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Ten ways
to build online
connections

**A journey
of defiance**

The unstoppable
Polly Bhambra

**Inspired
by tropical
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A practice built on
eco-conscious ideas

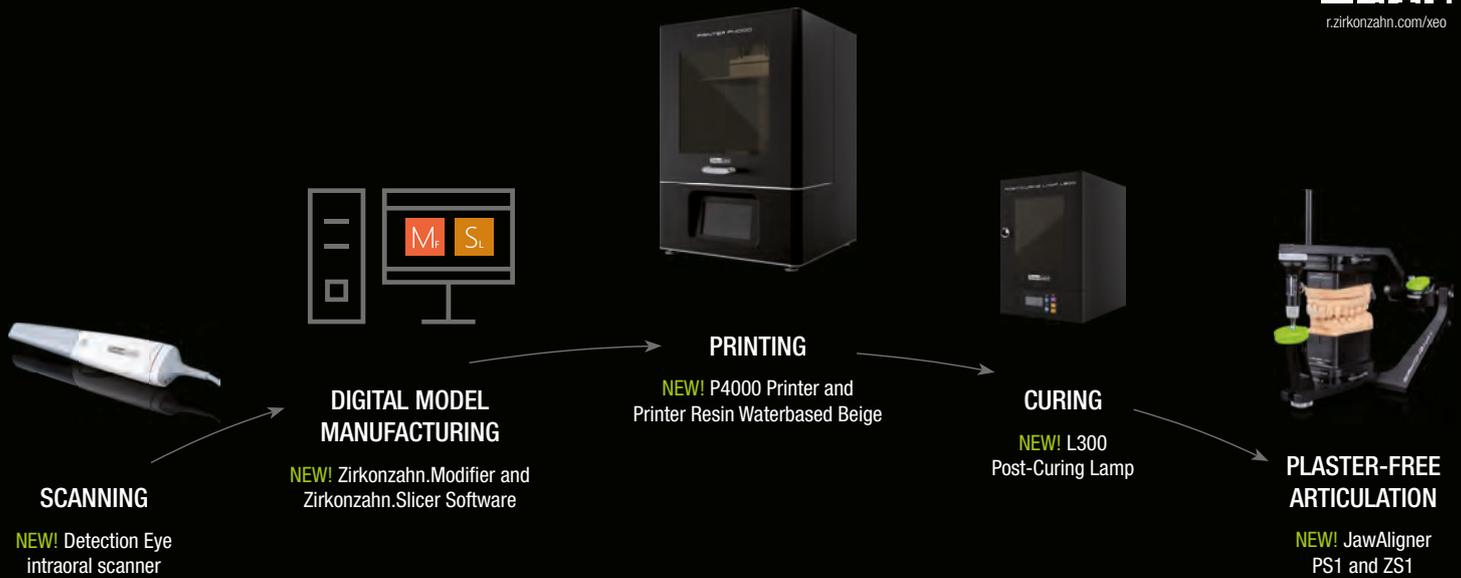
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THE JUDGES' GUIDE
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AWARDS SUCCESS



*A leap
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How I Did It: Allround Dental



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Make your voice heard

Patrick Ward
Editor

It can be difficult keeping up with the ever-changing landscape of social media. As soon as you get to grips with one platform, two more spring up and, all of a sudden, you need to adapt – again.

And yet social media is today a key factor to promoting your practice and keeping your patients informed – meaning you have to engage across multiple platforms and in different ways. That’s especially true if you want to reach younger patients who value their appearance as much as their app collection.

If you’re fumbling over Facebook or getting your Tiktoks in a twist, we have a plethora of advice this month from those in the know, including Rachel Dilley’s easy-to-follow rundown of how best to tailor your social media posts to different platforms and audiences.

We also have advice from Ross Idzhar on how to take this further, by adapting content you’ve created for social media for more traditional uses, such as practice brochures, flyers and reception screens.

But none of this should come to the detriment of good old-fashioned word of mouth.

As Chris Barrow argues in his column this month, involving your satisfied patients in spreading the word about your good work can be a simple but effective game changer.

And if you really want to stand out from the crowd and have something to shout about, there’s still time to be in with a chance of winning a coveted Private Dentistry Award.

To increase the odds, turn to page 71 to find out what the judges are looking to see in your entries. This year’s awards take place at London’s prestigious Grosvenor House Hotel on Friday 8 November. You have until 11 September to enter, so take the time to craft the perfect entry!

This issue we also proudly feature a previous Private Dentistry Awards winner, Elleven Dental. The team at Elleven picked up a host of awards in 2023, including Practice of the Year UK.

Not only do we chart Elleven Dental’s journey to success, but we also hear from its practice designers, Lucy Walker and Charlotte Malagoni. They join others in our practice design section to give advice on how to put sustainability at the heart of dental environments.

All this is just scratching the surface of what we have in this jam-packed issue. We hope you enjoy it!



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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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Dental plan and insurance coverage **rate soars**, research suggests

New research suggests that 3.8 million people in the UK were covered by private dental plans or insurance in 2022 – increasing from 3.2 million in 2019.

The findings, published by market analyst Laingbuisson in April, suggest that demand for private dental coverage in the form of insurance and dental plans is steadily rising. The researchers considered data about private dental services going back to 2007, before which uptake of dental insurance was decreasing.

Laingbuisson said the number of dental insurance subscribers increased by 23% in 2021 and 22% in 2022, with more than 1.1 million people insured. The analyst described this as ‘record growth’, with the market size increasing from £109 million to £180 million in two years. Capitation plan subscriptions also increased by 4.6% in 2021 and 7.7% in 2022, for a total of 2.7 million people covered.

Catherine Rutland, clinical director of Denplan, said: ‘This study shows what we have been seeing at Denplan and Simplyhealth over the last couple of years. As access to NHS dentistry becomes more difficult, employers, and patients themselves, are seeing plans, either insurance or capitation, as a cost-effective solution.

‘There is a growing understanding amongst the public that private dentistry is not just cosmetic dentistry, but also focused on long-term preventative care, helping avoid more expensive needs later. Plans also help to spread the cost and improve speed of access for all generations.’

Tim Read is director of research and content at Laingbuisson and author of this year’s report. He said that the increased demand for private coverage reflects reduced access to NHS dentistry.

Reported in *The Telegraph*, he said: ‘With more and more people finding themselves unable get an appointment with NHS dentists, it comes as little surprise to find growing numbers choosing to take out dental cover. Not just for themselves, but also to ensure their families are able to get the treatments they need when they need it.’



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Upcoming events

Key dates for FMC’s unmissable dental shows and awards. Visit 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

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



Irish Dentistry Show 7 September – Dublin

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




Book a Demo and See More Today



Last chance to join dentistry golf championship

Will you be getting in the swing of things this summer? The UK Dentistry Golf Championship, hosted by FMC, will be taking place on Thursday 27 June at Hadley Wood Golf Club.

You could join more than 100 other players from the profession and industry as you compete for the prestigious title of UK dentistry's golf champion.

You don't need to be a pro to take part – this Stableford individual competition is open to all abilities.

It is the perfect opportunity for the dental world to compete for arguably the most prestigious trophy in 'dental golf', as well as get together in a beautiful and convivial setting. The event promises great prizes and a post-round buffet reception. The tournament fee is £199+VAT, which includes green fees, catering and range balls.

It is a first-come, first served event, so don't delay! Register now to secure your spot by calling 01923 851777 or emailing events@fmc.co.uk. Alternatively, for more details, visit www.dentistry.co.uk/golf-championship.

SPONSORS



Walk aims to raise mouth cancer funds and awareness

Dental sector workers are being urged to take part in a charity walk to raise funds for and awareness of mouth cancer.

The 19th annual Mouth Cancer 10km Awareness Walk is set to take place in London's Hyde Park on Saturday 21 September. The free event is organised by the Mouth Cancer Foundation and sponsored by Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, Saliveze and Dental Focus.

President of the Mouth Cancer

Foundation and oral and maxillofacial surgeon Mahesh Kumar said: 'The charity's goal is to see the coming together of everyone involved in saving and improving lives of mouth and head and neck cancer patients.'

'My hope is that all sectors of the charity, dental, medical, pharmacy and patient support group communities will join forces to really help make a difference this year. We are especially appealing to professionals working in dental practices, GP surgeries and hospital maxillofacial units to get involved.'

WALK FROM HOME

People unable to attend the walk in London, or who want to go the extra mile, can walk 10km in their own localities.

The Walk From Home series of events, which take place during Mouth Cancer Action Month, can be done individually or in groups from 1 October to 30 November.



GET INVOLVED

More than 3,034 lives are lost each year in the UK from mouth cancer, which affects around 650,000 people a year worldwide.

Fundraising T-shirts to wear during the walks are available for £7.50 and can be ordered at www.justgiving.com/campaign/MouthCancerFoundationWalkTShirt.

The Mouth Cancer Foundation has also made a series of posters to promote the event, which can be downloaded from www.mouthcancerfoundation.org.

People wishing to volunteer to help at the Mouth Cancer 10km Awareness Walk should email info@mouthcancerfoundation.org.



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Oral rinse could provide early cancer screening, research suggests

Oral rinse could be used to detect cancer at an early stage, according to a new study.

The oral rinse would identify biomarkers for cancer in the oral microbiome, which could also be detected in pre-cancerous patients.

Researchers analysed bacteria samples from the mouths of 98 patients, 30 of whom were known to have gastric cancer. Distinct differences were found between the oral microbiomes of healthy patients and those with cancer.

Shruthi Reddy Perati is a general surgery resident at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson School of Medicine and author of the study. She said: 'We see that the oral microbiome and the stomach microbiome are connected, and knowing what bugs are in your mouth tells us what the stomach environment is like. That has a huge implication that could lead to some practice-changing tests and guidelines.'

The research also determined that the microbiomes of pre-cancerous patients were very similar to those who had already developed the disease, which suggests that oral microbiome changes occur as soon as the



stomach is altered in ways that could eventually lead to cancer.

Dr Perati continued: 'In the cancer world, if you find patients after they've developed cancer, it's a little too late. The ideal time to try to prevent cancer is when it's just about to turn into cancer. We were able to identify people who had pre-cancerous conditions. As a screening and prevention tool, this has enormous potential.'

The researchers intend to conduct larger studies with multiple institutions to verify their results. Dr Perati said: 'Even with a small cohort, we were able to see some stark differences and believe the findings are very promising.'

Tooth-growing clinical trials set to begin this autumn

Clinical trials of a medicine that could grow new teeth are set to begin this September in Japan, researchers have announced.

The trials, set to take place at Kyoto University Hospital, will see the medicine administered to patients congenitally missing a full set of teeth. If successful, researchers hope that the treatment will be available by 2030.

The treatment deactivates the protein USAG-1, which prevents teeth from growing. Researchers hope that it will eventually be possible not only to grow

congenitally missing teeth but also replace teeth lost to cavities and injuries.

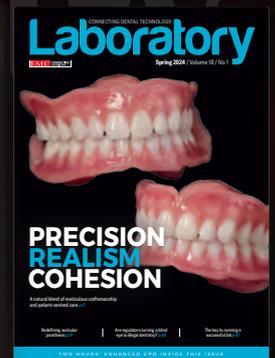
Katsu Takahashi, head of dentistry and oral surgery at Kitano Hospital and the study's lead researcher, was reported in Japan's the *Mainichi* newspaper as saying: 'We want to do something to help those who are suffering from tooth loss or absence. While there has been no treatment to date providing a permanent cure, we feel that people's expectations for tooth growth are high.'

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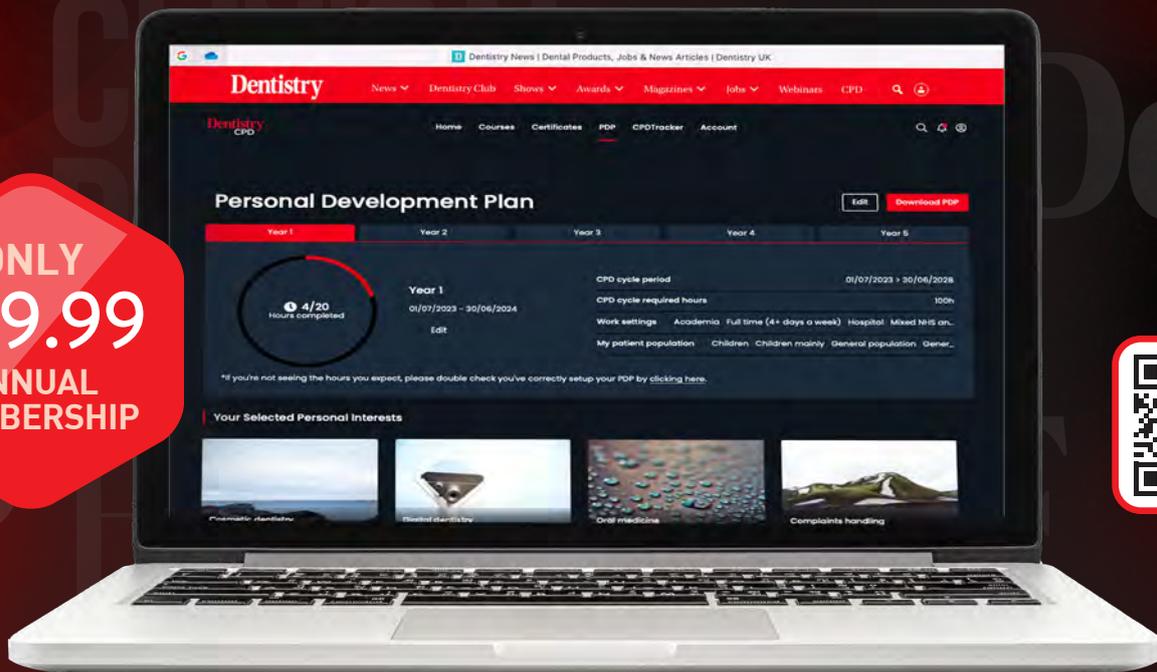
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Keep it simple

Columnist **Chris Barrow** offers his advice on how to keep your marketing as simple (and cheap) as possible



CHRIS
BARROW

So, there I was, on a monthly Zoom call with a client, who said: 'By the way Chris, I just wanted to take the opportunity to thank you – our new patient numbers are very healthy thanks to your idea.'

That's a lovely thing to hear and I pondered which of my 'great ideas' it was.

Maybe Google Review cards with QR codes? Automated requests for video testimonials using proprietary software packages like 'Vocal Video' or 'Bonjoro'? Creating inbound marketing collateral through blogs, newsletters and a branded Youtube channel?

I was surprised to hear her answer: 'We have started handing out three business cards to every patient, using the suggested dialogue you shared with us: "Mrs Patient, could I ask you a favour. We are currently expanding the practice, and we would love to see more patients, especially patients like you. I was wondering if I could give you three of my business cards and ask you to pass them on to any family, friends or colleagues that you think might be interested in visiting us?"

'It has worked a treat, Chris – patients are mainly delighted to help and flattered to be asked. The team has become used to asking and it makes them feel proud of what we do.

'It has cost us loose change to have the cards printed and they are working.'

A reminder, if it were needed, that sometimes it is perfectly OK to go back to basics, especially in a digitised world that overwhelms us with e-blasts, newsletters, special offers and spam.

THE CURRENCY OF INTERNAL AND INBOUND MARKETING IS PEOPLE AND TIME – COMMODITIES IN SHORT SUPPLY

BACK TO BASICS

Everyone who follows me knows that I have a hang up about digital advertising. While I appreciate the role this can play in an overall marketing strategy (especially for a start-up), I'm always worried by the feedback that I hear, complaining of:

- High cost
- Low return
- Attractive to price-shoppers, bargain hunters and time-wasters.

Of more concern is the reliance that some owners place on digital advertising – who then take their foot off the pedal on internal and inbound marketing:

- Internal marketing – turning your patients into your salesforce
- Inbound marketing – becoming the expert in your postcode.

