progress regularly: transparency through regular sustainability reports builds confidence among consumers, stakeholders and regulators
- Educate your team and patients: ensure everyone involved understands the importance of genuine sustainability and the risks of greenwashing. Promote sustainable practices within your team and among your patients.

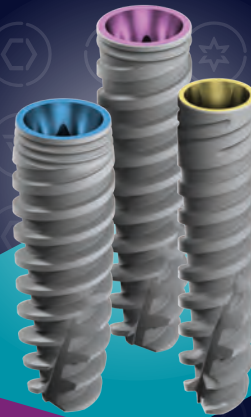
Dental practices seeking to navigate the complexities of sustainability can turn to resources like Go Practice Green and Dental Susnet for tailored guidance and support.

### EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE

As stewards of both oral and planetary health, we have a responsibility to foster an environment of transparency and authenticity in our sustainability efforts.

By recognising and rejecting greenwashing, we uphold the trust of our patients and lead our industry towards a truly sustainable future. Let's embrace this challenge with commitment and integrity, knowing that our actions contribute to a healthier planet and community.

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# In a sphere of their own!

Trycare explains the benefits of Tokuyama's patented spherical filler particles

**T**okuyama are pioneers in the field of light-cured sub-microscopic spherical filler particles, resulting in composites of outstanding aesthetics, reliability and user-friendliness. The only manufacturer to use patented spherical filler particles, each variant utilises different diameter particles to maximise their optical and physical properties for the indication. In addition to optimised optical properties resulting in enhanced aesthetic restorations, Tokuyama's spherical filler particles offer other advantages to the irregular shaped filler particles used by other manufacturers. They are quicker and easier to pack, reducing the risk of voids; easier to sculpt and carve; and have a much smoother surface finish with a natural high lustre requiring minimal if any polishing.

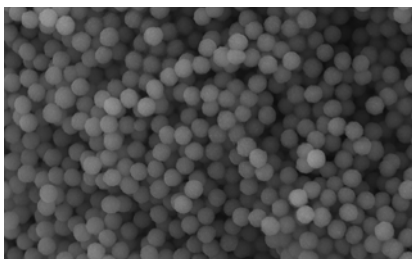
Tokuyama's spherical filler particles produce the highest gloss in the shortest time. Not easily dislodged, they create smooth surfaces that are highly resistant to abrasion. Tokuyama's spherical fillers ensure smooth restorations that stay smooth; diffuse and transmit light for optimal aesthetics; produce mirror reflection and high abrasion resistance that ensures a long-lasting polish, lustre, durability and colour stability.

## A PEARL OF AN IDEA!

Utilising patented Sol-Gel technology, Tokuyama 'grow' spherical filler particles to diameters optimised for their desired colour adaptation and outstanding physical properties. Some manufacturers grind their glass materials until the individual filler particles are within a desired, but random, size range, making the filler particles irregular in size and shape.

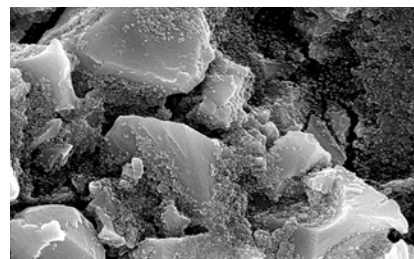
Advantages include:

- Mirror reflection and lustre: with identically shaped spherical filler particles, Tokuyama composites reflect light just like natural enamel and have a natural lustre. Unlike rough



SEM of Tokuyama spherical filler particles

- surfaced composites that scatter light diffusely producing a dull matt appearance
- Abrasion resistance: Tokuyama composites' uniform and small spherical filler particles are not easily dislodged and produce a very smooth surface that is highly resistant to abrasion. This abrasion resistant surface remains smooth permanently, so that the initial lustre of Tokuyama composites remains permanent too. Unlike other manufacturers' irregularly shaped filler particles, which can become dislodged by polishing etc leaving a rough and irregular pitted surface which is very abrasive and very difficult to polish
- Light diffusion and transmission: High light diffusion and transmission properties of Tokuyama composites ensure uniform and gradual transition between tooth and composite. Unlike conventional composites which exhibit minimal light diffusion and transition resulting in visible margins
- Faster polishing: Tokuyama composites produce the highest gloss in the shortest time
- Radical Amplified Polymerisation (RAP) technology: this patented technology enables them to reuse camphorquinone repeatedly, not only speeding up the curing time, but also dramatically reducing the amount of camphorquinone required by other composites



SEM of irregular filler composite material

- Longer working time, faster cure: Tokuyama's RAP technology ensures faster curing plus high resistance to ambient light to ensure an extremely generous working time, when required. Followed by an extremely short curing time. Consequently, Tokuyama composites offer ease of placement, sculpting and finishing which remains completely under your control until the moment you want it to cure, at which point it cures virtually instantaneously
- Deep cure: RAP technology ensures a higher degree of polymerisation, resulting in lower residual monomer, which leads to stronger, deeper and more complete curing
- Minimal shade change: when camphorquinone light cures its shade changes to a more yellowish hue. Tokuyama's RAP technology means there is a much lower proportion of camphorquinone in their composites, which ensures an imperceptible shade change after light curing.

## WORKSHOPS WITH JOAN MACH

In association with GC UK and NSK, Trycare are running a series of Full Day Workshops by Joan Mach. Achieve excellence in direct anterior composites using a biomimetic and non-invasive approach, and accomplish outstanding aesthetic results and long-lasting treatments in the anterior region using Estelite Sigma Quick.

*For details about the Tokuyama range or to book a place on the workshop, contact your local Trycare representative, call 01274 885544 or visit [www.trycare.co.uk](http://www.trycare.co.uk).*

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# Stack the deck in your favour

Create a culture deck for your practice and make your core values, vision and uniqueness shine, says **Barry Oulton**

**L**ast month, my article concluded with: 'Being mission-driven is not just a strategy; it's a philosophy that sets the stage for long-term success.'

This month I want to discuss a way of building and communicating that philosophy. When coaching my dental practice owners, one of things I help them to develop early on is their culture deck.

It is a hugely beneficial document or presentation that adds value to each employee and ultimately every patient. Let's explore the idea of a culture deck.

## WHAT IS A CULTURE DECK?

A culture deck is a comprehensive document that outlines the core values, mission, vision and unique aspects of your dental practice's culture. It serves as a guide for both current and future employees, providing insight into the company's ethos, expectations and overall atmosphere.

Essentially, it's a roadmap for fostering a positive work environment and aligning everyone with the practice's goals.

## BENEFITS OF HAVING A CULTURE DECK

There are many advantages to utilising a culture deck in the dental practice, including:

1. **Employee alignment:** a culture deck helps align your team members with the values and mission of your practice, ensuring everyone is working towards the same goals
2. **Recruitment and retention:** it becomes a powerful tool for attracting and retaining top talent who resonate with your practice's culture and values
3. **Enhanced communication:** clear communication of

expectations and values fosters a more cohesive and productive team environment

4. **Improved patient experience:** a strong culture translates into better patient care as employees who feel valued and aligned with the practice's goals are more likely to deliver exceptional service.