I've mentioned before that the currency of internal and inbound marketing is people and time – commodities in short supply.

A recent visit to another long-established practice (who invited me in for an initial consult) revealed a £10,000 per month budget for digital advertising, diminishing new patient numbers and an almost complete absence of any internal or inbound marketing activity.

'Oh yes – we used to do that stuff, but we ran out of time and don't have the team members,' the team said.

I've coined an internal description for these practices – 'the used to do it dental practice'. When I tell my team I've been to visit one of those, they know what to expect next – a return to those basics.

Back to my opening conversation.

Just three business cards per patient and a well-rehearsed request – and the difference has become measurable within a matter of weeks.

I like my marketing to have the following characteristics:

- Low cost
- High return over the long term
- Attractive to patients looking for a quality experience.

Let's keep this simple, shall we?



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E D U C A T E D & A C C R E D I T E D B Y S T Y L E I T A L I A N O

Allround Dental

Driven by the fear of a retirement filled with ‘what ifs’, **Mina Messiha** shares the story of opening his practice and dreaming big in dentistry

I decided to set up my practice because, after years of successful work as a dental associate, I felt a compelling drive to advance my career.

Having graduated in 2010 from the prestigious Ain Shams University in Cairo and then moving to England, I had continued to expand my expertise. Perhaps most notably, I completed my membership of the Faculty of Dental Surgery from the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, achieved an MSc in dental implantology from Bristol University in 2019 and obtained my conscious sedation certificate from UCL in 2021.

With these accomplishments, I was eager to face a new challenge and ready for the next level – to create a space that truly reflected my vision and expertise.

My journey began with a desire for more than just clinical excellence. I wanted to build a practice that resonated with my personal and professional ethos. The ease and security of being an associate, where operational concerns were handled by others, was comforting but no longer fulfilling for me.

Despite the risks of starting from scratch, such as potential financial instability and the daunting prospect of managing a business, I

THE THOUGHT OF STAGNATION WAS FAR SCARIER THAN THE LEAP INTO THE UNKNOWN

was driven by the fear of looking back at retirement filled with ‘what ifs’. In the end, the thought of stagnation was far scarier than the leap into the unknown.

Step inside...

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LOCATION AND PREPARATION

Finding the right location was crucial. I looked for a spot that was not just strategically advantageous but also within a comfortable commute from West Sussex, where I was happily settled.

In the end, the chosen site offered the perfect balance: good visibility, high foot traffic and financial viability, all within a manageable distance from home.

I was also very aware that opening a brand-new dental practice was venturing into the ‘unknown’ for an associate dentist. Questions loomed large: Is it worth it? Will I be in debt for years? Will I work more hours for potentially less pay? Do I possess the managerial skills needed to lead a team? How will I handle employment issues? What if it fails? Can I ensure financial stability again? Will I be able to support my family as before? Will I maintain a work-life balance? You get the picture!

In my view, the answer to all these questions lies in preparation, motivation, ambition and a clear aim. I focused on my desire to advance to this next level, recognising that even if things didn’t work out for whatever reason, it was honourable to make the attempt.

Certainly, mentally and financially, the preparation was intense. I realised



The ethos

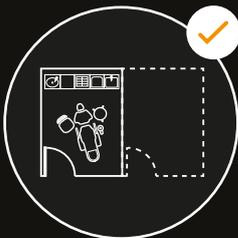
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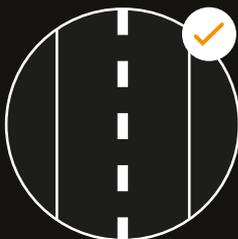
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there were no emotional frameworks that could fully prepare me for the enormity of the risk.

Financially, I armed myself with detailed budgets and reserves, anticipating that costs would invariably overrun. I made sure I had at least 50% more funds than the total of my estimates before I embarked on this project.

After all, financial preparation and stability are crucial in such a venture. Without them, the outcome is likely to be unfavourable. So, the focus remained sharply on my aim: to elevate my career to new heights by overcoming the challenges.

DEALING WITH COMPLICATIONS

In truth, the building phase was a tense time when it came to coordinating between various companies and tradespeople, despite having project managers. My vision for the practice demanded personal involvement at every step to ensure no detail was missed.

For example, the décor and ambiance of the practice were meticulously chosen to reflect professionalism and warmth, with an olive green and gold colour scheme that spoke of tranquillity and elegance.

This decision, over which I took my time and was guided by a professional interior designer, ensured that the environment would be both welcoming and reflective of high standards.

The whole process was both exhausting and enlightening, as I juggled my full-time duties as a dentist with the myriad tasks of overseeing a large-scale construction. Many days, after work, I found myself responding to various important emails until very late and only sleeping in the early hours of the morning.

Although achieving your vision is an immensely time-consuming endeavour, the reward is immeasurable. Once the construction is complete and you finally stand within the walls of your own practice, the sense of accomplishment is overwhelming. Looking around at what you've built, you can't help but feel immense pride in your achievement.

Despite the countless hours and sometimes seemingly relentless effort, the realisation of your dream suddenly makes every sacrifice seem entirely worth it.

MARKETING FOR SUCCESS

I have also learned that it takes time for a new practice to become known to patients, gather reviews, earn referrals, build its reputation and ultimately become busier and established. I don't think there's much you can do to speed up this process; it's something you must mentally accept while you work out your marketing plan.

There are obviously numerous marketing channels available, and finding the most effective one for your specific local area is crucial, as each region has its unique demographics that may respond differently to various types of marketing.

I am currently exploring a wide range of avenues, including social media platforms, our website, Google advertising and leaflet distribution, to pinpoint which one has the greatest impact within my local community.

As I continue this exploration, my goal is to gather as much data and feedback as possible. This will not only help in identifying the most successful marketing channel but also in shaping a more targeted and effective marketing strategy moving forward. Once I determine which channel resonates the most, I plan to concentrate my resources there, optimising our outreach and engagement.

Identifying the top-performing marketing venue for my specific

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The team

PRINCIPAL DENTIST
Dr Mina Messiha

ASSOCIATE DENTIST
Dr Diego Devanna

DENTAL RECEPTIONIST
Miss Danielle Marfé

community and demographics is well under way and, once confirmed, will set the stage for a focused and hopeful push towards greater visibility and success.

So, I'm optimistic about the future and the potential for growth in the local area. By tapping into the best marketing avenues, I aim to strengthen our presence and build deeper connections within the community.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Post-completion, the transition has been significant, both personally and professionally. My roles multiplied overnight, and I became not just the dentist but also the manager, the decision-maker, the problem-solver. While my work-life balance has yet to stabilise, its evolution is ongoing and promising. I will get there!

With the entire undertaking in mind, for fellow dentists considering such a venture, my advice is grounded in realism and preparation. Understand the slow rhythm of business growth, prepare financially to buffer the stresses of the early stages and harness a strong support network.

In addition, a good support circle is not just beneficial – it's essential. It provides emotional encouragement, practical advice and can be a critical resource during tough times.

Patience and steadfastness are your allies in the face of

inevitable challenges, and having supportive peers and mentors can make a significant difference in navigating them successfully.

Since opening, I've made it a priority to elevate patient care to exceptional levels, a natural shift when every patient interaction directly reflects on your practice. Embracing the future, I aim to continue enhancing our services and, perhaps, expand operational hours as patient volume grows.

Reflecting on this enterprise, my biggest takeaway is the need for realistic expectations and patience. Growth takes time, but with perseverance and a clear vision, the results are profoundly rewarding.

One day, looking back at this monumental effort, I anticipate a deep sense of pride in not just the outcomes, but the journey itself. This practice is not just a place where I work, it is a manifestation of my life's work and aspirations.

Who was involved?

Surgery design, equipment and practice interiors
Hague Dental Supplies
www.haguedental.com

Build
Dentalbuild Ltd
www.dentalbuild.co.uk

Website and marketing
Five O'Clock Creative
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Eco-conscious *evolution*

Sameer Patel reveals how a luxury experience inspired him to create a dental environment like no other

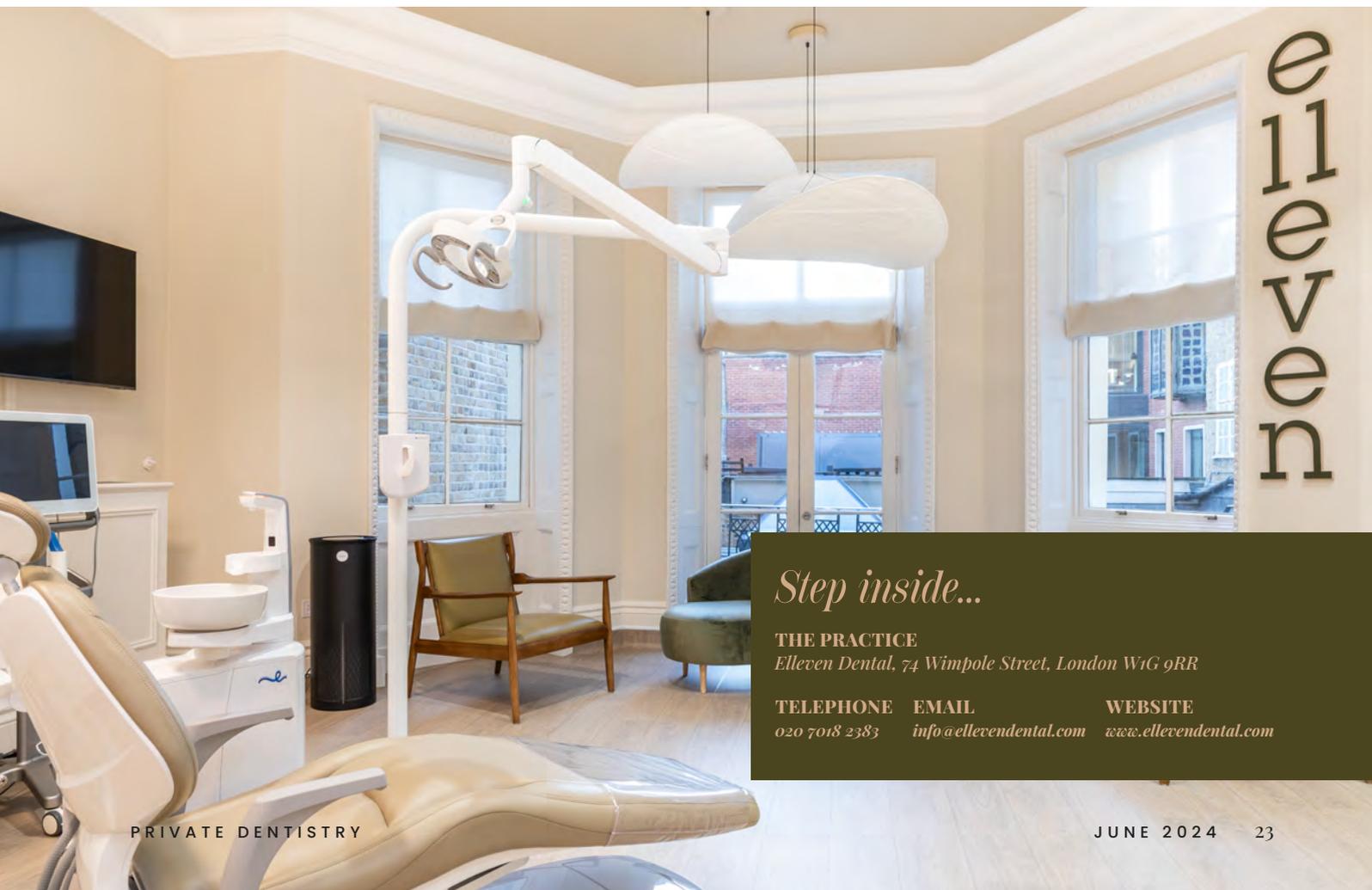
Inspiration often emerges from the unlikeliest sources. For Sameer Patel, a visit to the luxurious Maldives resort of Soneva Jani provided more than just a much-needed respite from dentistry. Surrounded by the azure waters of its private lagoon, he was captivated by this slice of paradise and its clever fusion of luxury and environmental mindfulness – and it ignited a spark. Returning home, he drew on its commitment to eco-conscious practices and its element of indulgence to create a tangible dental design concept – and so Elleven Dental Wellness was born.

Opening last year, the clinic is located in the heart of London's prestigious Harley Street and is widely regarded as a beacon of excellence. The team's hard work has already reaped rewards, with the clinic winning the Private Dentistry Awards' category of Practice Brand & Design 2023.

Under Sameer's visionary leadership as clinical director – and with his wife Shivani and Anthony Lam, both orthodontic specialists – the clinic continues to go from strength to strength with a tranquil aesthetic that harmonises perfectly with their commitment to holistic patient care.

Sameer says: 'I was totally inspired by the eco-centric luxury angle. I became a global ambassador for the resort three years ago – it is an inspiring brand! They have health and wellness running through their business. Now, our practice embraces the same eco-driven luxury concept. We prioritise sustainability and environmental consciousness in every aspect of our operations.'

It's not his first foray into practice reinvention. He acquired Elleven Orthodontics more than 11 years ago, elevating it from a small two-surgery, single-speciality practice into the 18-clinician multidisciplinary practice it is today.



Step inside...

THE PRACTICE

Elleven Dental, 74 Wimpole Street, London W1G 9RR

TELEPHONE

020 7018 2383

EMAIL

info@ellevendental.com

WEBSITE

www.ellevendental.com

THE 'WOW' FACTOR

To realise this latest reincarnation, he partnered with interior designers Walker Malagoni and installation experts Anglian Dental to incorporate eco-sustainability into the clinic's design, workflow and operations.

'Shivani and I created a vision that was clear from the outset, which was crucial,' Sameer explains. 'We then chose our partners based on their sustainable outlook and commitment to environmental responsibility. We aligned ourselves with like-minded businesses to reinforce our dedication to sustainability and actively contribute to positive change. The team was awesome in terms of can-do and collaboration.'

The 'wow' factor is immediate. The clinic seamlessly blends functionality with aesthetic appeal. The architectural design is a testament to elegance and comfort, where natural light floods through strategically placed windows, creating an open, airy ambience. Soothing pastels punctuate earthy tones, while warm wood accents delicately juxtapose sleek metallic surfaces. Every detail has been planned to ensure a seamless workflow without compromising the overall atmosphere.