## HOW TO PRODUCE A CULTURE DECK

There are five key considerations to creating a culture deck:

1. **Identify core values:** begin by identifying the core values that define your practice. These could include things like integrity, empathy, teamwork and excellence in patient care, for example
2. **Mission and vision:** define the mission and vision of your practice. What are your long-term goals and what do you aim to achieve in the dental industry?
3. **Employee involvement:** involve your team in the creation process. Conduct workshops or brainstorming sessions to gather input on what they believe should be included in the culture deck. This not only ensures buy-in but also reflects the collective values of your team
4. **Design and content:** design the culture deck with engaging visuals and concise content. Use real examples and stories to illustrate how your values are lived out in day-to-day operations
5. **Feedback and iteration:** once the initial draft is created, solicit feedback from your team members and make the necessary revisions. The culture deck should be a living document that evolves as your practice grows and changes.

## A CULTURE DECK IS A ROADMAP FOR FOSTERING A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND ALIGNING EVERYONE WITH THE PRACTICE'S GOALS

## COMMUNICATING THE CULTURE DECK

Next comes how you communicate the culture deck to your team and beyond.

By creating and effectively communicating a culture deck, you'll not only enhance the work environment within your dental practice but also attract and retain employees who are committed to your vision and values, ultimately leading to greater success and patient satisfaction.



**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.

## BEST PRACTICE

1. Orientation and onboarding: introduce the culture deck during employee onboarding sessions to familiarise new hires with your practice's values and expectations from the outset
2. Regular reviews: schedule regular reviews of the culture deck during team meetings to reinforce its importance and ensure alignment with the practice's goals
3. Lead by example: as the practice owner, embody the values outlined in the culture deck. Your actions will speak volumes and set the tone for the entire team
4. Integration into performance management: incorporate the values outlined in the culture deck into performance evaluations and recognition programmes to reinforce their importance
5. External communication: showcase your culture deck on your practice's website and in recruitment materials to attract like-minded individuals who align with your values.

## BENEFITS FOR TEAM ISSUES AND DYNAMICS

For the team, having a culture deck has numerous benefits, such as:

1. Clarity and alignment: a culture deck provides clarity on the values, expectations and norms of the practice. It ensures that every team member understands what is expected of them and how they should conduct themselves, leading to better alignment within the team
2. Conflict resolution: when conflicts arise, the culture deck serves as a reference point for resolving them. Team members can refer to the shared values and principles outlined in the deck to find common ground and work towards a resolution
3. Team cohesion: by fostering a shared sense of purpose and belonging, a culture deck promotes team cohesion. When everyone is working towards the same goals and adhering to the same values, it creates a stronger sense of unity and teamwork
4. Enhanced communication: the culture deck encourages open and transparent communication among team members. It provides a framework for discussing issues and concerns in a constructive manner, leading to more effective problem-solving and collaboration.

## UTILISING THE CULTURE DECK FOR PRACTICE MANAGERS

There are also many positives for practice managers:

1. Setting expectations: practice managers can use the culture deck to set clear expectations for their team members. By referring to the values and norms outlined in the deck, they can articulate what is expected in terms of behaviour, performance and teamwork
2. Performance management: the culture deck can be integrated into performance management processes. Practice managers can use it as a basis for evaluating team members' performance and providing feedback.



## *Want to see some good examples of culture decks?*

Netflix:

[www.jobs.netflix.com/culture](http://www.jobs.netflix.com/culture)

[www.slideshare.net/reed2001/culture-1798664](http://www.slideshare.net/reed2001/culture-1798664)

Spotify:

[www.lifeatspotify.com/being-here/the-band-manifesto](http://www.lifeatspotify.com/being-here/the-band-manifesto)

LinkedIn:

[www.slideshare.net/StephanieHurst1/linkedin-culture-deck-45813536](http://www.slideshare.net/StephanieHurst1/linkedin-culture-deck-45813536)

This ensures that performance evaluations are aligned with the practice's values and objectives

3. Conflict resolution: when addressing team issues or conflicts, practice managers can leverage the culture deck to facilitate discussions and find solutions. They can remind team members of the shared values and principles they are expected to uphold, helping to resolve conflicts more effectively
4. Team building: practice managers can use the culture deck as a tool for team building and development. They can organise activities and initiatives that reinforce the practice's values and promote team cohesion. This could include team-building exercises, training sessions or recognition programmes that celebrate adherence to the culture deck.

Overall, the culture deck serves as a valuable resource for practice managers in managing team issues and dynamics.

By leveraging the shared values and principles outlined in the deck, practice managers can promote alignment, cohesion and effective communication within their teams, ultimately leading to a more positive and productive work environment.



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# Step into dentistry's sustainable future

We all have a part to play in protecting our planet, and adapting to sustainable practices can have hidden benefits. But where do you start? **Patrick Ward** investigates

**H**ow much do you know about sustainable (or green) dentistry? Perhaps it is a concept you, your practice or your group are already exploring but are unsure where to begin. Perhaps it sounds like more confusing buzzwords you have little experience of. Or perhaps you already embrace sustainable dentistry but want to stay ahead of the curve.

Sustainable dentistry is, at its core, a means to provide an excellent standard of care not just to your patients but to the world in which they live too. The relationships between health and the state of the natural world – including climate change and harmful emissions – are long-established.

The benefits of taking sustainability seriously can also be seen at a more immediate level, as one in three UK consumers say they have stopped purchasing certain brands and products due to concerns over sustainability

and ethics (Deloitte, 2023). This can help your services to stand out in an increasingly competitive market, allowing you to attract new patients as well as the best talent for your workforce.

This brief introduction should help you get a better understanding of the concept and its myriad benefits to you, your patients and the planet.

**ONE IN THREE UK CONSUMERS SAY THEY HAVE STOPPED PURCHASING CERTAIN BRANDS AND PRODUCTS DUE TO CONCERNS OVER SUSTAINABILITY AND ETHICS**

## RETHINK YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

At the core of sustainable dentistry are the four Rs:

1. Rethink
2. Reduce
3. Reuse
4. Recycle.

We want to be rethinking our relationship with the wider environment while reducing the quantity of resources – from packaging to electricity – we use in the process, while reusing equipment and recycling whatever we have discarded in the process.



It can also mean proactively boosting the environment, with some surgeries even planting trees to absorb carbon dioxide while encouraging biodiversity.

Many practices are now aiming to become carbon neutral or net zero, which involve cutting back on emissions while taking action to remove the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as they create.

Reading all of this, it might seem that taking the leap into sustainable dentistry will be time-consuming, costly and perhaps even impractical. However, there are steps everyone can take that can make a big difference.

### TRAVEL

The most environmentally damaging aspect of dentistry is travel, which includes patients travelling to the practice and staff commutes and work-related travel. Together, this makes up around 64% of dentistry's carbon footprint (Public Health England, 2018).

The impact of travel can be mitigated in several ways. Cycle-to-work schemes can cut harmful car emissions, as can locating practices in areas with good public transport links and encouraging staff to walk to work. Some practices have installed electric car charging points.

Using new technology to perform remote diagnoses also cuts the need for travel, while things like performing multiple treatments in single appointments and promoting family check-ups can help to avoid repeat journeys. Encouraging patient self-care can also mean fewer trips to the practice.

### PROCUREMENT

Procurement makes up around 19% of dentistry's carbon footprint, and there are plenty of ways to help cut this back. A good place to begin is researching suppliers known for their ethical and environmental credentials, ideally those closer to your practices to save on unnecessary travel.

When drawing up a list of preferred suppliers, in addition to prices, think about whether they offer things like recycled products as standard, and if they have corporate social responsibility accreditations.

### GAS AND ELECTRICITY

Recent world events have shown how unstable gas and electricity prices can be – and even when they are at their lowest, it is still a major expense. So, cutting down on how much gas and electricity you use is as good for your bank balance as it is for the environment.

## THE MOST ENVIRONMENTALLY DAMAGING ASPECT OF DENTISTRY IS TRAVEL

Things to consider here might be switching to lower energy LED lights, installing insulation and using energy-saving devices.

### OTHER AREAS

There are plenty of other ways you can adapt your practice to become

more sustainable. For example, you can join a recycling programme so that patients can bring in things like their used toothbrushes and floss containers, become a paperless office or even cut back on your use of nitrous oxide (which alone contributes around 0.9% towards dentistry's carbon footprint).

As more practices move towards sustainable dentistry, expect regular innovations in the industry. Keeping up to date with these advances is key to staying ahead of the game.

### IT WON'T COST THE EARTH

Creating a sustainable practice will likely require investment, depending on how far you would like to go. Procurement of environmentally friendly equipment or even climate-consciously redesigning your clinic might cost more, but there are savings to be made in areas such as reduced energy and water usage, lower transport costs and, hopefully, increased patient numbers.

Think of it as future-proofing your practice. Demand for climate-conscious services is only set to grow as the climate crisis intensifies and public awareness increases. This, in turn, will gradually drive down prices.

### SMALL BEGINNINGS


Adopting a sustainable business model does not have to happen overnight. Not everyone will be able to redesign their practice or install electric vehicle charging points, for example. But each change, however small, makes a difference.

Whatever you do, be sure to showcase it. Not only are patients looking for such reassurances, but it also helps to promote the importance of sustainability across the sector. Then you can rest assured that you are not only keeping your patients healthy but the planet as well.

### REFERENCES

Deloitte (2023) Available at: [www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/sustainable-consumer-what-consumers-do.html](http://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/sustainable-consumer-what-consumers-do.html)

Public Health England (2018) Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/carbon-modelling-within-dentistry-towards-a-sustainable-future](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carbon-modelling-within-dentistry-towards-a-sustainable-future)



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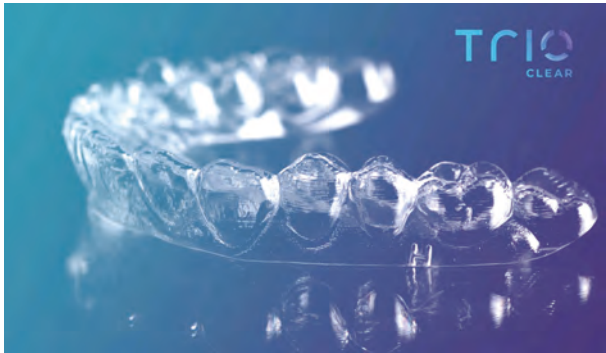
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# Is your practice team's service first class or economy?

Is your patient journey the best it can be? Could you do better?  
**Louise Anderson** suggests areas to consider for improvement

**A**s appointments at NHS practices become scarcer, more patients are turning to private practices for their oral healthcare. Many of them will have been longstanding NHS patients, and now that they are being asked to pay higher fees for their dentistry, they may have certain pre-conceived ideas about the sort of service they can expect from a private dentist.

On Practice Plan's recent Workshop Tour, Dr Barry Oulton showed attendees how they could offer their patients a first-class service without spending a lot of money. To be able to achieve this, he emphasised it was important not just to meet their expectations, but to exceed them.

## TAKE A STEP BACK

To state the obvious, before you can start making improvements you need to understand what's already there. This will involve taking a step back and looking objectively at how your practice team works. Ask yourself: 'What impression would I get of my team and the practice if I were visiting for the first time?'

If you're to get the most out of this exercise, then you need to be prepared for some disappointments. After all, we're looking for ways to improve things, so there will be things

you see your team doing that you know can be done better.

## DEFINE WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE TO YOU

To focus your review and make it easier for you to assess your team, it's helpful to first develop your own ideas of what you would expect as a new patient.

That way you can gauge your team against your blueprint of how you would like things to be.

It might be helpful to consider these five areas:

- Appearance
- Punctuality
- Public interaction with team members
- Behaviour/mindset
- Skills/capabilities.

For each category, write down a few points that you feel are what you would expect from a first-class team. You can then use that as your benchmark and rank your team members against it.

Come up with the standards that you would expect from a team that meets your definition of first class.

This is the sort of exercise that need only take five minutes of your time, so it's not something you need to pore over for hours!

Here are some examples.

## Appearance

As a minimum, your team members should look clean and tidy.

If you have a uniform/workwear, is everyone sticking to it or have some people gone rogue and started wearing their own thing?

## Punctuality

Is everyone at work and ready to start when you open? Or do some team members stroll in on the stroke of 9am and then spend the next 10 minutes sorting themselves out?

What about breaks? If you're lucky enough to get them (and you should!), do some people take longer than they're entitled to?

## Public interaction with team members

Is everyone in the team treated

respectfully by their colleagues when they are seen in public? Or is there passive aggression or antagonism on display for everyone to see?

Patients should not be aware of

any personal differences between team members, as any clashes should be put to one side in public. Would open hostility be on your list of attributes for a first-class team?

## Behaviour/mindset

Complementary to the way your team members interact with each

## THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT, EVEN IF IT'S ONLY IN MINOR DETAILS



**Louise Anderson**

Louise is regional support manager for Practice Plan.



other is their attitude to work. Are they enthusiastic and willing, or do they sulk and whine? Do they behave in a way that suggests they enjoy their job and want to do well at it, or are they just going through the motions?

In short, does their attitude and the way they behave enhance or hinder the work of the team?

**Skills/capabilities**

Does every member of your team have the right skills and capabilities to be able to do a good job? If not, any skill gaps and training needs you have identified during this exercise can be addressed and put right.

By doing that, hopefully you'll not only improve performance but job satisfaction for the individual too.

**HOW DO THEY MATCH UP?**

Once you've completed your assessment, you should have a clear picture of the team as a whole. So, do your team members live up to how you defined the behaviours and attitudes you felt marked out teams as first class when you set your

benchmark? It's likely you'll have a mixed result, even if you previously regarded everyone as providing a first-class service. There's always room for improvement, even if it's only in minor details.

Another characteristic of a first-class team is constantly striving for improvement. When Sir Dave Brailsford took over at British Cycling, he looked at every aspect of the operation to discover where improvements could be made, no matter how small. It was uncovering every opportunity to achieve 'marginal gains' that turned an also-ran team into a world beater. On their own, each marginal gain was negligible, but when they were all added together, they made a spectacular difference to the performance of the team.

So, even if you found that your team currently provides a budget standard of service, by repeating this exercise regularly, you can continue to make small changes to refine and elevate things so that, over time, things become truly first class.

*Questions to consider*

- What would you think of your practice if you were visiting it for the first time?
- Do all your team members look clean and tidy?
- Are all staff members punctual?
- Does everyone in your team treat each other with respect in public?
- Is everyone enthusiastic and willing to do the job to the best of their abilities?
- Does anyone have any skill gaps that need to be addressed?

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*Practice Plan will be at the Dentistry Show Birmingham on 17 and 18 May (stand K50). For more details, call 01691 684165 or visit [practiceplan.co.uk](http://practiceplan.co.uk).*

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# Be honest with your team about leaving the NHS

What should a practice owner consider when deciding to hand back an NHS contract? **Zoe Close** catches up with employment lawyer **Sarah Buxton** to get some helpful pointers

**F**or dental practice owners looking to hand back an NHS contract, there are many factors to consider. In this article, Zoe Close speaks to Sarah Buxton to help decipher the key points.