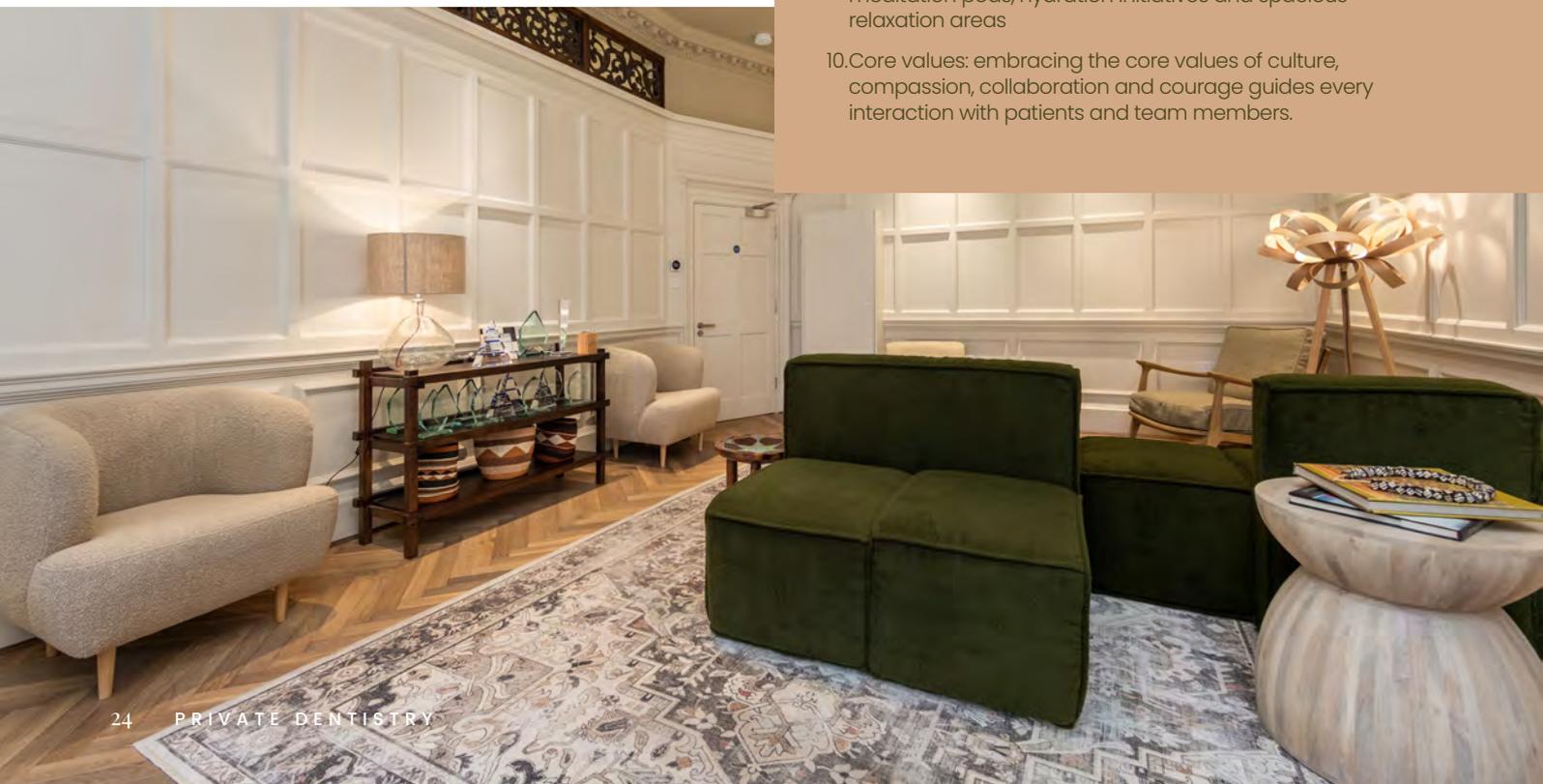
From a blank canvas spanning multiple storeys, the team worked closely with Sameer to define each floor's purpose, allocating specific dentistry disciplines to each area.

Sameer says: 'There were many revisions to ensure that we came up with the best layout. This was a massive challenge with the listed building consent, as we could not subdivide certain areas we would ideally like to have done. It's a grade II listed building, so creating a modern practice with an organic, homely feel within a challenging zone was remarkable.'

Anglian Dental provided a turnkey design solution for this luxury practice. It installed all the dental equipment, including its first Belmont Eurus S8 package. The chairs' innovative design features offer optimum convenience, including an intuitive touch screen and integrated chair foot controls. 'Our partnership with Anglian Dental was fundamental to creating the practice, and the Belmont treatment centres offer value, comfort and reliability,' Sameer says, aligning with his preference for sustainable investments.

Eco-dentistry in action: Elleven offers 10 of its sustainable practices

1. Leadership in sustainable luxury dentistry: we offer an eco-driven luxury dentistry experience that promotes environmental consciousness, community engagement and exceptional care
2. Sustainable operations: we implement practices such as separate recycling bins, food waste recycling and no plastic distribution to reduce waste and promote proper waste management
3. Eco-friendly partnerships: we work with partners committed to reducing environmental impact, supporting green lifestyles and promoting eco-friendly products
4. Aesthetic sustainability: our clinic's aesthetics reflect our commitment to sustainability, including wooden and eco-friendly vinyl signage and recycled sofas
5. Ethical sourcing and community engagement: we support marginalised communities by sourcing artefacts from East Africa and Asia, collaborating with fair trade practices and engaging in charity work
6. Waste reduction and carbon footprint: we minimise waste by ordering supplies monthly, reducing environmental impact and setting a blueprint for sustainable practices
7. Excellence in dentistry: we offer high-end dentistry and exceptional service delivered by highly skilled clinicians, using the latest tools and technologies to ensure outstanding long-term health outcomes
8. Technological advancements: we use digital scanners instead of impression materials to increase precision and avoid wastage. Our practice has cutting-edge tools, such as intraoral scanners, CBCT and AI diagnostic X-ray software for comprehensive patient care
9. Wellness-driven environment: we prioritise patient and staff wellbeing through calming environments, meditation pods, hydration initiatives and spacious relaxation areas
10. Core values: embracing the core values of culture, compassion, collaboration and courage guides every interaction with patients and team members.



SUSTAINABLE PHILOSOPHY

But what truly sets Elleven apart is not just the elegance of its physical surroundings but rather its underlying philosophy. Sameer and Shivani's journey has been characterised by a desire to ensure the business is built on sustainability principles, and their commitment goes beyond rhetoric.

There is a long list of initiatives aimed at reducing the practice's environmental footprint, with every aspect of practice life carefully considered to ensure that Elleven Dental not only delivers exceptional dental care but does so in an environmentally responsible manner.

Central to this is an unwavering focus on customer service. Word of mouth is the practice's primary source of referral, a testament to the trust and satisfaction of its patients. The emphasis on preventive dentistry, coupled with a collaborative approach that brings together specialists under one roof, ensures every patient receives personalised care of the highest calibre.

Over the past 15 years, Sameer and his team have worked hard to create the best patient experience possible, but it is a journey 'that is still evolving', Sameer says.

'We want every patient to know their wellbeing is central to our decisions. Technology and systems are key to ideal workflow in any industry, and dentistry is no different.'

And the argument for a more eco-focused delivery of dentistry is compelling.

A VISION FOR DENTISTRY

'We are minimally invasive and focus on preventing future issues, which goes hand in hand with sustainability,' says Sameer. 'We wanted our vision for dentistry to reflect the space we are in so that it feels seamless. We considered how we bring sustainability into our surgeries.'

'In every room, there are two bins – one recycling bin and one normal bin. We don't use paper or plastic cups, only sterilisable metal cups. There's almost no printing, everything is fully digital, and we don't take impressions, we scan instead. We only partner with other businesses that have a sustainable outlook. We order only once a month, so there aren't endless deliveries adding to our carbon footprint, and we focus on using recycled materials throughout the building, such as wood signage and recycled plastic vinyl.'

'We're trying to make a concerted effort that we hope will create a blueprint for how practices can work sustainably.'

Even subliminally, there is a need to pamper and protect patient health. In the waiting lounge, they are greeted with a sign that reads: 'I'm sorry, we don't have Wi-Fi. It's your time just to be silent, relax and have mindful time.' It's a nudge for those who need it and an affirmation that this clinic cares deeply about its patients.

In addition to this commitment, Elleven is deeply rooted in giving back to the community. This includes pro bono cases, where they enhance patients' smiles to boost their self-esteem and confidence.

Looking to the future, Sameer envisions Elleven Dental Wellness as not just a leading dental practice but a pioneer in shaping the future of dentistry. Through educational initiatives and mentorship programmes, the goal is to nurture the next generation of dentists, fostering a culture where eco-consciousness and holistic treatments flourish to improve dentistry's landscape.



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Dental spaces to turn heads and open minds

Lucy Walker and **Charlotte Malagoni** explain how reimagining interior design conventions is helping them to create greener dental environments

We've been turning spaces into dental practices for a while now, and the most significant shift we've noticed is in how principals perceive their responsibility to the planet.

Young entrepreneurs have grown up understanding the impact we all have on the environment. This, in turn, has fed into a rising number of owners looking to create more sustainable clinics by using innovative design and green products and redefining spaces for everyone's wellbeing.

As interior designers, we try to employ strategies that are mindful of the environment while creating standout spaces that leave a lasting impression – and are designed to last. Often, this involves balancing function and aesthetics, which requires compromises, whether choosing between air conditioning options or navigating building regulations that limit the use of eco-friendly materials.

By focusing on enhancing the business while staying mindful of the impact on our planet, we can craft memorable designs that fuse creativity and functionality, ensuring the best customer experience. Authentic and thoughtful design choices can also contribute to brand reputation, improve value and

ultimately boost the overall return on investment.

We had the pleasure of collaborating with Sameer and Shivani Patel to establish their stunning practice, Elleven Dental, which won Practice Brand & Design at the Private Dentistry Awards last year.

Our shared values, focusing on environmental responsibility, perfectly matched their vision. It is now a dedicated space where they deliver exceptional dental care within an environmentally sound space. And it is beautiful (Sameer shares the practice journey on page 23).

HOW WE DO IT

There is definitely a trend towards more sustainability in design – and long may this continue! An increasing number of private dental practice owners are now seeking ways to lessen their environmental impact, utilising advanced methods and technologies to minimise waste, preserve energy and reduce pollution. This contributes to environmental protection and offers cost- and time-saving benefits.

Here are some solutions we offer practice owners in our designs that are tailored to reduce environmental



Lucy Walker

Lucy is design director at Walker Malagoni.



Charlotte Malagoni

Charlotte is design director at Walker Malagoni.



PRACTICE DESIGN

impact while maintaining excellent functionality and stunning aesthetics.

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

We prioritise energy-efficient appliances and fixtures, aiming for reduced energy consumption and a smaller carbon footprint throughout the clinic's operations.

LED lights are recommended for energy efficiency and longevity. Lutron systems are used to control lighting better and promote energy conservation. Additionally, incorporating motion sensors can enhance energy savings by automatically adjusting lighting levels based on occupancy and natural light conditions. Integrating these technologies reduces energy consumption and creates a comfortable and productive environment for patients and staff.

Managing heating preferences within a team can be a sensitive issue. Strive to find a middle ground between those who prefer warmer temperatures and those who don't.

We suggest principals explore

eco-friendly heating technologies to enhance efficiency. From a design perspective, ceiling height can have a considerable impact. While tall ceilings are a wonderful aesthetic, heat will rise, escape and compromise any efforts to conserve heating.

MATERIALS

To minimise your environmental impact, opt for sustainable materials in furniture, fabrics and flooring. By choosing durable and eco-friendly options, you reduce maintenance needs and enhance the longevity of structures and finishes. This makes them increasingly favoured for their eco-consciousness and long-term cost savings. For instance, Armourcoat plaster-finished clay lime plaster is an excellent sustainable and durable material. This type of plaster is made from natural ingredients, making it environmentally friendly. Its composition allows for exceptional breathability, which can help regulate humidity levels indoors, creating a healthier living environment. Its hardwearing nature ensures it

can withstand wear and tear over extended periods, reducing the need for frequent repairs or replacements. Best of all, it creates a stunning effect.

Paint alternatives like clay paints are gaining traction regarding interior finishes. These paints are made from natural clay and mineral pigments, eliminating conventional paints' harmful chemicals and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Practice owners can reduce environmental pollution and promote better indoor air quality using clay paints. Additionally, these paints have excellent adhesive properties, ensuring a long-lasting finish that resists chipping and fading.

OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Practice teams can help reduce waste through initiatives like using biodegradable cups, paperless operations and digital processes.

We often encourage staff to adopt sustainable practices, such as cycling to work, as an excellent way to reduce carbon emissions and improve overall health.

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An insider's guide to eco-friendly options

Surface finishes

- Armourcoat specialises in high-quality decorative wall finishes, including polished plaster, sculptural effects and sustainable panels
- Lick is a modern paint brand offering a curated selection of eco-friendly paints focusing on ease of application and trendy colour palettes
- Coat provides a range of innovative wall coatings and paints designed to offer durability, versatility and aesthetic appeal.

Fabric houses

- Kvadrat is a leading distributor of decorative fabrics, offering a wide range of high-quality textiles for upholstery, drapery and décor
- Panaz specialises in flame-retardant fabrics suitable for contract and hospitality sectors, offering a blend of style, durability and safety
- Warwick is renowned for creating an exclusive range of upholstery fabrics, curtains and wallpapers that blend traditional and contemporary designs.

Furniture makers

- Fred Rigby is a contemporary furniture designer and maker known for crafting bespoke pieces using sustainable materials and traditional woodworking techniques
- Sebastian Cox is famed for his innovative approach to sustainable furniture design, blending traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics
- Pinch is a British design studio recognised for its elegant and timeless furniture collections, emphasising craftsmanship, quality and attention to detail
- Julian Chichester offers a distinctive range of furniture inspired by classic designs with a contemporary twist using high-quality materials and finishes.



We recently incorporated bike storage in the design of a practice staffroom to encourage team members to ditch public transport in preference for a more environmentally friendly commute to work.

PROCUREMENT

We always try to source materials directly from local and sustainable sources to reduce transportation costs, support local businesses and buy from companies that use recycled and recyclable packaging to minimise waste.

With Elleven Dental, we used a London-based artisan carpenter to save on emissions from long-distance shipping and ensure handcrafted furniture tailored to the clinic's aesthetic.

Of course, sustainable design often comes with higher costs, making it essential to account for budget limitations. Designing eco-friendly squat practices is relatively straightforward due to their blank canvas nature, whereas retrofitting

requires addressing the building's foundational aspects. Nonetheless, integrating traditional architecture with modern designs can involve environmentally conscious solutions.

Our approach is primarily guided by our clients' needs as they seek our expertise. Dentists are entrepreneurs and often have a clear vision for their practices, with efficiency hinged on forward-thinking approaches.

While we may not be 100% there yet, the collective effort towards improvement is encouraging. By incorporating sustainable elements into designs and promoting eco-friendly practices among staff, we can make a positive difference for the environment and pave the way for a greener future for everyone.

Walker Malagoni is an interior design practice established in 2010 by interior designers Lucy Walker and Charlotte Malagoni. For more information, visit walkermalagoni.com.

Give your clinic a sustainable makeover

Renovating dental clinics sustainably is a crucial step towards creating a healthier environment for both patients and practitioners, says **Ben Lee**

In the ever-evolving world of healthcare, sustainability is becoming increasingly important. Dental clinics, as integral components of the healthcare system, are not exempt from this shift towards eco-conscious practices. Renovating dental clinics sustainably is a crucial step towards creating a healthier environment for both patients and practitioners.

Dentists and clinicians naturally want their clinics to look millimetre perfect to reflect their brand values, from the brickwork and lighting details right down to the fabric of the waiting room chairs. But should practice owners start promoting the wellbeing of the planet as well as oral health?

We're now seeing practice leaders shift their approach to sustainably-led clinics that reflect their wellness ethos. The construction industry accounts for 39% of global carbon emissions, so we've got a lot of ground to cover. Whether refurbishing or building a new clinic, your business will play a key role in that.

A FORCE FOR GOOD

Sustainability refers to the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves balancing economic, social and environmental considerations to create a harmonious and lasting impact on the planet.



Ben Lee

Ben is a director at the award-winning Vita Architecture and has years of experience practising within the dental industry as well as high-end residential property developments. He is currently working on numerous dental practice designs across the south-east and works as a tutor for digital fabrication at the Architectural Association, London.

In the context of a clinic refurbishment project, sustainability involves implementing practices and making decisions that promote social responsibility, minimise the environmental impact and ensure economic viability throughout the project's lifecycle. Here's how these three points can help drive and reinforce your practice's position as a force for good.

PROMOTE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In all our projects at Vita Architecture, we start off by asking who you are as

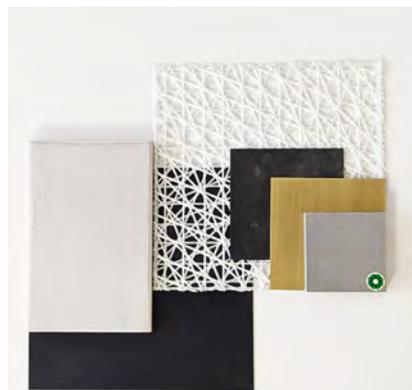
a brand, dentist and individual. It's a question that's difficult to answer and has been met with a stoney silence in many an instance! What we hope to eke out of you are your core values as a human being: what's important to you? What's your unique selling point? We'll take this and embed it into your building design.

Adopting a sustainable approach across all aspects of your clinic can tell a compelling story of how you, your team and your practice collaboratively contribute to a healthier planet, taking your practice message beyond 'I want to offer great dentistry'. Strengthen ethical practices as an integral aspect of your practice's social responsibility.

MINIMISE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Minimising environmental impact during a refurbishment project involves incorporating sustainable practices and making mindful choices throughout the project's lifecycle. Here are some strategies to reduce the environmental footprint of your refurbishment:

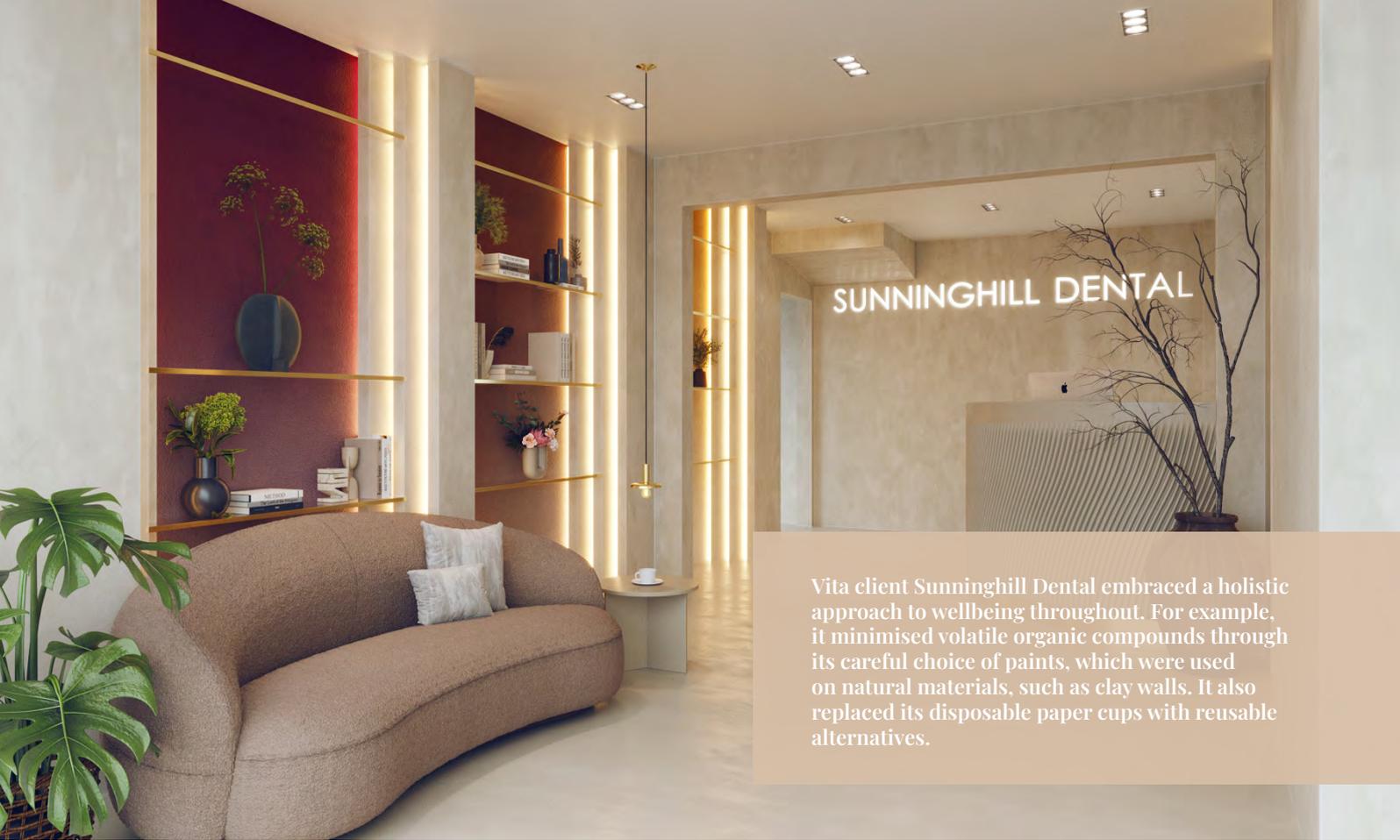
1. Energy efficiency. When it comes to ramping up the energy efficiency of your existing property, we normally take the 'fabric first' approach. We're talking about giving your place a cosy upgrade by bringing the insulation and windows up to today's building standards. Now, I get it – insulation and windows might not make you the life of the party in conversation. But let us shift the focus to the key role it plays creating a well-insulated space, stealthily preparing it for a future of comfort and cost-effectiveness for you, your staff and your patients. And it's not just about the insulation.



Sustainable material palette

Our sampleboard for our clinic in Majorca included:

- Clay walls, which are recyclable, compostable and repairable while helping to regulate humidity and temperature
- Recycled metal panelling
- Natural stone tiling
- Architectural textile meshes to create privacy screens.



Vita client Sunninghill Dental embraced a holistic approach to wellbeing throughout. For example, it minimised volatile organic compounds through its careful choice of paints, which were used on natural materials, such as clay walls. It also replaced its disposable paper cups with reusable alternatives.

Consider bathing your clinic in the glow of energy-efficient lighting, using water-efficient fixtures, having a top-notch heating, ventilation and air conditioning system doing its thing and throwing in some renewable energy technologies.

With energy costs continuing to rise, it is time to make these savvy and efficient moves. Consider it a smart investment, not just for the eco high fives it gets but also for the victory dance your wallet does over those energy bills

2. Material selection. Advise your designer to give preference to sustainable and recycled construction materials, as there is currently a wide array available. While the healthcare sector adheres to stringent specifications for CQC compliance, there's room for innovation. In several projects, we are exploring the incorporation of sustainable materials like bamboo, eucalyptus and even countertops crafted from recycled plastics. It is worth mentioning that while these materials might not be applicable across the entire clinic, they certainly find their niche in clinic design! While the conventional practice of utilising vinyl across clinics is rooted in purpose, at Vita, we are actively working to break down the

distinctions between healthcare design and hospitality. This involves a continuous effort to explore and experiment with new materials that can undergo thorough testing for CQC compliance

3. Waste reduction. Typically, wastage rates for materials due to damage and over ordering is somewhere around the 15% mark. At Vita, we request that our surveys are all modelled in 3D and are taken from laser measurements, which result in more accurate drafting and therefore more confidence in ordering accuracy and the production of less wastage. It should be an easy win and a significant cost saving for you and the contractor. Prefabricated pieces that are built off site are also a great way to minimise wastage, as the design will be millimetre perfect with little to no wastages occurring in the factory

4. Reuse, not renew. Of course, everyone typically wants to have a shiny new clinic with all the bells and whistles, but in every project and building, there's a story and history. Why not celebrate these historical facets within your building and leverage them to craft a distinctive identity? In numerous instances, we've proposed preserving certain existing features in our

projects. It's worthwhile to explore your surroundings before committing to a total overhaul. Opting for reuse not only lowers your overall construction costs and carbon footprint but, when executed thoughtfully, can genuinely contribute to forging a distinct practice identity. But do beware – work carefully with your design team and the CQC to ensure these historical features don't compromise your CQC certification

5. Local sourcing. Start by exploring offerings from local suppliers. This not only infuses a sense of community into your identity but also proves highly sustainable by minimising transportation expenses. It's a straightforward yet impactful method of incorporating sustainable practices into your dental clinic.

The construction industry is changing. It's crucial that we adopt more sustainable construction methods right from the start of all projects. In the long run, this not only ingrains an ethical dimension into your brand but, if executed effectively, should also reduce your overall expenditure while promoting the wellbeing of our planet.

For more information, visit www.vitaarchitecture.com or follow Vita @dental_architect.

Could you save money on childcare?

Myrtle Lloyd outlines the benefits of tax-free childcare to self-employed parents in dentistry

The new financial year is often an opportunity to get organised for the year ahead. For self-employed parents juggling the demands of running a business with caring for their family, it could also be a good time to review the family planner and take a fresh look at the household budget to ensure they're getting all the support they're entitled to.

We asked the experts at HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to outline the financial help available for our readers so they can access the childcare they need while keeping an eye on their bottom line.

Q What help is available for self-employed parents?

A There are a number of schemes available that could be worth thousands of pounds a year, including tax-free childcare, free childcare hours, universal credit, tax credits and child benefit.

Q What is tax-free childcare?

A Tax-free childcare is a government-funded top-up scheme for working parents, including the self-employed. It can save parents up to £2,000 a year per child – or £4,000 if their child is disabled – to put towards the cost of childcare. For every £8 paid into a tax-free childcare account, the government tops it up with another £2.



Myrtle Lloyd

Myrtle is director general for customer services at HMRC. She has overall responsibility for delivering consistency in HMRC's customer services and for providing customers with the joined-up support they expect, across all channels and in ways that best suit them.

Q Who is it for specifically?

A Working families, including self-employed parents. Latest statistics show more than 63,000 families, with at least one self-employed parent, use it to help pay for their childcare. Families should check out the full eligibility on gov.uk, but in summary it's for working parents or guardians, including those who are self-employed, who:

- Have a child or children aged up to 11. They stop being eligible on 1 September after their 11th birthday. If their child has a disability, they can receive support until 1 September after their 16th birthday
- Earn, or expect to earn, at least the national minimum wage or living wage for 16 hours a week, on average
- Each earn up to £100,000 per annum
- Do not receive tax credits, universal credit or childcare vouchers.

Q What can I use it for?

A Tax-free childcare can be used flexibly to pay for any approved childcare that suits your family's needs. You can use it to pay for childminders, nurseries and nannies,

before and after school clubs, and holiday or activity clubs. If you find a provider you want to use and they're not signed up, encourage them to visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/providers for information on how to sign up and what it means for them.

Q How do parents open an account?

A It's simple to open an account via gov.uk and only takes about 20 minutes. Accounts can be opened at any time of the year and can be used straight away, money can be deposited at any time and used when needed. Any unused money can be simply withdrawn at any time. Account holders will be reminded every three months to confirm their details are up to date to continue receiving the government top-up.

Q I have more than one child in different childcare settings – can I use it for both?

A Yes! If families have more than one eligible child, they will need to register a tax-free childcare account for each child. The government top-up is then applied to deposits made for



each child, not household. For more information about tax-free childcare and how to register, visit gov.uk.

Q Can tax-free childcare be used with the free hours offer?

A Yes! If you meet the eligibility criteria, you can receive both free childcare hours and tax-free childcare. In England, eligible working parents of two-year-olds have been able to access 15 hours of free childcare per week since 1 April. This is the first step in the rollout of the largest investment in childcare in England's history.

The offer will expand to 15 hours of free childcare for working parents from nine months old up to when their child starts school by September this year, and 30 hours by September 2025.

This is set to save parents using the maximum allowance up to £6,900 per year.

Q Can I use tax-free childcare with child benefit?

A Yes! Child benefit is worth £25.60 per week for the oldest or only child and £16.95 per week for each

additional child. It can be claimed by parents or guardians once you have registered your child's birth and can be claimed up to the age of 16 or 20 if the child stays in approved education or training.

In addition to financial support for your family, child benefit ensures parents qualify for national insurance credits, which could help protect their state pension. It also helps children to automatically receive a national insurance number when they are 16.

You can now claim child benefit online and manage your account via the HMRC app.

To check eligibility and make a claim, go to gov.uk.

Q Can I use tax-free childcare while claiming tax credits or universal credit?

A No, but tax credits offer alternative childcare support that could also be worth thousands.

If you already claim tax credits, you'll receive a letter from HMRC by 19 June. There are two types of letters to look out for: if your renewal pack has a

red stripe across the page then you will need to check the information, renew and report any changes by 31 July, otherwise you risk your payments being stopped. If your renewal pack has a black stripe across the page, you need to check the information is correct, and only contact HMRC if you have any changes to report.

Tax credits are being replaced by universal credit by April 2025. Many customers who move from tax credits to universal credit could be financially better off and can use an independent benefits calculator to check. If customers choose to apply sooner, it is important to get independent advice beforehand, as they will not be able to go back to tax credits or any other benefits that universal credit replaces.

You cannot claim tax-free childcare and universal credit at the same time.

Q How do I know which offer is best for me?

A To find the right childcare offer for your family, visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

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Marketing INNOVATION in dentistry

Alan Clarke takes us on his marketing journey, from AI to charity initiatives

The past three years at my clinic, Paste Dental, have taught me that people and relationships are the life-giving force of our industry.

We live in community.

There is an old proverb: 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.' This is a mantra that I have stuck by. My goal, as I promote and push my clinic forward with technology and brand awareness, is to get creative but to keep the key focus: running a business built on a foundation of people, relationships and trust, where a personal referral is the best recommendation.

I want to focus on the way we have built our clinic using technology and taking a very different marketing approach. Hopefully, this will help you, as an associate or a clinic owner, look to your own career future and how you wish to craft the patient list and working day that gives you the most joy, financial reward and, most importantly, job satisfaction.

MEDIA PUBLISHING

I have made some bold choices and often taken decisions against the grain of common thought.

These paid off, and on our second anniversary – to the day – Paste Dental was featured in the *New York Post*! For me, this was a real achievement from a patient and team perspective but also because our concept and brand had received recognition on a global platform.



Alan Clarke

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

I have since written for *The Independent*, *HELLO!*, *Woman and Home*, *Huffington Post* and many other media outlets, with the focus on sharing sound knowledge to consumers on their dental health and teaching dentists how to look at things differently and to put themselves back into the story of their business. For me, this is brand alignment!

JOIN THE AI REVOLUTION

Dentistry in the US has been transformed by artificial intelligence (AI), and this is now an accepted baseline practice. So, be an early adopter and share this vision with your patients. For Paste Dental, being one of the first in the UK to champion AI diagnosis from Pearl AI Second Opinion has led the new Gen Z generation to see that we really care. An audience reached, a message shared, new patients converted. This is an incredible marketing resource for video, patient testimonials and co-diagnosis, one that we find younger patients are now requesting.

AI lets you enhance your dental diagnostic capabilities through flagging and measuring caries on radiographs. It highlights bone level reduction, periapical radiolucencies and the presence of subgingival calculus. This is an utter game changer to your clinical practice!

Pearl AI lets a new generation of patients see that we have their backs. We give them objective data and provide healthcare on their terms.

Gone is the paternalistic model of service delivery where we tell the patient what to do. Instead, we can give the patient all the data, free from

our opinion, and it's up to them what they choose to do with it. Hopefully with the trust we have built and the relationship with our clinic, the patient allows us to be a guiding partner, helping them map their own wellness journey to optimal health.

Through this approach, we have seen case acceptance soar, our dentists' stress and fear of breaking bad news has dissipated, and a more relaxed working style and environment has been born. This revolution is here to stay at Paste Dental, and I am so proud to be at the forefront of this in the UK.

Top tips

1. Use the media to publicise your work
2. Embrace artificial intelligence to help patients choose their own treatment options
3. Giving back through charity work can inspire your team and gain you further publicity, as well as doing something beneficial to others
4. Providing an excellent service to your current clients helps you to gain new patients via word of mouth
5. Know your purpose – this is your marketing message.

GIVING BACK

At Paste, we have worked with influencers, local press and many media sources, running ad campaigns and trying to engage our social media followers about cosmetic dentistry, our brand and how we are doing dentistry differently. We have gained skills in this digital field and thus have skills and wisdom to share.