## IN CONVERSATION

**Zoe Close (ZC):** There are occasions when we're working with a practice when the owner has made the decision to leave the NHS, and they know exactly what they're doing and why they've chosen to do it. However, sometimes we find ourselves in a situation where they haven't shared their vision with their team. If this is the case, we always advise them to take the time to make sure everyone in the team understands what's happening.

The conversions that work best are ones where the whole team has been involved and everyone is on

board. There have been discussions about what is happening when, and everyone is clear on how they're going to respond to any questions from patients about the change.

What other things do you advise they consider, Sarah?

**Sarah Buxton (SB):** What people in these circumstances have to bear in mind is that about 62%, so around two thirds, of their workforce will not like change.

That could apply to a small change

within the practice or to something that they themselves perceive to be a larger change.

But whichever it is, they will see it as something that will affect them either personally or financially, such as giving up an NHS dentistry contract.

So, it's important that you have a strategy and a vision. And it's important to explain to them what your vision and plan is and be open and honest about why you're doing it.

What I sometimes find in practice is



### Zoe Close

Zoe is head of sales at Practice Plan, a provider of practice-branded dental plans. Zoe has more than 35 years' experience in the dental sector, including group business manager for a corporate group, dental nurse, head receptionist and practice manager.



### Sarah Buxton

Sarah specialises in acting exclusively for dentists, dental managers and dental practice owners in all aspects of HR and employment law and is a director at Buxton Coates Solicitors Ltd. Sarah advises dental practices on managing and motivating their staff, dealing with sickness absence, assisting with making changes to employment contracts and, if needed, how to bring the employment relationship to an end.





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that a lot of the workforce don't understand what a practice owner goes through. They aren't aware of the financials.

They don't know that it can be quite difficult to

run a business on NHS income. For example, I have a client in Wales who is losing money, but he is holding onto the NHS contract as he feels he has to keep it. But that's his heart, not his commercial head, speaking. However, his staff may not know that he's losing money and it's not working for him.

So, I would say be honest with your team and share your vision and strategy. Explain your reasons as to why you're making the change and communicate these in a positive way. And remember that people need to receive communication in different ways. Some people like

## REMEMBER THAT PEOPLE NEED TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATION IN DIFFERENT WAYS

one-to-one meetings, others prefer group meetings, while some will want things to be given to them in a written format. So, communicate

with your team members in the way you know they prefer.

Tell them what you're doing but be aware that some people might be shocked or angered. They may misunderstand, or they might have anxiety about the changes. So be prepared for their reaction. Be aware that they may not have the same feelings that you are having of: 'Great! We're giving up NHS dentistry.'

However, what I'm finding is that there are a lot of team members who are actively in favour of leaving NHS dentistry. They want it for their practice because they'd like to work in a different way.

There are a lot of stresses for the team involved in reaching NHS targets. So, they might be really happy about the change, and it's important to acknowledge their feelings too. However, they will probably still have questions, so you will need to work with them and try and answer as many of their concerns as you can.

I feel it's important to make the point that, depending on how your contracts are drawn up, you are going to have to look at serving notice and changing contracts. However, I wouldn't broach that subject first of all! Do the part that involves soft skills first.

So, deal with the communication, and then once you've done that, cover the legal implications.

You won't be carrying on with units of dental activity (UDA) targets for your associates, so that will require a contractual change.

If you have the sort of business structure where you have a limited

company and an NHS contract running outside the limited company, it may be that previously you've been seconding your staff out to work on the NHS dentistry, so that will also require a change to their contract.

So, some contractual changes will be needed, but you don't want to worry your staff about that at first. The key at the outset is making sure that you communicate with them.

**COMMUNICATION IS KEY**

**ZC:** I do think this is an aspect of NHS conversions that we don't speak about enough in practice. We assume that this is something that would happen automatically. However, with everything that's going on when you're in the middle of a conversion, it's probably something that can get overlooked quite easily.

Nonetheless, it's really important that time is put aside to make sure everyone in the existing team has been spoken to and understands exactly what is going to happen and where they stand.

**SB:** I agree. I think it's one of the most important things to consider.

**IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT TIME IS PUT ASIDE TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE IN THE EXISTING TEAM HAS BEEN SPOKEN TO AND UNDERSTANDS EXACTLY WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN**

If you are moving to a plan provider, like Practice Plan, I know you get lots of support with the mechanics of the transition. So, at that level it is very supported, and it can be streamlined and quite easy to do.

However, when it comes to the team, you will have lots of different personalities to deal with when you're communicating the change to them and it's not always easy to predict how they will react or whether they will understand fully.

So, I would say communication is probably the most important

element of giving up NHS dentistry – making sure that your workforce is happy and that they understand what's happening.

However, I really am finding in practice that the staff are quite happy about it. And it's easier to recruit self-employed staff because they want to work in private dentistry.

So, there are lots of advantages to it, but we do need to make sure that we communicate in the right way, and the right way is being honest and transparent about things, acknowledging your team members' feelings and answering any questions they may have.

*If you are considering your options away from the NHS and are looking for a provider who will hold your hand through the process while moving at a pace that's right for you, you can start the conversation with Practice Plan on 01691 684165, or book your one-to-one NHS to private call via [practiceplan.co.uk/nhsvirtual](http://practiceplan.co.uk/nhsvirtual). For more information visit [www.practiceplan.co.uk/nhs](http://www.practiceplan.co.uk/nhs).*

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# DFAB Desktop: innovative 3D printer for laboratories and clinics

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*The DFAB Desktop 3D printer:  
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# Enjoy life a chapter at a time

**Zainab Al-Mukhtar** shares her insights on striking the delicate balance between professional excellence, personal growth and wellbeing

**A**s the world of dental and facial aesthetics continues to undergo dynamic transformation, practice owners face heightened demands. They must find time to improve clinical proficiency and broaden their understanding

of new trends while navigating the financial and personal investments a business requires to remain at the forefront.

Paradoxically, amid the progressive strides in patient care, a poignant dilemma emerges: practitioners, while advocating for holistic approaches, often struggle to protect their own wellbeing. Fuelled by an unwavering commitment, the demanding nature of the profession frequently encroaches upon personal time boundaries. In this delicate equilibrium, the spectre of burnout looms large.

It's a familiar story, especially for perfectionists within the profession.

## I EMBARKED ON PERSONAL COACHING, BECAME SELECTIVE ABOUT WHAT I TOOK ON AND GREW PROTECTIVE OF MY TIME

Zainab Al-Mukhtar is keen to shed light on this. A dentist and facial aesthetic practitioner, she comes from a family of 'over-achievers'. The eldest of four daughters, her father was a surgeon,



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## Zainab's reading list

*Books are a sustainable way to protect my time and help me grow. I mostly enjoy reading personal development books, and those listed below cover a range of topics, including neuroscience, self-discipline, habits, leadership, communication and productivity.*

- *The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information Overload* by Daniel J Levitin
- *The Power of Discipline: How to Use Self Control and Mental Toughness to Achieve Your Goals* by Brian Tracy
- *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones* by James Clear
- *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* by Simon Sinek
- *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* by Marshall B Rosenberg
- *Do Less, Get More: How to Work Smart and Live Life Your Way* by Sháá Wasmund
- *Reclaim Your Heart* by Yasmin Mogahed.



Photo credit: Neil Prabhova

her mother a dentist, her sister Yusra a dentist and facial aesthetics practitioner, another a dentist and one a lawyer.