Paste Cares, our non-profit social initiative, was set up early into our business as a way of engaging with our local community. We have an urban city centre location and are acutely aware of the diversity of life experience, circumstances and needs of those who walk past or enter our building each day.

We chose to partner with an organisation that is helping refugees and ethnic minorities in the south Belfast area, with our manager devoting a day pro-bono to the team there, which demonstrates the strength of her own commitment to the work. Rather than solely providing financial aid, we shared our skill set of branding, growing an online presence and marketing. We did this to help

the organisation secure new funding pathways and more long-term financial security.

Providing marketing for others, sharing our skills and helping to lift local non-profits provides plentiful rewards for us. In addition, the people we meet and the word of mouth about our endeavours all enrich our team and inspire us to keep going!

THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK

Search engine optimisation (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC) ads and algorithms are all useful tools to promote your website or get your brand to new audiences, but to really gain the type of patient you are looking for, look to your best patients right now. Chances are, you have a connection with them for a reason, shared interests and an abundance of mutual respect.

They are proud to call you their person and feel privileged to have you in their 'little black book' of contacts. Remember, that little black book is also filled with lots more patients just like them who you will vibe with and who will love you too. They are in that book for a reason. The challenge for

you is to translate them into new clients. Think about this concept before you spend a fortune solely on blanket, poorly targeted ads and instead create your own patient list.

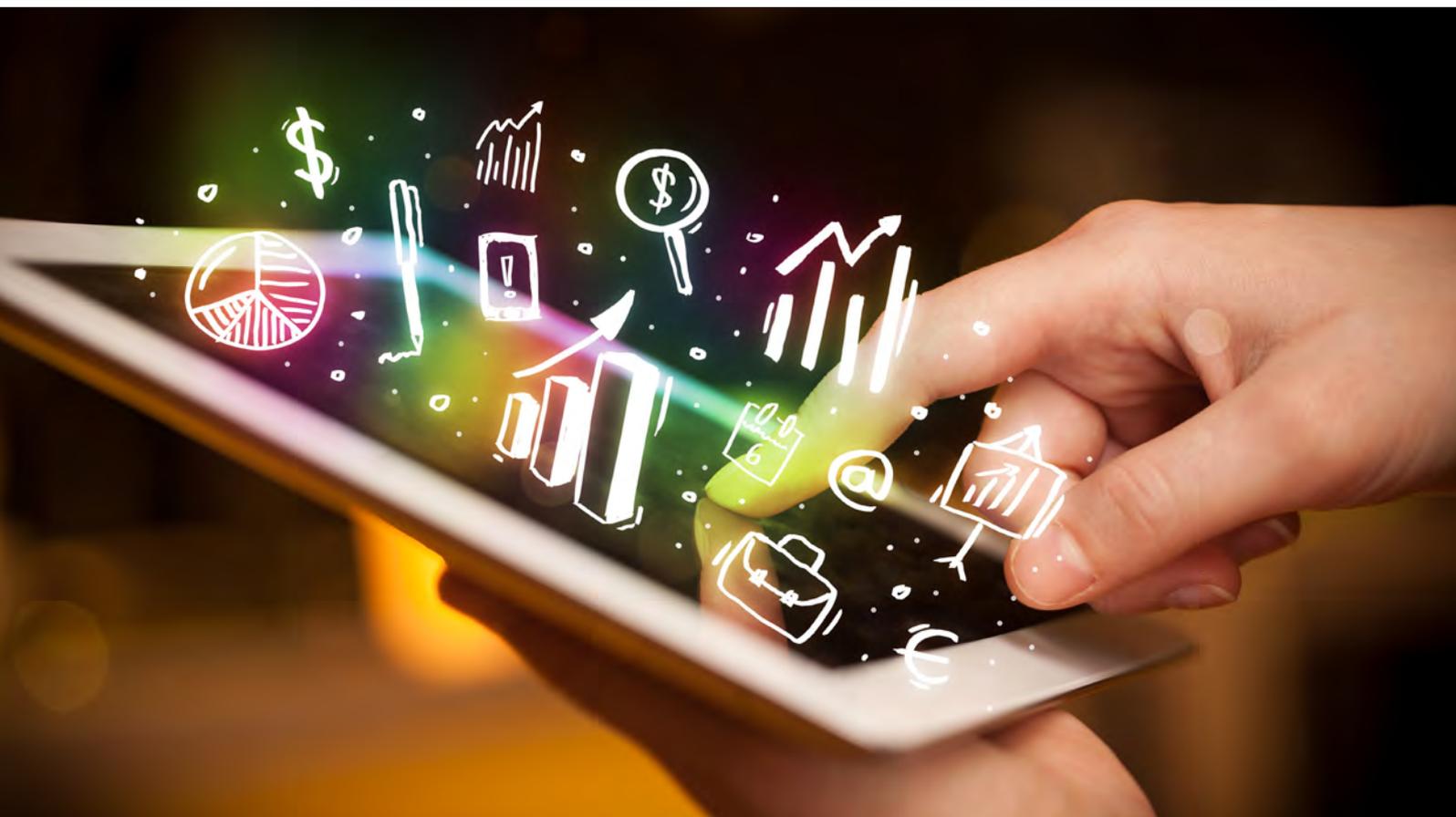
Marketing needs to be bespoke, just like your patient offering should be. Drill into your core purpose, deliver an exceptional experience and solve the problems of your clients in new and creative ways.

At the same time, you will boost your income, generate life-long patients and cement your market position well past 2024.

UNDERSTAND YOUR 'WHY'

When it comes to marketing, whatever channels you use, the most important thing is to first understand your purpose, your 'why'. Why do you choose to be a dentist/dental care professional? Why do you choose to help people?

These are the things that you are truly passionate about. Then simply, you want to communicate that message to your team, your patients and the wider community – because your 'why' is your story, and that is your marketing message!



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Or visit the careers page on our website: colosseumdental.co.uk/careers

Ten ways to build genuine *connections* *online*

Rachel Dilley explains how a tailored and cohesive content strategy can help elevate your social media presence

In today's digital age, harnessing the power of social media is crucial for dental practices to thrive and grow. Rachel Dilley is the founder and chief executive officer of Liberty Dental Group, which opened its first practice, Tower Hill Dental Practice, in Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire, last year. In this article, she shares her expertise and experiences of leveraging social media to elevate her practice's presence and effectively engage with patients.

1 AUTHENTICITY IS KEY

Sharing genuine thoughts, aspirations and achievements is essential. During the pandemic, I witnessed a surge in online presence across all industries, and those who succeed are authentic in their profiles and engagement. By remaining mindful of the need for authenticity and sharing personal stories, we can connect with our audience on a deeper level. My online network doubled in that first month of COVID-19, especially on LinkedIn, my preferred platform. I now use it daily to engage with existing and new business colleagues. My content is designed to resonate, and I hope they find my thoughts and stories helpful and inspiring.



Rachel Dilley

Rachel is the founder and chief executive officer of Liberty Dental Group, which opened its first practice, Tower Hill Dental Practice in West Yorkshire, last year. She has 30-plus years of experience in the dental sector as a registered dental nurse, manager and now provider.

2 TAILOR CONTENT FOR DIFFERENT PLATFORMS

Each social media platform serves a different purpose, and understanding the different audiences allows us to tailor content effectively.

LinkedIn is an ideal platform for business-focused content. My account has given me a great way to develop my profile. I want to show that although we are professional, we are also human. I like to share who I am and what my aspirations are, help people through tough times by sharing my experiences and reach new partners who have been able to support our business.

My Facebook page, on the other hand, engages with the local community. Although mainly for family and friends, I also support patient growth by sharing the practice's social media posts.

I've lived in Halifax for much of my life and have an extensive network of friends and colleagues in the area, all of whom support and share my posts. This helps the organic reach of Tower Hill Dental Practice's Facebook and Instagram accounts and circulating content to anyone looking for a dentist in the area. Facebook has been successful in reaching that local community, as everyone seems to be on there. Our weekly posts are very successful in engaging prospective new patients well.

Our Instagram platform is growing. From what we're seeing, it's targeting

new patients mainly looking for cosmetic treatments.

I like to take time out each month to view all our posts and see how the practice has developed alongside our team's success.

Our Google business account works exceptionally well alongside our website. We follow our Google analytics closely, as they offer insight into what pages of our website are most viewed and what key phrases people are searching for.

3 ENSURE COHESION AND VARIETY – AND DON'T FORGET THAT RICH CONTENT!

A cohesive social media strategy is essential. Liberty Dental Group maintains a robust online presence, and there has never been one single post that has offered success. It's more about the cluster of social media activity that is designed to provide clear insight into our treatments, our team, how personable they are, our work in the community and team values. Consistent and valuable content – blogs, videos, team member profiles, etc – helps build a practice's brand and reputation.

Quite early on after opening, we shared a short film of our practice, introducing the new internal branding, the treatments offered and the team.

It had traction from the beginning and continues circulating on our social media platforms, even eight months later!

4 HAVE A TRUSTED PARTNER

Although I strongly influence the content released online through feedback during our group's weekly marketing meetings, my director of business development – marketing and partnerships, Gavin Rees, decides what content makes the grade and how it should be best presented.

Content is scheduled and manually released based on analytical data and our thoughts on the practice's needs. Gavin and I have worked together in dentistry for more than seven years. We have a great working relationship and have developed trust in each other's skill sets. Collectively, we know how best to support each other, create a business and develop a supportive team around us.

Our combined knowledge and expertise are undeniably the reason for Tower Hill Dental Practice's success.

5 ANALYSE METRICS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS

By utilising analytics from various platforms, we can track the success of our social media efforts. These insights guide Liberty Dental's marketing strategy, ensuring it remains aligned with its goals and objectives.

Each platform provides analytical data gathered monthly and presented during business development meetings. The data is cross-checked against the number of new enquiries,

new patients and any other helpful information needed to develop our marketing strategy.

6 ADAPT TO INDUSTRY TRENDS

The dental industry needs to step up its game regarding marketing.

Our patients are our clientele, and a dental practice needs a marketing plan that not only pinpoints its target demographic but also educates patients on their dental health and what we can do to help them. However, the landscape of dental social media marketing is ever-shifting, so it is also critical we adapt our strategies to meet these changes as well as our consumer expectations.

Staying proactive and investing in a dedicated marketing team is crucial.

7 REFLECT YOUR BRAND AND ITS VALUES

Every social media post reflects our values and brand identity. Through creative content and educational resources, we ensure that Liberty Dental Group remains an integral part of the community while prioritising oral health education. We write blogs that help identify needs and educate our patients and the wider community.

Once I knew I wanted to set up a dental group, I immediately appointed a marketing director. Most dental practices will rely on external marketing and social media

consultants or agencies to create and schedule content for their online platforms. Still, we find more value in employing our own creative marketing team, led by Liberty Dental Group's director of business development, to share our vision.

8 SPARE FOR YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Despite my busy schedule, I dedicate time to managing my social media presence and engaging with the online community. I strive to maintain a strong connection with peers and potential partners by prioritising this activity. I set aside 90 minutes weekly for this, as engaging with the online dental and business community is essential.

I always reply to direct messages from business owners or partners – some who want advice and guidance and others who wish to connect.

9 CONSIDER THESE TIPS

Focus on creating relevant, personable and creative content. By understanding your audience and adapting strategies accordingly, you can effectively leverage social media for business growth.

Unlocking social media success requires a strategic approach, authenticity and a commitment to engaging with the community. Consider your audience on each platform and adapt your content to meet your audience's expectations.

Since opening our Sowerby Bridge practice in May 2023, we have exceeded our expected number of new patients by 50%. In November, our social media platforms successfully brought more than 100 new patients to register with Tower Hill.

We made a difficult decision to place a hold on new patients registering throughout December and January to ensure we could offer excellent service to existing patients.

10 AND FINALLY...

To grow your dentistry business, work alongside experienced marketing experts with a history of successfully developing dental businesses or practices.

Liberty Dental Group has consultants who can support dentists, dental practices and businesses. Our team is available for an initial discussion.





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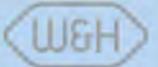
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Think beyond social media

Ross Idzhar shares tips on how to unlock the power of great content to use further than Instagram and Tiktok

Engaging content is the cornerstone of effective dental marketing. But more importantly, anything crafted by a marketing team on behalf of your dental practice should also be highly versatile. To achieve greater reach, it must be designed to serve various purposes beyond the most popular social media platforms.

MAXIMISING ONLINE REACH

The digital realm offers a plethora of avenues for connecting with potential patients. From your practice website to email marketing campaigns and paid advertising, each channel serves a distinct purpose in fostering engagement and driving conversions.

Content optimised for these diverse platforms is paramount. For instance, while Tiktok thrives on bite-sized, behind-the-scenes content, your website may demand more comprehensive testimonials and case studies to captivate visitors and instil trust.

Beyond cyberspace, offline collateral such as brochures, flyers and reception/in-chair screens also present invaluable opportunities to showcase expertise.

Therefore, repurposing existing content, such as meet the team or treatment journey videos, can enrich the patient experience. Picture this: a patient sits in the chair post-implant placement, greeted by an informative video about postoperative care instructions. It's not just a moment of patient education; it's

a testament to your commitment to comprehensive care.

Testimonial videos from past clients can be shown in the chair while patients wait and instructional videos can also be shown. All might be content created initially for digital platforms.

EMPOWERING PATIENTS

Education lies at the heart of patient empowerment. By commissioning content that educates and informs, dentists can position themselves as trusted allies in their patients' oral health journey. Whether it's that postoperative implant care video or a compilation of flossing tips, educational content is a beacon of knowledge across various touchpoints – from postoperative email follow-ups to social media shares and website resources.

There are several ways this type of content can improve a dental practice's marketing. For instance, it:

- Builds trust: this type of content can showcase the practice's knowledge and areas of expertise. For example, content about maintaining Invisalign aligners is crucial for achieving the best results and keeping patients' oral health in check
- Enhances engagement: great content educates patients and empowers them to take control of their oral health by providing valuable information on preventive care, treatment options and lifestyle habits. This increased understanding leads to greater engagement with the dental practice, as patients are more likely to schedule regular check-ups, follow recommended hygiene routines and seek timely treatment when needed
- Demonstrates authority: consistent delivery of high-quality content can

establish the practice as an authority in oral health, attracting patients seeking knowledgeable care

- Addresses concerns: content addresses common patient concerns, alleviates anxieties and builds confidence in the practice's services. Blogs on topics such as 'Demystifying the implant process' and 'Five things you didn't know about composite bonding' all help to create a sense of transparency and trust between the dental practice and its patients. By breaking down the implant process or explaining the benefits of composite bonding in easy-to-understand language, patients can approach their dental appointments with greater confidence and peace of mind
- Improves SEO and referrals: by consistently producing high-quality, informative and engaging content across all media channels, dental practices can improve their SEO performance, attract more organic traffic and generate valuable referrals, ultimately leading to increased visibility, credibility and patient acquisition. Engaging content establishes your practice as an authority in the field, fostering trust among users and encouraging social media amplification, further expanding your reach and driving referral traffic.

ALIGNING CONTENT WITH YOUR BRAND MESSAGING

Consistency is vital to amplifying brand messaging and achieving marketing goals. Whether spearheading an Invisalign campaign or promoting general dental services, tailoring content to align with specific brand messaging



Ross Idzhar

Ross co-founded DNTL, a creative partner for dental professionals. It has almost a decade of experience in the dental industry, providing video, photo, brand and social media services, ultimately helping dental professionals grow their revenue. For more details, visit www.dntl.co.uk.

MARKETING

is non-negotiable. Every element, from imagery to language and influencer partnerships, should seamlessly reinforce your practice's identity and value proposition.

As a marketing team, we define the brand's values, messaging and desired perception as early as possible. With this clarity, we shape the tone, pace and style accordingly. Dentists typically aim for professionalism with a touch of personality conveyed in a subtle yet confident manner.