## LIFE CAN BE A HAMSTER WHEEL, BUT WE CAN STRIP BACK THE EGO WITH A FEW MINDFUL RITUALS

A keen artist and highly driven academic, Zainab excelled at dental school, qualifying from Guy's, Kings & St Thomas' Dental Institute with distinction in 2010. She worked in the NHS and private practice before focusing on cosmetic dentistry and advanced facial aesthetics, becoming a clinical trainer in facial aesthetics in 2014.

She is co-owner of Harrow On The Hill Dental and Facial Aesthetics, which she bought and branded in 2018 with her husband and business partner, Ahmed Hussain, a restorative dentist. The practice won Facial Aesthetics Practice of the Year in the Clinical Dentistry Awards last year, Practice Brand and Design South in the Private Dentistry Awards in 2022 and was highly commended for the Best Aesthetics Practice award in 2023.

Now a judge for the Private Dentistry Awards, Zainab has also been highly commended for Best Young Dentist in 2020 and Best Full Facial Treatment at the Aesthetic Dentistry Awards 2021.

### CHANGE OF MINDSET

While these highs and huge successes

continue to ignite her passion and gift her some incredible opportunities, she believes it is only with self-analysis and a change of mindset that she has discovered true fulfilment.

As a busy business owner, mother of two and committed educator in her field, she has had to learn the importance of dedicating time to herself. Recognising signs of burnout a couple of years ago, she was forced to recalibrate to avoid it. For Zainab, this has been a journey of lengthy introspection rather than an epiphany and quick fixes.

She takes up the story: 'I felt exhausted at the end of 2022, and I realised how I was living life was untenable. Pursuing excellence in all areas, I focused on working hard, meeting the demands of a busy clinic, building a brand, motherhood, leading and speaking all at once.

'As I pushed in every arena, I realised I needed to pause and reflect. I had to take time out to ask myself what was driving me. So, I embarked on personal coaching, became selective about what I took on and grew protective of my time.

'Navigating this path of professional development and personal growth while owning a dental practice has been a journey of self-discovery.

Over the past five years, I've learned invaluable lessons that have shaped a healthier approach to business, life and parenting.'

### TRUSTING THE TEAM

Two crucial strategies she adopted were compartmentalisation and delegation. These are intricate processes for a clinician with a keen eye for detail.

'Each year, during the Christmas break, I reflect on what I envision for the upcoming 12 months. I divide my goals into three categories: professional, personal and business. I visually organise my aspirations using spider graphs, allowing me to clarify what truly matters,' she explains.

'My strategy is to break these deadlines into smaller tasks and delegate action points. Trusting my team has been a significant mindset shift, as I've learned that controlling every outcome is exhausting and unsustainable. I'm actively working on this, as striving for perfection in every corner of life is unsustainable. I've grown to understand the necessity of setting realistic boundaries to avoid overstretching myself and experiencing fatigue.'

Zainab had always been in touch with her intuition and was interested in studying human behaviour since her mid-20s when, in 2012, she embarked on an interactive learning programme with The Landmark Forum that's designed to bring about positive,



## *Mastering mindful disconnection: seven strategies for unplugging*

1. Engage in meditation and prayer practices
2. Embrace stillness and allow your mind to wander freely, fostering creativity
3. Find solace in walking and communing with nature
4. Benefit from the guidance of a life coach – it can enhance the ability to cope with challenges
5. Find pleasure in maintaining organisation, including making lists, decluttering, setting boundaries and dedicating time to administrative tasks
6. Treasure moments of human connection, especially those shared with family and cherished loved ones
7. Switch off the noise of social media.

permanent shifts in participants' quality of life. In more recent years, as the demands of life grew, she leaned back on those learnings and further developed them.

'Personal development training helps people let go of their limiting beliefs and embrace curiosity as a driver for growth. Courses on the power of communication and continued reading on the human mind and child

psychology (now I am a mother) have helped to enhance my understanding of self and relationships, both personally and professionally.'

### **CULTIVATING A NETWORK**

Collaboration with fellow professionals has also been instrumental in her growth; it allows for shared knowledge and experiences rather than solely relying on individual endeavours. Dentistry can be an isolating place – and running a business doubly so.

'I've cultivated a network within and beyond my field and actively set up meetings to encourage collaborative work.'

Outsourcing tasks where possible has helped her focus on more critical aspects of her work. Similarly, in her personal life, she has set goals that focus on her physical health, mental wellbeing and emotional balance. Recognising the importance of self-improvement and downtime continues to shape her life. Self-compassion plays a vital role here. She is now more realistic about what she sets to achieve in any given timeframe – and she has learned not to be too hard on herself when things fail to go as planned.

Maintaining a sense of accountability while fostering self-care has been vital to Zainab's management of all her life roles – as a mother, clinician, clinic owner, educator and writer.

'As a woman in dentistry, I've faced unique challenges in balancing professional and personal development, especially with societal pressures to excel in multiple domains simultaneously. Social media doesn't help, and life looked through that lens can over-glamorise success in dentistry. Nobody shares enough behind-the-scenes moments, such as the nights spent awake with babies and breastfeeding while writing presentations or meeting deadlines. We are not supposed to be superwomen; we must permit ourselves not to do it all simultaneously. Life comes in chapters.

'I've learned to protect my wellbeing and pursue goals with a healthier mindset. I've become more selective about what I take on and now prioritise rest and self-care. Understanding the importance of regenerative sleep and function has been instrumental.'

## FINDING A BALANCE

Finding greater resilience and happiness in life's simple pleasures by detaching from seeking constant improvement and achievement, she now embraces mindfulness, which has made an enormous difference.

It seems that Zainab's key to living life better is how she organises her time. She is in a more balanced place now, but getting there has taken a lot of work on 'self' and required radical decisions about goal-setting, time management and what good leadership means.

'I had a pattern of constantly striving hard and seeking more considerable achievements when all was already enough. I now celebrate the wins, practise gratitude and appreciate all things – large or small.

'I have also created rules for myself, such as a commitment to sleep

well – it's the only time we repair and regenerate, and our cognitive function is only better if we rest.

'In the daytime, we have two brain states. Executive function mode is a linear thought pattern; if we are in that state constantly, we may compromise

our empathy and cognitive function and feel decision fatigue.

'The other is a mind-wandering mode when we switch off. Only in that mindset can we create and grow empathy and solve previously unsolvable problems.

'So, we must allow enough mind-wandering mode each

day. Life can be a hamster wheel, but we can strip back the ego with a few mindful rituals. I am at my happiest then, and I am more self-aware and resilient.'

Doing it all is possible, but it comes with one simple caveat: not necessarily doing everything simultaneously.

For Zainab, a successful life is a balanced life.

'The Greek philosopher Socrates wrote: "The secret of happiness, you see, is not found in seeking more, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less."

'Reflection and growth mindset are at the core of my approach to life now. Protecting that all-important "me" time has allowed me to evolve personally and professionally while staying true to my values. Yes, you can do it all, but here's the disclaimer – not all at once.

'If you have many goals, filter the "why" and focus on personal development so you do it in a healthy space without compromising your wellbeing.

'Implement healthy rituals and daily habits to improve your emotional and mental health. Reflection is key, and so is adopting a growth mindset.

'Letting go of the pressure to strive for more has allowed me time to focus on what truly matters and live life more authentically, one chapter at a time.'

## I HAD A PATTERN OF CONSTANTLY STRIVING HARD AND SEEKING MORE CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

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# Dental Practice Accelerator: the hurdles

The Dental Practice Accelerator programme is full steam ahead for winner **Hannan Saleem** and his practice – but what challenges lie ahead?

**H**aving won the Dental Practice Accelerator, Hannan Saleem and his practice, London Dental Centre, are looking forward to reaping the benefits of the programme.

With goals now set, the journey to becoming a million-pound practice is underway, but what hurdles will the dental team need to overcome? *Private Dentistry* caught up with Hannan and his four mentors – Sameer Patel, Justin Leigh, Sandeep Kumar and Shaz Memon – to explore the challenges they see ahead.

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

Sandeep Kumar, founder and CEO of the Mismile Network, believes one of the key stumbling blocks for Hannan is the fact that he does not have a dental background.

'The biggest challenge I see working with Hannan is because it is his parents' dental practice, and he is managing it. So, his dental knowledge is a little bit limited,' says Sandeep.

However, after spending some time at the practice, Sandeep has discovered that this hurdle may become a driving force.

'What I've seen so far is that he's really keen, he's really interested and he really wants to grow. He wants to prove to himself and to his family that he wants to take their business to the next level. And when somebody has that type of attitude, they are the

## The challenges

From the outset, Hannan and the mentors can all see various areas that could throw up some challenges along the way to becoming a million-pound practice. The hurdles to overcome to bring in necessary change include:

- Finding the right leadership approach for a family-run practice
- Stepping away from the noise to enable growth
- Uncovering the story to build an effective brand
- Changing existing habits within the well-established team.

perfect type of person to work with.'

Sameer Patel, clinical director at Elleven Dental, sees the fact that the practice is family-run as a positive force: 'I love the fact that it's a family-run business and therefore everybody's helping him.'

Where Sameer sees potential issues is around decision-making and instilling change: 'He's going to have to isolate himself and make key decisions on how he works and runs his practice. All the rest will be noise, but he needs to titrate in exactly the changes he wants to make.'

## ROOM FOR GROWTH

Justin Leigh, managing director of Focus4growth, sees Hannan's non-dental background as an encouraging factor. 'He's the business manager

for the practice, which means he can dedicate his time and energy and efforts to really driving through the changes that need

to be made to make the practice world class and achieve his ambitions and goals,' says Justin.

'I think the biggest challenges are around growth. The practice is really well established. They've got a lot of priorities and there's a lot going on.

'The biggest challenge is going to be getting their heads out of the weeds, removing themselves from the day to day and starting to make the key changes that are going to drive growth, because he's got some great ambitions and some great goals.'

As a mentor, Justin will be helping Hannan to 'break free of the inertia of current practice' by identifying what







needs to change and then holding him accountable to make those changes in order to push for growth.

#### WHAT'S THE STORY?

While Hannan and the team are delivering dentistry in a central London location, Shaz Memon, founder of Digimax Dental, notes there is no 'story to be told' and he sees this as one of the reasons why growth is currently limited.

'There's no brand, I don't see why a patient would speak about their practice right now. It's a convenience-led dental practice, which is in a great location.

'Without a brand, without a story, without a reason, without something to go back and tell your friends about, you're limiting your growth.'

Part of the roadmap for London Dental Centre is defining the brand and giving patients a seamless journey from social media to the website and then visiting the practice.

This is part of the recipe for bringing Hannan closer to his dream of maximising the practice's potential and helping his parents to retire.

#### CHANGING HABITS

As the person leading the business and pushing the change, the biggest hurdle that Hannan anticipates is changing existing habits within the

## WITHOUT A BRAND, WITHOUT A STORY, WITHOUT A REASON, WITHOUT SOMETHING TO GO BACK AND TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT, YOU'RE LIMITING YOUR GROWTH

well-established team, who are used to their ways of working.

'I think the mentorship that the DPA will provide will be a completely new way of working.

'We'll gain insights into how the mentors run their practices and their clinical care. That's something which I think will be exciting to learn about and implement. However, it's definitely going to be a challenge to get the team aligned on the same goal.'

Zoe, the lead receptionist at London Dental Centre, also feels that 'getting everyone on board' could be a challenge for the small team.

'I think everyone is excited,' she says. 'But getting everyone together in terms of logistics might be something that will take a while because everyone

has their set days and times. But I think that will be the most important thing, it will have the best knock-on effect once everyone is together.

'I think it will be great for the whole practice.'

Sameer agrees: 'He's got a number of clinicians and staff, we're almost resetting everything. That communication to get over to the team is going to be really paramount.

'I think getting the team on board to make those changes is going to be his challenge, but we're here to help him.'

While there are challenges to overcome, the mentors all agree that there is a lot of opportunity for growth at London Dental Centre.

Justin says: 'It's a London-based practice, the demographic is really central. The practice has an opportunity to improve the experience of patients and the overall brand... that's real opportunity for growth and evolution of the business.'

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*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).*

# A celebration of success amid five-star splendour

The **Private Dentistry Awards** returns to the majestic surroundings of the Grosvenor House Hotel this year. Will you join us in celebrating dental excellence – and maybe win well-deserved recognition?

It's hosted everyone from royalty to international celebrities, and now the majestic Grosvenor House Hotel in London's Mayfair is set to welcome back the cream of the dental profession.

This year's Private Dentistry Awards is the perfect opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of yourself and your team, and registration is now open!

Whether you want to celebrate a member of staff who has gone the extra mile, win acclaim for your new practice or claim your peers' seal of approval for patient care, this glamorous event is the perfect opportunity for your hard work to be recognised.

The Private Dentistry Awards takes place on Friday 8 November, and promises to be a night to remember.

Of course, to be in with a chance of getting called up to the stage to receive your award, you have to enter! If you feel your practice or team will shine in multiple categories, then feel free to enter as many as relevant. Once you have decided which to go for, register at [dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards](http://dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards).

Remember, each category has its own criteria to be followed, which must be met within 750 to 1,000 words. Be sure to supply supporting evidence too, be it photos, testimonials or marketing material. Don't forget to submit your entry by 11 September!

## MORE THAN A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

The Private Dentistry Awards will be a night of grandeur and glamour, as you join your peers for the industry event of the year. There will be entertainment, amazing food, dancing and – of course – flying Champagne corks!

And all of this happens amid the splendour of London's historic Grosvenor House Hotel, an opulent venue next to Hyde Park.

But the Private Dentistry Awards is about more than the event itself. The whole process can be transformative for your team as you take the opportunity to reflect on and celebrate your strengths.

And the warm glow of satisfaction at winning an award lasts more than just a night.

A Private Dentistry Award shows that you are the best of the best, and promoting your awards success can boost your profile, patient numbers and profits.

## FORMER GLORIES

If you want a look at the glitz and glamour of last year's event, check out this video of some of the highlights from 2023: [youtu.be/FAzAsYiVlv8](https://youtu.be/FAzAsYiVlv8).

And be sure to keep an eye on these pages over the coming months as more is revealed about this year's event – it promises to be better than ever.

# 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](http://dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards).