It is important that your marketing team is adept at striking this balance, delivering polished content with an intact personality.

NAVIGATING CONTENT CREATION

Streamlining content creation necessitates leveraging cutting-edge tools and technologies. There are several useful tools to help, so we'll try to distil it down a little.

With the advent of AI software, it's becoming increasingly viable for practices to create content in-house. Platforms like Canva empower marketers to design eye-catching visuals effortlessly, while smartphones are versatile content-creation hubs. Investing in online courses can equip teams with the skills to navigate the evolving digital landscape with finesse.

It is worth dividing the content creation process into the following areas:

- **Planning:** create a content calendar. Organise content ideas and schedule posts with tools like Trello, Asana or Google Spreadsheet. Consider keyword research and utilise tools like Semrush or Google Keyword Planner to identify keywords for SEO
- **Capture:** with some know-how, a mobile phone is an excellent option for practice content capture. Canva can help create visually appealing graphics and designs with its easy-to-use platform. Additionally, tools like Jarvis by Conversion.ai utilise AI to generate content ideas, headlines, blog posts and more based on provided prompts. Also, Grammarly offers AI-powered writing assistance to improve grammar, punctuation and readability
- **Editing:** Adobe Creative Cloud's Premiere Pro is ideal for video editing, and Photoshop is great for image editing, offering comprehensive editing capabilities. Mac users can



utilise iMovie for basic video editing needs, and the Capcut app also works well for video editing

- **Scheduling and posting:** similar to Buffer, Hootsuite allows for scheduling and managing social media content. Later, it is handy for Instagram scheduling, offering visual planning and analytics tools
- **Analytics:** track website traffic, user behaviour and content performance with Google Analytics, or consider Sprout Social, a comprehensive social media management tool that includes analytics features for tracking performance across platforms.

DRIVING COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

Successful collaborations between marketing agencies and practice owners hinge on clear communication and shared vision. Regular dialogue facilitates the exchange of insights and ensures that content resonates with the practice's target audience.

TAILOR CONTENT STRATEGIES

Developing a content strategy tailored to your dental business entails a holistic approach encompassing online and offline channels. By conducting a comprehensive audit of existing assets, identifying target audience personas and setting measurable objectives, you can chart a course that maximises visibility and engagement across all touchpoints. Consider these key things:

- **Inventory and categorisation:** compile and categorise all existing content

assets by format, topic and platform

- **Performance analysis:** evaluate content performance using analytics tools to identify top-performing pieces and understand audience engagement
- **Content quality:** review content quality and relevance, updating or removing outdated or inaccurate content
- **Audience segmentation:** segment the target audience based on demographics and interests, analysing which types of content resonate most with each segment
- **Gap analysis and optimisation:** identify content gaps, opportunities and keywords relevant to the audience, optimising existing content and planning future content to fill these gaps. We recently saw a great use case for Adveronix. It allowed the user to download all of the practice's Tiktok videos, output them as a PDF and upload the data to Chat GPT. They could then use Chat GPT to analyse the data, asking it to recommend the best type of content, content gaps, best times of day, performance, etc. The power of Chat GPT could provide beneficial insights and suggestions to build on.

Your content's educational value makes it a valuable patient resource. To inform your audience further, you can use it on social media and in-practice materials. Any content should be a valuable asset that can be utilised in various ways to help achieve your marketing and business goals.

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Letitia Mcelumary, Treatment Coordinator,
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- *Digital design of a gingival guide in the Zirkonzahn.Modifier software for the gingivectomy*
- *Minimally invasive preparation of the natural teeth*
- *Production of the final, minimally reduced single crowns in Prettau® 3 Dispersive® zirconia; infiltration with Colour Liquids Prettau® Aquarell Boost®, characterisation with ICE Stains 3D by Enrico Steger and minimal veneering with Fresco Ceramics*
- *Cementation of the zirconia crowns in the patient's mouth*



Personal consistency brings success with a smile

Simon Chard explains how bringing consistency into your own life can reap great rewards for yourself and your business



Last month was the first part of my two-part consistency series, which was on professional consistency, how you build a brand and everything that's involved in that. This month we're talking about personal consistency. This is consistency outside of the actual functionality of your brand, but it is vital to building its foundations. This all comes out of a solid routine. You've got to really systemise and have discipline around it. If you do that, you can have incredible outcomes off the back of it. I've broken it up into five key pillars, spelt out by the acronym SMILE.

HOW TO SMILE

- S stands for sleep: when it comes to showing up for your team and showing up for your customers, without good sleep you can't make good decisions, and without good decisions you can't build a good brand. I wake up at around 5am, but I don't do that to the deficit of my sleep. I always make sure I get around seven to eight hours a night and have



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.

consistency around sleep and waking times. The evidence is very strong that sleep is probably the central pillar to everything

- M stands for mind: you can look at this as either mindfulness or meditation. I make sure I implement at least one of those things during my day. That can be things like breathwork as well. There is lots of evidence that creating space in our busy daily lives supports improvements in mental health and cognitive ability. I put that in my diary, which makes me do it
- I stands for intake or input: I've tried to bring together everything you're taking into your body as one category. Food can be a very divisive topic, but I try to simplify that into wholefoods of the highest quality possible, as seasonable as possible and as local as possible, with no processed foods. By hydrating and eating properly, you'll find that the fuel you are putting in your body really drives your ability to get the most output out of your brand
- L stands for love: love or relationships have been proven time and time again to drive our personal satisfaction in life. Having good relationships can hugely increase your longevity as well. Whether those relationships are romantic, friendships or family, they're all important. You need to concentrate on them and they will have a positive impact on your business as well, which is a secondary benefit.

- E stands for exercise: I exercise every day, and this has probably been the biggest positive change that I've made in my life. It takes a variety of different forms, from strength training to running to Brazilian jiu-jitsu. It has been a crucial anchor in my life when the world of business and brands can sometimes all crash together at the same time.

Don't forget to smile!

Remember the acronym SMILE to enhance your personal consistency and therefore your brand:

- S**leep
- M**ind
- I**nput
- L**ove
- E**xercise

Each of those five components require consistency, and that's the key message here. Don't rely on motivation, rely on your discipline. Say to yourself, this is what I'm going to do based on the evidence that it is going to be good for me. Don't overcomplicate it, and I think you'll find it has a huge positive benefit on the brands that you build.

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Cyber security: on high alert

Kabir Ahmed outlines the cyber security concerns that every dental practice should plan for

Dental practices are often busy places – managing and caring for the needs of patients is paramount. However, keeping pace with the latest in practice systems and technologies can be challenging and often takes lower priority.

With the rise of more sophisticated cyber attacks and the unknown implications of AI on the industry, failure to keep up when it comes to technology and cyber security exposes a significant risk. At best, a dental practice is lucky and doesn't face any threats, but in the worst case, it could be exposed to serious data breaches, long-lasting reputational damage and a loss of patients.

SYSTEMS AND SOFTWARE

As a minimum, each dental practice typically has a website, a patient contact form, telephone lines and an appointment book.

That's just the public-facing side – behind the scenes, there is software. Dental practices rely heavily on software systems to store sensitive patient information, manage staff rotas and payroll and help with management finances, as well as other tools to keep track of the day-to-day running of the practice and its costs. The dependence on the software is great – it plays an essential role in running the practice and holds hundreds of thousands of pieces of data, of which almost every aspect is maintained online, leaving dental practices potentially exposed and vulnerable to fraud and cyber crime.



Kabir Ahmed

Kabir is commercial manager for Wesleyan Financial Services.

A TWO-FOLD THREAT

Cyber criminals aren't ethical in their targeting, and attacking dental practices can be highly lucrative. For practices, this threat usually falls into one of two categories.

The first one relates to patients. Breaking into patient records and accessing information, particularly sensitive data, can be hugely damaging for the practice and its reputation, as well as disruptive to business operation, as each patient should be notified of the breach. Sadly, however, it is profitable for a cyber criminal.

The second threat relates to the practice and its staff. There is the chance that the technology used to support the running of the practice, such as appointment booking systems or HR software for confidential staff information, could also be compromised. Not only does this pose a threat to the day-to-day operation of the business, but it can also cause considerable anguish to the colleagues that may fall victims of these crimes.

THREE STEPS TO BOOST SECURITY

When it comes to enhancing security, the first step is looking at cyber defence. Practice managers and owners should make colleagues aware of the potential threats and challenges.

This could be as simple as not digitally recording patient information outside of official systems or making sure everyone is adhering to best practices around updating passwords and alerted to suspicious email traffic.

Depending on the size and layout of the practice, it can also be worth factoring in physical security too, such as keycards.

Assigning responsibility to someone

who will do regular security checks and share reminders with the team can be useful.

The second step is around managing your risk. Monitoring and logging incidents and near-misses may help to identify patterns or expose wider concerns that warrant a closer look.

Each breach should be properly investigated to avoid it happening again. Defending what you've got, and having a robust plan in place to deal with it should a breach occur, is essential. These plans should include clear actions to keep the practice running smoothly, plans to manage patients and an external and internal communications plan.

The third step is around understanding what support you have in place and what extra backup you might need.

An NHS contract may provide some sort of buffer in terms of protection, but for private practices it is really the responsibility of the owners and managers to ensure that adequate protection is in place. Take the time to understand what your obligations are in protecting the data you use, and if you are exposed, speak to an insurance expert. There are also cyber security insurances available that can help provide another layer of support and advice should an attack happen.

Taking stock of vulnerabilities and putting cyber security back at the top of the agenda is critical for all dental practices. Those who need extra support should speak to an expert who can help them protect their patients and practice.

For support and guidance on cyber security for your practice or to obtain a quote, email Wesleyan at gicommercialdept@wesleyan.co.uk.



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Empower your team for success

Mark Topley discusses the role of autonomy in workplace satisfaction

Picture your dental practice on a bustling Monday morning: the phones are ringing, and patients are streaming in.

As a dental practice leader, delegating tasks can seem like a minefield. Do you micromanage every detail, or do you step back entirely?

Both of these extremes – micromanaging and abdicating responsibility – can frustrate and hold your team back, stifling motivation and preventing your practice from reaching its full potential. Finding a balanced approach is crucial for maximising both workplace satisfaction and productivity.

THE FUTILITY OF DELEGATION WITHOUT EMPOWERMENT

Simply assigning tasks isn't enough to unlock your team's full potential. According to Daniel Pink, true motivation at work depends on three key elements:

1. **Autonomy:** allows team members to take initiative and make decisions
2. **Mastery:** encourages skill development
3. **Purpose:** connects team members' efforts to larger goals.

This framework not only boosts job satisfaction but also cultivates a proactive and engaged workplace culture.

For example, consider a dental clinic that empowers its dental nurses by applying Pink's principles. Autonomy is granted through control over how tasks are completed, with clear success criteria and adherence to standards and compliance protocols.

Mastery is pursued through continuous training and alignment with personal career goals. Purpose is reinforced by understanding the clinic's mission and values, keeping team members connected with why their work matters.

EMPOWERING THROUGH STRATEGIC DELEGATION

Craig Groeschel's insight, 'You can have control or growth, but you can't have both', is pivotal when discussing empowerment.

To grow a thriving dental practice, leaders must enable their team to make decisions within defined boundaries, transitioning from direct management to empowerment.

Incorporating Ken Blanchard's model of situational leadership is vital, as it emphasises adapting leadership style to the team member's development level. This model includes:

- **Directing:** new or inexperienced dental nurses need clear instructions and close supervision
- **Coaching:** dental nurses gaining skills require support but should be involved in decision-making to build confidence
- **Supporting:** experienced but less committed dental nurses are given autonomy while still receiving guidance
- **Delegating:** fully competent and committed dental nurses manage tasks independently, with minimal oversight.

This approach ensures effective delegation that enhances both individual and team performance, aligning with the clinic's goals to foster a proactive and empowered culture.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DELEGATION

Effective leadership is built on the

foundation of clear and transparent communication. It's crucial to share your vision, intentions and expectations openly with your team.

Writing down expectations and clearly defining the scope of each delegated task can significantly enhance clarity. Specify the decision-making power attached to each task and the expected time commitment. This transparency helps in setting clear boundaries and ensures that team members feel confident and supported.

Providing unwavering support is akin to steadying a rope for a climber. It involves being present and accessible, offering guidance when necessary and stepping back to allow independent problem solving.

Remember, patience is vital. Empowering your team is a process that involves learning and development, which requires time and dedication. The investment in your team's growth will yield substantial returns in terms of loyalty, efficiency and workplace satisfaction.

Lastly, delegate authority, not just tasks. This crucial distinction involves trusting team members with broader responsibilities, which fosters a deeper sense of trust and encourages personal and professional growth.

PUT YOUR PRACTICE ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

To build a workplace where trust, autonomy and satisfaction flourish, leaders must step away from micromanagement and foster a supportive environment.

By encouraging your team to take initiative and make decisions, you set your practice on a path to growth. It won't be easy, there will be setbacks, but with patience, determination and a system, you will succeed.



Mark Topley

Mark is the founder of responsibledentistry.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.

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Compliance

How to keep your practice up to standard

Pat Langley looks at how the CQC regulates dentistry and what you can do to ensure compliance



Compliance is a critical part of running a dental practice. It covers a huge range of topics, but at its heart it is straightforward.

Put simply, compliance is about being able to consistently demonstrate that you operate a safe, well-run practice with well-informed patients who are fully involved in their treatment decisions, with whom you are striving to achieve a measurable health gain.

It is the role of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to inspect practices and ensure that they meet these fundamental standards – but how does it do this?

As of 13 May 2024, the CQC started inspecting dental practices using its single assessment framework.

The new framework retains the five key questions at its heart, meaning inspectors will continue to look for evidence that your practice provides care that is safe and effective, that you and your team are caring and responsive to your patients' needs and that your practice is well-led.

Within the new framework, the key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) have been replaced by 34 'quality statements', with practices being required to

provide evidence of compliance with the relevant quality statement.

For each evidence category, practices will be assessed as:

- Regulations met
- Regulations not all met.

The key areas of focus for inspectors are:

- Infection prevention and control
- Staffing – robust recruitment processes, sufficient competent staff, training and supervision
- Equipment and premises
- Delivering evidence-based care
- Good governance
- Safeguarding
- Consent and patient records
- Medicines management
- Complaints
- Caring and responsive care.

These are very similar to the previous areas of focus and, in practice, inspections are likely to look and feel much as they did before. The only exception is practices that were last inspected before April 2015, when the CQC last made significant changes to how it inspects and regulates.

COMMON AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The areas most frequently found to be non-compliant at inspection predominantly fall into the 'safe' category or the 'well-led' category:

- Issues with practice policies and protocols (well-led)
- Issues with risk assessments (safe and well-led)

- Issues with infection prevention and control processes (safe)
- Out of date medicines and equipment to deal with medical emergencies (safe)
- Incomplete patient records (well-led)
- Evidence of effective complaints management processes (responsive, caring and well-led)
- Incomplete recruitment checks when employing staff, meaning there are gaps in mandatory personal records (well-led)
- Evidence of adequate supervision of and support for staff (well-led)
- Evidence of mandatory training for all team members (well-led).

COMMON ISSUES WITH PRACTICE POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS

The most common issues causing non-compliance are:

- Having policies and protocols that are generic and not tailored to your practice
- Having policies and protocols that are out of date. For example, team members who have left the business are named as the infection control or safeguarding leads, or you may have policies that do not reflect current thinking
- No evidence that policies and protocols have been read and are understood by all team members.

For all your practice policies and protocols, it is important to ensure that:

- They are tailored to your practice and up to date with an in-date review date



Pat Langley

Pat is a dentist and founder and chief executive of Apolline. Pat and the team at Apolline provide a complete end-to-end dental compliance management solution comprising of innovative software and in-practice support together with online and in-practice training.