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# Put a spring in your step

It's the ideal season to re-evaluate decontamination protocols

**M**aintaining a safe and hygienic environment is paramount in dental practices. Here's why spring is an ideal season for re-evaluating decontamination protocols:

1. Post-winter clean-up: after enduring the winter months, dental practices may find themselves contending with accumulated dust, dirt and other contaminants. Spring provides an excellent opportunity for a thorough deep clean of equipment, surfaces and sterilisation areas
2. Increased patient flow: spring often heralds an uptick in patient appointments as people become more active and prioritise their health and wellness. With greater foot traffic, it becomes imperative

to ensure that decontamination processes are robust enough to prevent the spread of germs and infections. As patient numbers increase, it's important to check for stock of those daily essentials, such as gloves and Alpron

3. Review and update protocols: spring is an opportune time to review and update decontamination protocols in line with the latest guidelines and recommendations. This proactive approach ensures that the practice remains compliant with industry standards and continues to prioritise patient and staff safety above all else.

4. Preparation for allergens: spring's arrival brings with it pollen and other allergens that can exacerbate respiratory issues. Maintaining a clean and sanitised environment becomes even more crucial to minimise potential allergens, thereby enhancing the overall comfort and wellbeing of patients. As temperatures increase, it's important to review your practice's risk of legionnaires' disease. Left untreated, biofilms can multiply exponentially, and waterlines – where supplies may be left undisturbed overnight or at weekends – offer perfect breeding conditions.

*Aura Infection Control offers free decontamination reviews at [www.aiconline.co.uk/dental-decontamination-review](http://www.aiconline.co.uk/dental-decontamination-review). For more information, call 01833 630393.*

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and superior polishability



# Material selection in indirect anterior ceramic restorations

**Kostas Karagiannopoulos** looks at the factors to consider and the importance of a close partnership between clinician and technician for functional and aesthetic restorations

**L**ithium-based restorative materials have been in use for many years, and there are many versions of lithium disilicate now available.

Zirconia is a relative newcomer, but within both ceramic families, there is a huge spectrum of options in terms of opacity, strength, translucency, versatility and the ability to layer.

Ceramic materials as a group are considered to be appropriate enamel substitutes. Lithium disilicate, in particular, is well established and documented as an extremely versatile material, suitable for both the anterior and posterior dentition. Restorations can be milled following a CAD/CAM workflow or, alternatively, pressed from ingots.

## LITHIUM DISILICATE OR ZIRCONIA?

While many would not consider that zirconia falls into this category, both



### **Kostas Karagiannopoulos**

Kostas graduated from Queen Mary University before specialising in prosthodontics at King's College, London. He is passionate about education and comprehensive dentistry. He is currently offering patient care in two specialist clinics near London and teaching training specialists at King's College.

lithium disilicate and zirconia are ceramics. There used to be significant disparities between the two, but now lithium-based materials have become stronger and more versatile, while zirconia has become more aesthetic, although sometimes at the expense of strength.

Lithium disilicate and zirconia offer many of the same properties; both

materials can be bonded, both can be monolithic or layered, both can mask and be milled and cemented, and both can create thin, translucent, glassy restorations.

What this

indicates to me is that there is no longer a big difference between the two families of materials, and, in my opinion, they are almost merging into one.

## WHAT FACTORS DETERMINE MATERIAL SELECTION?

As a clinician looking to restore anterior teeth, and aside from deciding on a direct or indirect restorative approach, there are four factors I believe should determine the choice of material for the case in hand:

1. Restorative space. The first is to consider how much restorative space there is, as this will determine the thickness of the restoration. In general, lithium disilicate requires a little more restorative space than zirconia, so this must be taken into account
2. Substrate. The second factor is the colour of the substrate. We are not considering here whether we are bonding to enamel or dentine, but rather the colour of the substrate, which will have an effect on the appearance of the restoration on top. It could be anything from a metal cast post to an AI coloured tooth preparation
3. Value. The value is in relation to how glassy the restoration needs to be and this will be dependent upon the appearance of the surrounding dentition. Value and translucency are probably the hardest things to get right for both clinician and technician and are often the main reason for

## THERE IS A HUGE AMOUNT OF CHOICE AND COMPLEXITY AT PLAY

remakes, especially with single tooth restorations

4. Technician preference and skill. Material choice is heavily dependent on your technician's skills and preference. It is really important to engage with your technician and understand their material preferences and approach. In my experience, it works best when clinician and technician work together on material choice, combining their respective clinical and technical expertise to generate the desired result.

### INITIAL LISI PRESS AND BLOCK

One material that I find myself favouring in many anterior restoration cases, along with my technician, Joao Esturrado at London Digital Lab, is Initial Lisi Press and Block from GC.

Lithium disilicate ceramics are extremely versatile, silica-based ceramics consisting of lithium disilicate micro-crystals uniformly dispersed in a glass matrix.

These restorations can be manufactured by either pressing or milling.

Initial Lisi Press from GC is a lithium disilicate ceramic ingot with high density micronisation (HDM) that provides high flexural strength and unparalleled aesthetics, suitable for all types of restorations through all levels of transparency.

Initial Lisi Block is a fully crystallised lithium disilicate milling block that does not require firing. The ultrafine crystal makes it easy to grind and quickly milled in its fully crystallised stage. High gloss and natural opalescence can be obtained by polishing only and the restoration is then ready for luting.

Additional characterisation of chroma, value and brightness in either material can be created with Initial IQ Lustre Pastes, Initial Spectrum Stains or using a microlayering technique with the Initial IQ One Sqin concept.

### DEFINING THE MARGINS

In terms of margin adaptation, if there

## IF THERE IS A CLEAR, WELL-DEFINED MARGIN, THE MILLED BLOCKS ARE EQUALLY AS GOOD AS PRESSED

is a definitive margin like a chamfer or an onlay with a very clear chamfer, Joao recommends using Initial Lisi Blocks. On the other hand, with a posterior onlay that is bevelled and has an infinity margin, he prefers to use Initial Lisi

Block ingots, which are pressed rather than milled.

In summary, if there is a clear, well-defined margin, the milled blocks are equally as good as pressed - if not better. If the margin is not well-defined, pressing usually works best.

As this short foray into Initial Lisi Press and Block demonstrates, there is a huge amount of choice and complexity at play in the mastery of indirect anterior ceramic restorations. As a result, a close partnership between clinician and technician is vital to afford the best chance of delivering a restoration that is both functional and aesthetic.

*Find out more at [campaigns-gceurope.com/initial-lisi-block-lab](https://campaigns-gceurope.com/initial-lisi-block-lab).*

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## Continuous 12-hour fluoride protection!

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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, 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. The toothpaste is approved by the Oral Health Foundation for sensitivity relief and remineralisation.

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

## Eagerly anticipated new products

### Planmeca

Planmeca was delighted to unveil the Viso G3 CBCT imaging unit and preview the new Planmeca Pro50 dental unit to representatives from its distributor network at a special event in March.



Out now, the Viso G3 brings new features to the market, including video-based field of view placement and a new generation sensor with an even better signal-to-noise ratio. There is also an optional back of the head support for more comfortable positioning and a graphical user interface, which matches the style of the Planmeca Romexis software for ease of use.

Coming this autumn, the Pro50 dental unit is a masterpiece of sophisticated technology with an easy to use seven-inch touchscreen and a cuspidor that can be positioned on either side of the patient. The new suction arm has an extended reach and can be height adjusted for ease as well.

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## State-of-the-art bone regeneration

### Trycare

Tecnoss's Osteobiol GTO is the state-of-the-art second generation guided bone regeneration material distributed by Trycare.



All Tecnoss Osteobiol products are second generation because they contain a dual-phase resorbable bone matrix incorporating both mineral component and collagen. Unlike ceramised first generation materials, which undergo very little resorption and are therefore never completely replaced by newly formed bone, dual-phase biomaterials do resorb progressively and are replaced by adequate new vital bone.