THE KEY TO COMPLIANCE AND AVOIDING DEATH BY PAPERWORK IS TO HAVE THE OPTIMUM NUMBER OF POLICIES THAT REFLECT WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS IN YOUR PRACTICE

Dentistry Compliance

- They are understood by all your team members. The best way to do this is to discuss a couple of policies at each team meeting and test understanding using some form of policy training assessment
- Signed as having been read and understood by all team members. The simplest way to achieve this is to have a policy reading acknowledgement sheet that all team members sign that is kept with the policy.

DEATH BY PAPERWORK!

Apolline's experience is that many dental practices have far too many policies, some (or many) of which may not be relevant to their practice or practising circumstances. Because of the need to keep all policies you do have up to date and understood by all team members, 'policy overload' can lead to a situation we sometimes refer to as 'death by paperwork'!

The key to compliance and avoiding death by paperwork is to have the optimum number of policies that reflect what actually happens in your practice.

That means ensuring you have enough policies and protocols to ensure you are compliant, but not so many that it contributes to you being non-compliant because you can't keep them all current and updated.

Or, to put it another way, only have policies you need and don't have policies you don't need. It sounds obvious, but many practices are persuaded to have policies 'just in case'.

GET MORE GUIDANCE ON THE ROAD TO COMPLIANCE

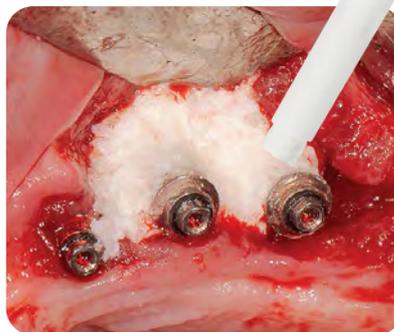
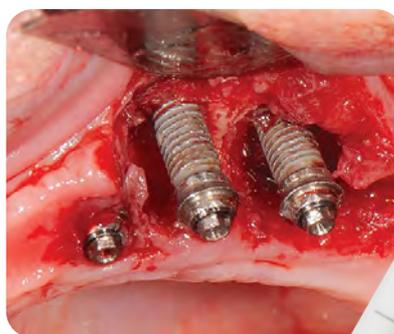
To simplify the way that you integrate compliance management into your day-to-day business processes, it pays to seek expert assistance. That way, you can concentrate on ensuring patient satisfaction and high standards of clinical care.

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Master your emotional landscape

How we feel can shape how we reach our desired outcomes, says **Barry Oulton**

In the intricate realm of dentistry, where professional success can often seem like a distant horizon, lies a profound truth: our emotional state is the compass guiding us toward our desired destination. It's not merely what we do, but how we feel while doing it that shapes our outcomes.

Delving deeper into the realms of emotional intelligence unveils the transformative power of physiology, language, focus, attention and intention. In this article, I'll dissect each facet of this multidimensional approach to professional growth and achievement.

PHYSIOLOGY: THE FOUNDATION OF EMOTIONAL MASTERY

Imagine a symphony where each note resonates with harmony and purpose – a reflection of the conductor's poise and confidence. Similarly, our physiology orchestrates the melody of our emotions, dictating the rhythm of our thoughts and actions. The way we hold ourselves, breathe and move serves as the baton conducting the symphony of our emotional landscape.

To embark on the journey of emotional mastery, dentists must first attune themselves to the language of their body.

Stand tall, shoulders back, chin up – adopt a power pose that exude confidence and authority. Feel the ground beneath your feet, grounding yourself in the present moment. Take deep, diaphragmatic breaths, infusing your body with vitality and energy.

Studies have shown that even a simple smile can trigger a cascade of positive emotions, signalling to our brain that all is well. By consciously adjusting our physiology, we signal to our brain that we are in control, fostering a sense of confidence and readiness to confront challenges head-on.

LANGUAGE: CRAFTING THE NARRATIVE OF SUCCESS

The words we choose to utter – both internally and externally – hold the power to shape our reality. Our internal dialogue, often a subtle whisper of self-doubt or a resounding affirmation of belief, profoundly influences our emotions and actions. It's not just about what we say but how we say it – the tone, cadence and conviction with which we express ourselves.

To harness the power of language in optimising our results, dentists must cultivate a vocabulary of empowerment. Monitor your internal dialogue and replace self-limiting beliefs with empowering affirmations. Transform 'I can't' into 'I am capable' and 'I failed' into 'I learned'.

Furthermore, pay attention to the language you use in interactions with patients and colleagues. Communicate with clarity, positivity

and conviction, inspiring confidence in yourself and others through the power of your words. Remember, the narrative we weave shapes the reality we inhabit.

FOCUS: CHANNELLING THE FLOW OF ENERGY

In a profession brimming with challenges and complexities, maintaining unwavering focus is the compass guiding dentists towards their professional goals. Our attention serves as the rudder steering the course of our actions, directing the flow of energy towards our chosen objectives.

To optimise our results, dentists must cultivate a crystal-clear vision of what they want to achieve. Set specific, measurable goals that align with your values and aspirations. Break them down into actionable steps and prioritise tasks based on their contribution to your objectives.

Practise mindfulness to quiet the incessant chatter of the mind and sharpen your focus. Train yourself to concentrate fully on the task at hand, free from distractions and mental clutter. Embrace the power of single-tasking, devoting your full attention and energy to each patient interaction and procedure.

Moreover, learn to manage your emotional state in moments of stress or uncertainty. Cultivate resilience and adaptability, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable obstacles.

Remember, where attention goes, energy flows – direct your focus with intention and purpose.



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.



THE NARRATIVE WE WEAVE SHAPES THE REALITY WE INHABIT

ATTENTION AND INTENTION: SHAPING OUR REALITY IN DENTISTRY

Attention and intention play a significant role in shaping our experiences and reality. While this notion might sound like a piece of motivational advice, there is scientific evidence to support the idea that our thoughts and focus can influence our perception, behaviour and outcomes.

Research in psychology has shown that our brains engage in a process known as selective attention. This means that our minds prioritise certain stimuli or information while filtering out others. When we focus our attention on a particular aspect of our environment or a specific thought, our brain allocates resources to process that information more deeply. This heightened processing can lead to an expanded perception of the focused-upon element, creating a subjective experience of it being more prominent or influential.

Cognitive biases, on the other hand, are systematic patterns of deviation from norm or rationality in judgment. These biases can affect our perception of reality and

subsequently influence our decisions and behaviours.

Confirmation bias, for instance, leads individuals to seek and interpret information in a way that confirms their pre-existing beliefs. This bias can cause people to focus on information that aligns with their current mindset, thus expanding their perceived reality within that framework.

Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's ability to reorganise and form new neural connections in response to experience. This concept suggests that the more we focus on certain thoughts or activities, the stronger the neural pathways related to those thoughts or activities become. As we repeatedly engage with certain thoughts or behaviours, our brain adapts by reinforcing the associated neural connections. This process can lead to an expansion of our cognitive and behavioural patterns in line with our focus.

The concept of self-fulfilling prophecies plays a role in the expansion of our focused-upon ideas. If we expect a certain outcome or behaviour, our actions are more likely to align with that expectation, increasing the likelihood of the expected outcome becoming a

reality. When we focus on a particular outcome or behaviour, we often engage in actions that lead us toward that outcome. This behavioural alignment can expand the influence of our initial focus by shaping our actions and decisions.

SHAPE YOUR OWN REALITY

To wrap up, while the saying 'what you focus on expands' may have started as a piece of motivational wisdom, it finds support in scientific research related to attention, perception, cognitive biases, neuroplasticity and behaviour. Dentists have a remarkable capacity to shape their professional experiences based on where they direct their attention and intention.

By understanding these psychological and neurological mechanisms, dentists can become more conscious of the thoughts and ideas they choose to focus on, knowing that they have the potential to shape their reality in profound ways. Remember that the expansion of focus isn't a guarantee of success or specific outcomes but rather an acknowledgment of the influence thoughts and attention can have on professional experiences.



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Time is of the essence for practice sales

It takes plenty of time, preparation and advice to successfully sell a dental practice, says **Harmy Bains**

As a practice owner, you will have thought about selling your practice once your dental career ends. This process can be overwhelming if you haven't had the proper preparation and guidance to give you the highest likelihood of the transaction meeting your needs.

You may not understand the process of how to sell your practice or how far in advance you need to start planning for it.

This article discusses some of the steps of that process and some key professionals you should have in your corner.

PLANNING IS CRUCIAL

A practice sale is something that one should plan well in advance. These thoughts are echoed by Connor Bryan, a senior paralegal at Carter Bond Solicitors specialising in dental practice sales: 'I would advise all sellers to start planning for the sale and seek advice as early as possible.'

The average sale can take six to nine months (sometimes longer).

Selling a dental practice is not a decision that one should rush.

However, the earlier you start planning, the better.

Ideally, begin the planning process at least one to two years before you intend to sell, possibly earlier if you consider the potential of having to

stay on as an associate post-sale. Planning this far ahead gives you ample time to organise your financial records, address any operational issues and increase the value of your practice.

UNDERTAKE A VALUATION

Obtaining a dental practice valuation is necessary before listing it for sale.

Jamie Williams, an associate director at Christie & Co,

says: 'Sellers should obtain a valuation well in advance to give a clear understanding of what the practice is worth and a step-by-step breakdown of the entire practice sale process.'

A valuation will consider your practice's revenue, patient list, location and goodwill, as well as other factors.

Working with experts, such as Jamie, to determine a fair and accurate market value means you have a realistic valuation to assess whether that figure is viable to meet your financial goals post-sale.

UNDERSTAND THE TAX IMPLICATIONS

Calculating how much tax you will pay when you sell a practice is essential. Knowing the type of tax payable and working with a dental specialist who understands this makes your life much easier.

Josh Curties, at A4G Accountant, says: 'On sale, the seller can expect to

pay capital gains tax. The tax rate will depend on the company structure, and there could be a further liability to corporation tax in some instances.'

Assessing the tax payable for your practice sale allows you to understand how much of the sale proceeds will be paid to you after the tax has been paid. In the years leading up to the sale, you could be withdrawing profits from the business

in the most tax-efficient manner.

One example of this would be to maximise pension contributions, which lowers how much you pay in corporation tax and increases

your wealth through a personal pension. The personal pension can be used alongside the proceeds from the practice's sale to provide an income to cover personal expenses post-sale.

FINANCIAL GOALS

An area that is overlooked when planning for a practice sale is how the final proceeds will impact your life financially. The final process would be the amount the buyer has paid minus costs, such as legal fees and tax.

A lump sum in your bank can feel great, but assessing how this will translate into meeting your expenses post-sale is vital. Working with a specialist financial adviser who can provide a cashflow forecast of your personal finances is key to bringing this into focus.

IDEALLY, BEGIN THE PLANNING PROCESS AT LEAST ONE TO TWO YEARS BEFORE YOU INTEND TO SELL



Harmy Bains

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



Mohammed Ahad, a chartered financial adviser at Chase de Vere Dental, says: 'Understanding how the proceeds of a sale will be deployed is paramount for our clients to get a clearer picture of whether the sale amount is enough.'

Cashflow forecasting allows you to visualise how you can maintain your intended lifestyle and if it is sustainable into your later years. This will enable you to feel more comfortable accepting an offer from a buyer, knowing that your future is secure.

GET DOCUMENTS IN ORDER

The message from Kate Beech, a healthcare partner at Carter Bond Solicitors, is to 'put your house in order... get your due diligence, documents and processes ready. In our vast experience of selling practices, that makes for far better and less stressful sales.'

Buyers will want to review all the practice documents to evaluate the financial and legal position of

the practice. Having policies and procedures, contracts, licenses, CQC documents and financial statements all ready can accelerate the due diligence process.

MAKE YOUR PRACTICE MORE ATTRACTIVE FOR BUYERS

The practice's efficiency, by growing revenue, would improve the practice's appeal. This could include bringing in more associates, further utilising surgeries, developing advertising to expand the patient list and reducing costs.

Just like a house, the visual appeal of the practice can create a better impression to a buyer, increasing the chance of you achieving your ideal sale.

Patients are an essential asset when selling your practice. Maintaining excellent customer service and promoting loyalty within your patient list is vital. You can implement a patient membership plan to increase patient loyalty and grow the patient list. If you already have a membership

plan, you can look to cheaper providers to reduce costs without affecting the patient experience.

Early planning here is critical. Having accounts that reflect a more profitable business will give more confidence to a potential buyer.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The sale of your dental practice can be daunting as you look to embark on a different chapter of your life. The overarching theme from all the professionals I spoke to when writing this article is to start planning early.

The planning should be done surrounded by professionals who specialise in the industry. You will then fully understand what to expect and what documents you should have ready before you go to market with your practice.

An efficiently undertaken sale has the best chance of going through quickly with less stress for you, the practice's future owner and the patients you have valued throughout your ownership.

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How to make a mixed practice *thrive*

Josie Hutchings speaks with Amit Jilka about how he built a thriving business by combining a dynamic and evolving private practice with an NHS contract

When Dr Amit Jilka bought Abbey Dental practice in 2012, he was working predominantly as an NHS dentist. However, he knew a mixed practice would be the best way for him to grow his business. 'We have a fairly substantial NHS contract with a number of units of dental activity (UDAs), so the contract value is so high that I didn't really want to part with that in terms of practice value,' he explains.

Although Amit was keen to add a private dentistry offering to the practice, he didn't rush to do so. He continued to enhance his range of skills by training in implants and then sedation. Within two or three years of having bought the practice, he was able to carry out an increasing number of private treatment plans.

It was a desire to offer a wider range of cosmetic and private treatments to his patients that led him to take the decision as principal to give up his own NHS commitment and introduce a membership plan with Practice Plan. Thanks to Practice Plan's years of experience, the conversion process went well, apart from a small dent to his ego!

'We sent letters to all the patients that I had previously seen and just

stated that I'd be going private thereafter and another dentist would be taking over,' he says.

'Quite a lot of the NHS patients did go private with me. Surprisingly, there were some of the patients I thought would've gone with me who didn't. It's always a bit hit and miss. You can't really predict who's going to go with you and who's not.

'I think there was some fear that a lot of patients would be upset by the situation, and we did get a few patients that were upset, but it wasn't as many as I thought it would be. So, clearly, I'm not as important as I thought I was!

'In all seriousness, as we were still offering NHS services, they could remain with a practice they had grown to trust and still receive the care they needed.'

SEPARATE FACILITIES

A concern some practices express to me when considering a partial conversion is how to deal with the issue of both NHS and private patients attending the practice at the same time. Amit already had in mind an elegant solution to this at the time he converted.

'We were building another private building, so we had a premises across the road that we were converting to fully private, which meant we felt we could offer both services and keep the patients separate within that structure,' he says. 'So, if NHS patients wanted more private dentistry, they could go to the other building.'



About Amit

Amit Jilka is an award-winning dentist and one of the owners of Abbey House Dental. He has been developing the practice and its facilities since he bought it in 2012. He has had extensive training in dental implants and has been placing them for over 10 years.

Amit is the practice clinical lead and mentors other dentists in dental implants and sedation. He is a nationally accredited sedation mentor for dentists in IV and RA sedation. His practice is now limited to dental implantology.

Amit has grown his dental practice from a two-surgery NHS practice to having 19 surgeries over four sites offering the full range of dental disciplines. He has grown his team from four staff members to more than 100 and recently launched his own training academy.



Josie Hutchings

Josie has been a regional support manager at Practice Plan for 22 years and has more than 30 years' experience in the dental industry. Practice Plan is the UK's leading provider of practice-branded patient membership plans, partnering with over 2,000 dental practices and offering a wide range of business support services.



BENEFITS

Since introducing private dentistry and the membership plan, Amit has seen huge benefits to both the team and the practice.

'Since going private, we have substantially increased our revenue,' he reports.