Handling like a sticky putty, Osteobiol GTO is Tecnoss's state-of-the-art ready-to-use pre-hydrated biomaterial that can be easily dispensed into defect sites direct from the syringe. It enables clinicians to skip the hydration phase with saline or blood, saving time and decreasing the risk of accidental exposure to pathogens. Osteobiol GTO contains Tecnoss's innovative Osteobiol TSV Gel, which ensures optimal stickiness of the material, allowing easy adaptability to the recipient site and extreme stability.

Conceived as a universal biomaterial, easily adaptable to any bone defect, it has proven clinically valid for horizontal augmentation of two-wall defects and socket preservation with compromised buccal plates. It can also be used to treat peri-implant lesions and severe bony defects, also in combination with Osteobiol Soft Cortical Lamina.

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

## The Prettau zirconia line Zirkonzahn

Zirkonzahn's zirconia range has grown over time into a material line consisting of six different types of Prettau zirconia:

- With a very wide range of applications – from partial crowns to full arches – Prettau solves common problems such as narrow spaces, bruxism or ceramic chipping for functional and aesthetic restorations
- Prettau 2 and Prettau 2 Dispersive are translucent with excellent flexural strength. Their aesthetic properties allow the design of monolithic restorations, preventing the risk of ceramic chipping. With Prettau 2 and Prettau 2 Dispersive, patients receive biocompatible, individual and stable dental restorations, from single crowns to full arches. Dispersive has a slight natural colour gradient
- With the new Prettau 3 Dispersive zirconia, the concept of Gradual-Triplex-Technology was introduced. In addition to the colouring, translucency and flexural strength levels also change. In this way, while the incisally increasing translucency results in a highly translucent incisal edge, the cervically increasing flexural strength leads to an extremely high flexural strength at the tooth neck
- Prettau 4 Anterior and Prettau 4 Anterior Dispersive have been specially designed for the anterior region and are therefore characterised by a particularly high translucency. Both materials are suited for the posterior region. These two types of zirconia are suitable for the production of single crowns, inlays, onlays, veneers and three-unit bridges.

Zirkonzahn Shade Guides are composed of monolithic zirconia sample teeth in the shape of premolars, upper and lower incisors. They are available in Prettau 2 Dispersive, Prettau 3 Dispersive and Prettau 4 Anterior Dispersive zirconia.

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



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## 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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## Referring for excellent care

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The Centre for Oral, Maxillofacial & Dental Implant Reconstructive Surgery offers excellence that every clinician can trust.

Renowned specialist oral surgeon Professor Cemal Ucer is an honorary professor in implant dentistry and postgraduate dental studies at the University of Salford. He and his team at the Centre for Oral, Maxillofacial & Dental Implant Reconstructive Surgery provide patients with a range of evidence-based treatment solutions of the highest quality.

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## Align with the experts Straumann

Clear aligners are hugely popular, and the material they are made of plays a key role in their efficacy.

Clearcorrect aligners from the Straumann Group are made from a proprietary Clearquartz tri-layer material combining two layers of resilient polymers with an elastomeric inner layer to produce a gentle but consistent application of force. This, alongside software that features enhanced precision editing tools and arching editing solutions, means highly controlled treatment planning and tooth movement.

Clearcorrect aligners feature a flat trimline above the gingival margin, resulting in a comfortable and retentive oral device.

In addition, the doctor portal affords streamlined case organisation and management, with the opportunity to identify and filter cases and colour-coded patient notes.

[www.straumann.com/clearcorrect/gb/en/landing/clearcorrect-aligners.html](http://www.straumann.com/clearcorrect/gb/en/landing/clearcorrect-aligners.html)



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## Perfect impressions from Coltene Coltene

Louise Hilton, practice manager at PBA Dental & Implant Clinic in Liverpool, is one of many highly satisfied customers of RPA Dental. She describes the relationship she enjoys with the team after working together for more than 20 years: 'We trust RPA Dental – they've been supporting our practice forever! We are confident in the advice they give us and always do as they recommend. They really understand our business and we know the team well enough to trust in what they say.'

'The whole team is fantastic and they communicate well, which is essential in dentistry. We're like a close-knit family having been in business for many years. I appreciate that we can have laugh with them and we know that they will always deliver a professional service. Over the years, we have built a brilliant working relationship and this makes a big difference to our practice.'

'For example, I rang with a question about our equipment on a Tuesday night and one of their engineers turned up to the practice at 8am the very next day to help – now that's a good service!'

'I would absolutely rate RPA Dental 10 out of 10. I think they're brilliant and have nothing bad to say about them at all.'

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## Triple-headed toothbrush Trycare

Welcome to the best smile of your life! With the introduction of the triple-headed toothbrush, Trycare has launched a paradigm shift in electric toothbrush heads that makes the Philips Sonicare even more effective – in fact, three times more effective!

Designed by a dentist, the triple-headed toothbrush head features individual labial, lingual and occlusal orientated brush heads, which combine to provide the most thorough toothbrush experience your mouth has ever enjoyed, delivering three times more prophylaxis for a two-minute cycle.

Featuring patented angled brush heads that clean along the gingival margin and extra soft bristles that do not harm enamel or gingiva, the labial and lingual heads are positioned at a 45-degree angle so they automatically brush perfectly every time. The three sides of the brush naturally adapt to the teeth so that it works on teeth of all shapes, sizes and positions.

Incorporating a built-in bristle indicator to let patients know it's time to change, triple headed toothbrushes are recommended for children eight years old and above. They are safe for use with implants and other restorations.

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## IN THE HOT SEAT

This month, we get to know **Shabnam Zai**, clinical director at West House Dental and host of the Filling the Gap podcast

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

**A** I went to Moka in London for breakfast with my husband. The restaurant does a great Indian breakfast.

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

**A** My daughter, everyone says she looks just like me!

**Q What's the best advice you've received?**

**A** Take action. You only regret the things you don't do.

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

**A** Having sugar in my tea and coffee. As a dentist, everyone finds this really surprising, but then I remind them I don't have any fillings.

**Q What was the last gift you gave/received?**

**A** I gifted my friend a spa weekend for her birthday. I received a beautiful bouquet from my team for Eid.

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

**A** Sunshine, a warm pool, with a beautiful view. I love it when I have no schedule, can eat delicious food on demand and have a siesta.

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

**A** I hadn't read a book for over 10 years, then I joined a book club. It's one of the best things I ever did. Five years on, I meet up with an amazing group of women once a month, and I now read more than 20 books a year.

I really enjoyed *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. I almost studied chemistry at university but at the last minute changed my mind and did dentistry instead. But to this day I have a great love of chemistry and science in general. I loved all the science facts dotted through this book.

When it comes to films, I don't really have favourites, but if I had to pick one, it would probably be *Shawshank Redemption*. I once went to Secret Cinema, which is an immersive movie experience. I got locked up in jail and relived experiences from the movie. It was just incredible!

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

**A** Currently, it's The Weeknd, Blinding Lights.

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

**A** A good book I cannot put down, otherwise I love my sleep. I am up early and exercise before work, so usually by the evening I am in bed before my kids.

**Q How do you unwind?**

**A** Dinners with friends, enjoying amazing food and fun days out with my kids. Last weekend, we went to an arcade in Camden with an indoor rollercoaster.

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

**A** Give a portion to charity then spend the rest travelling the world with my family. I value experiences over material objects every time.

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

**A** A friend bought this amazing cake to my house for Eid.



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Square Mile Dental Centre



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