'We've also been able to develop a much larger team as we're offering more and more different services. The skill mix of the team has increased significantly with our therapy team leading the way. We now have treatment coordinators

that are able to scan and do sedation assessments.

'So just by making that move to private, we're offering loads of different services.

'This in turn has increased our team capabilities, which means, ultimately, we're offering a much better service for our patients.'

Amit has continued to grow and develop the business. As well as the three buildings he now has at his site in Stone, Staffordshire (NHS, private and a separate hygiene building), he opened a five-surgery squat practice

last year in nearby Stoke-on-Trent. This squat has the benefit of a top floor that houses conference rooms and a training academy.

About three years ago, Amit changed the focus of his dentistry and became an implant only dentist. The new premises in Stoke-on-Trent will allow him to run training courses and pursue his interest in mentoring others in implant dentistry.

'At the moment, I do one week clinical and then the next week I'm completely admin only. So, I'm only working clinical every alternate week,' he explains. 'Probably 95% of the clinical dentistry I'm doing is just mentoring and not really seeing my own patients.'

Does he see himself moving away from hands-on dentistry altogether? 'I don't think I'll ever stop being a wet-fingered dentist,' he admits. 'I enjoy that aspect of it, and I think, as a mentor, you can't mentor unless you're in it and doing it. But I think seeing my own list of patients is almost coming to an end, and I'm moving more towards being a full-time mentor and trainer.'



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The *visionary* who smashed the glass ceiling

Polly Bhambra reflects on the unbreakable resilience that has characterised her path through dentistry

Few things embody defiance as powerfully as the innate capacity to dismiss the doubters. Many aspiring dentists encounter obstacles on their journey towards owning a practice, yet, for Polly Bhambra, a woman of colour and former dental nurse, the chorus of critics has been louder than most. Shockingly, among the most vocal have been women, dental peers and even patients whose casual racism and microaggressions she recounts with candid humour. Such resilience and grit are likely borne from her determination to succeed.

Despite a career peppered with incidents of negativity, she continues to bounce back, giving the impression that she considers it their problem rather than hers. However, for those wise enough to recognise success when they see it, Polly is considered something of a trailblazer, her journey to practice ownership characterised by a visionary desire for excellence in patient care.

As the first dental nurse with her name on an NHS contract, she is now director of Tri-Dental Group, which co-owns 10 dental practices. She also runs the nine-surgery Treetops Dental Surgery in Wolverhampton and recently launched a dental nurse training academy accredited by the National Examining Board for Dental Nurses.

From her humble beginnings to her current status, her career is a testament to an unwavering commitment to advancing dental care and breaking down barriers. Her mantra has always been 'patients first'. This ethos has propelled her (and her businesses) forward. As she tells her associates: 'Follow



Polly Bhambra

Polly is the director at Treetops Dental Surgery and Tri-Dental Group, which runs 10 practices. Her pioneering spirit and dedication have shaped her journey, which began as a dental nurse at Birmingham Dental Hospital. She recently launched an accredited Dental Nurse Training Academy and is a genuine philanthropist and advocate for women in dentistry.

that belief, and the money will come.'

After embarking on a career as a dental nurse in 1992, Polly's insatiable thirst for knowledge led to various roles, including dental nurse tutor, examiner and a prominent position in the oral care division for P&G in Western Europe. Despite the scepticism and prejudice along the way, her passion for dentistry remained undeterred. A deep-seated belief in this patient-centric approach was at the core of her ethos, and her dedication to fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture bolstered this.

Her top core value is well-publicised – 'bitching is bullying', she says – and the emphasis within her practices on integrity, respect and

collaboration permeates every area of the 10 practices that fall under her leadership.

'We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for negativity,' she says. 'You cannot have an internal terrorist. Dentistry is a tight-knit business environment, and nobody needs a mood-hoovering member on their team. Regular leadership meetings and an open culture ensure everyone commits to our key strategies and workplace culture. Our practices are environments where team members feel empowered to contribute their unique skills and perspectives.'

She emphasises the importance of learning from errors and moving beyond a blame culture, adding: 'Accidents happen, and we address them transparently, focusing on prevention. We have developed processes to ensure accountability at every step of patient interaction.'

Polly's ingredients for the perfect practice

Starting your dental practice is an exhilarating step towards shaping your future in dentistry. As someone who's been there, here are my essential tips to help you navigate this journey successfully:

1. A business plan is vital: outline your vision, goals, financial projections and marketing strategy. A robust business plan is your roadmap to success
2. Location matters: choose a location based on demographics, competition and accessibility. Your practice should be where the patients are
3. Invest in technology: the right equipment can enhance patient care and streamline operations – from digital radiography to practice management software
4. Build a strong team: hire not only for skill but for culture. Your staff represents your practice's values and work ethic
5. Marketing is essential: develop a strong brand and online presence. Utilise social media, local search engine optimisation (SEO) and community involvement to attract and retain patients
6. Continuing education: stay updated with the latest dental techniques and practice management. Your growth is pivotal to your practice's success
7. Self-care: running a practice can be demanding. Prioritise your wellbeing to maintain the stamina and passion required for your business
8. Remember, building your practice is a marathon, not a sprint. Patience, persistence and continuous learning will be your allies.



Ownership and accountability are encouraged. Before starting, every new team member must agree to the company's core values, and consistent measurement and follow-up protocols ensure empowerment and efficacy.

'Robust processes and systems are vital,' she says. 'From how we check patients in and out to our follow-up appointment and what happens at every touchpoint – nothing is left to chance. Consistency is key.'

The patient's best interests are paramount, and everything is considered with them in mind – from the need for air conditioning and digital workflows to ensuring investment in the best materials and teams.

'My strategy is based on the ethos of the Olympic-winning rowers' strategy of "will it make the boat go faster?". I look at everything using this analogy. Is it in the best interests of the practice, the team, the patient, the community and our commitment to all these?'

She leads from the front to create awareness for all: 'Leading by example, I instil positivity and foster awareness among the team.' Her commitment to their wellbeing and professional development also helps them remain motivated, engaged and loyal. However, she understands the need to investigate further afield – 'we all wonder if the grass is greener elsewhere'. A 'revolving door' allows staff to map out their own journey. 'If their mind is made up, we allow them to go and are there to help them develop and grow outside the business and within. Although, many do return,' she adds.

Prejudices persist in the backdrop of her daily work life, even after 14 years as a business owner and 34 years into her career, but she is now starting to sense a growing credibility.

However, 'there is still so much more to prove,' she says.

'When I first bought Treetops, there was stigma based solely on the colour of my skin. Since then [2010], I have seen positive changes. But there are still challenges, and I rise to face them with an attitude of "bring it on". As Albert Einstein said: "You have to learn the rules of the game. And then you

have to play better than anyone else." I know when to speak back and speak out. I have come from a grassroots level and understand the practice environment well, so it's a two-finger salute to you, my friends,' she laughs.

Building from the ground up has been Polly's way of feeling she can add value to the practice. Looking ahead, she has ambitious plans for Treetops.

'Tri-Dental now owns 10 sites, it's streamlined, and we are in a healthy place. We have nine surgeries at Treetops and are growing this to 15. We take a holistic approach to dental health, focusing on the mouth as a window to the rest of the body. This is why we are now developing Treetops Wellness Clinic – adding facial aesthetics, hair transplants, iPRF procedures, a hygiene and therapy suite, and food intolerance tests to our treatments. We will also focus on staff wellness and building a basement gym with shower facilities. We have a beautiful garden where the team can switch off and look after their mental wellness and physical health.'

FAMILY SOLACE

Sadly, Polly lost her mum last year. 'She was my leading champion, my cheerleader, who I knew always had my back. She was my moral compass and would put life into perspective when I was challenged. She encouraged me to do everything with a peak mental state and a positive mindset.

'She died of a pulmonary embolism while sipping cocktails on a beach in Antigua. I was with my daughter in Singapore, and suddenly, I had to navigate the situation and be a beacon of light for my family. These challenges make you question your purpose and why you are doing what you are doing. I look peripheral to my work, and my family is my solace.'

The family includes three children: a 21-year-old daughter immersed in law studies at Liverpool, a 17-year-old daughter navigating her A-levels and a spirited 13-year-old boy. Despite their playful teasing about her affinity for nature – she confesses to being a devoted tree-hugger – Polly finds comfort in the outdoors, relishing walks in the woods. She meditates every morning, reciting a mantra rooted in her Sikh faith. For her, this spiritual practice instils a profound acceptance of life's twists and turns, attributing every situation to the divine will. It also safeguards her mental wellbeing and fosters a more profound connection.

As a dental practice owner, Polly's approach is guided by a profound ethical compass and an innate understanding of human nature. But it is her humility that is striking.

'To be a dental practice owner, you need an ethical approach to life and dentistry, and you have to be people-smart and understand their quirks. However, a higher force is at play, and I have been blessed with the opportunity to lead a team in an industry I love. I'd rather be honest than impressive; rather than proud, I am grateful for my career success.'

Her energy and unwavering positivity are infectious, but she acknowledges that even she hears those negative inner voices from time to time – 'Just don't say it out loud; keep checking in with yourself,' she laughs.

With a leadership style characterised by integrity, good humour and frank openness, Polly is refreshingly forward-thinking. By smashing dentistry's glass ceilings, she has elevated her status to pave the way for others. Her influence is undoubtedly in the ascendant.

How to nurture a positive team

With a great team, you can achieve unparalleled success, making a real difference in the lives of those you serve.

1. The foundation of a successful dental practice lies not just in cutting-edge technology or a prime location but in the strength and unity of the team you build
2. The right team can transform your practice from good to exceptional
3. When hiring, look beyond the résumé. Seek individuals with the necessary skills and experience and share your vision, values and commitment to patient care. Remember, skills can be taught, but attitude and passion are inherent
4. Foster a culture of continuous learning, mutual respect and open communication
5. Your team is your practice's most valuable asset. Invest in each team member and they will invest their hearts and skills in your practice and your patients.



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Make a POSITIVE impact

Christian Leonhardt speaks to *Private Dentistry* about gaining clarity, embracing advancements and the endless pursuit of knowledge

Dr Christian Leonhardt is a distinguished dental professional, driven by a passion for excellence.

Graduating from Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg in Germany, Christian prioritises achieving aesthetic, functional, biomechanical and periodontal outcomes, with a particular focus on airway health. He is dedicated to advancing dental knowledge, committed to continuous learning and remains actively involved in advancing his profession. As a mentor and leader in continuing dental education, Christian recognises the pivotal role of ongoing learning in delivering superior patient outcomes.

Q How has your postgraduate education journey changed your working protocols?

A The pursuit of knowledge is an endless journey, and the more one learns, the more apparent it becomes how much there is still to discover. This realisation fuels my passion and drive to continually expand my expertise. Much like a seasoned tamer in the ring, being a generalist in dentistry necessitates a vast breadth of knowledge. It's about risk management, minimising uncertainties in treatment and maximising the likelihood of successful outcomes.

My dedication to continuous learning is exemplified by my extensive continuing education and attainment of two master's degrees in orthodontics, along with specialisations in prosthodontics, periodontics and endodontics. Each area of expertise contributes to a comprehensive approach to patient care, allowing for meticulous risk assessment and management.

The protocols I employ are not just



theoretical constructs; they are born from the fusion of knowledge gained through education and experience validated through daily practice. Each treatment decision is meticulously crafted, with a focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for my patients.

Q Tell us about your education path at the Kois Center

A Before attending the Kois Center in Seattle, I found it challenging to integrate the various pieces of knowledge in dentistry. There was a plethora of information available, but it often felt fragmented, lacking a cohesive framework. However, my experience at the Kois Center initiated a profound shift in my approach to dentistry. The curriculum encouraged me to unlearn outdated practices and embrace a new paradigm centred around evidence-based dentistry.

It was like breaking through clouds and gaining clarity. Suddenly, concepts became more objective, structured and clear. This transformation left a lasting impression on me and fuelled

my determination to continue my educational journey.

Moreover, the opportunity to connect with like-minded colleagues and forge lasting friendships enriched my learning experience immensely.

In 2022, I was honoured to become a mentor at the Kois Center, allowing me to give back to the community that had given me so much. It's been a privilege to guide and inspire others on their journey towards excellence in dentistry.

Q What are you now working towards?

A I strive to continuously grow and evolve. I don't see my professional journey merely as a series of milestones, but rather as a path of personal development and self-realisation. My goal is not only to expand my expertise in dentistry but also to mature as a person, integrating my values and convictions into my work.

Ultimately, I aim to make a positive impact in the world and contribute to the health and quality of life of my patients.

Q Tell us a bit about your course in the UK – who is it for, when is it and what will attendees learn?

A Our upcoming course is scheduled for 27–29 June, and is designed for general dentists, orthodontists and other dental specialists seeking to refine their approach to aligner therapy. Attendees will gain comprehensive insights into the critical aspects of effective aligner therapy, with a particular emphasis on meticulous orthodontic treatment planning.

Our protocol – which encompasses considerations in airway, aesthetics, function, periodontics and biomechanics – serves as the cornerstone of proficient aligner therapy.

Participants will delve into nuanced treatment methodologies, learning how to integrate various appliances with aligners to optimise clinical outcomes. One of the key focal points will be on risk management, guiding attendees on how to navigate potential challenges and minimise treatment risks effectively.

A significant portion of the course will be dedicated to airway management. Going beyond the superficial treatment of snoring and breathing difficulties, attendees will leave with an understanding of airway anatomy, functional dynamics and behavioural patterns, particularly in the context of orthodontic interventions. For instance, they will learn how orthodontic treatments can impact structural aspects of the airway and the importance of discerning whether treatment addresses symptoms or root causes.

This comprehensive approach ensures that attendees gain the knowledge and skills to implement advanced aligner therapy strategies effectively, ultimately enhancing patient care and outcomes. Those interested in attending can visit theorthodonticspecialist.co.uk/courses for more information.

Q What are the greatest benefits of comprehensive treatment planning?

A When it comes to comprehensive treatment planning, there are numerous benefits, including:

- **Improved treatment outcomes:** comprehensive treatment planning allows for a thorough assessment of the patient's oral health needs, resulting in more precise and effective orthodontic interventions. By addressing underlying dental and skeletal issues, treatment outcomes are optimised, leading to better functional and aesthetic results
- **Enhanced patient experience:** a well-coordinated treatment plan provides patients with a clear roadmap of their dental journey, instilling confidence and trust in the treatment process. Patients appreciate the thoroughness and personalised approach of comprehensive planning, leading to higher satisfaction levels
- **Optimised oral health:** comprehensive treatment planning considers not only orthodontic needs but also other dental aspects such as periodontal health, occlusal stability and airway management. By addressing these factors holistically, overall oral health is improved, reducing the risk of complications and promoting long-term dental wellness
- **Predictable treatment progression:** through careful planning and coordination of various treatment modalities, orthodontic treatment progression becomes more predictable. This allows for better management of treatment timelines and enables clinicians to anticipate and address potential challenges proactively
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration:** collaboration among different dental specialists ensures that all aspects of the patient's

Christian's top five tips

1. **Knowledge is freedom:** embrace learning as a lifelong journey. The more you know, the more empowered you become in your practice and patient care
2. **Never quit:** perseverance is key in dentistry. Even during the toughest times, maintain focus and determination. Success often comes to those who persist through challenges
3. **Have protocols and improve them:** establishing and adhering to protocols ensures consistency and efficiency in your practice. Continuously evaluate and refine these protocols to enhance patient outcomes and practice management
4. **Surround yourself with supportive people:** choose your professional circle wisely. Surround yourself with individuals who genuinely support your growth and success. Distance yourself from those who seek to exploit or hinder your progress
5. **Honesty and self-improvement:** be authentic and transparent in your interactions with colleagues, patients and yourself. Strive to be the best version of yourself every day, focusing on continual self-improvement and growth.

oral health are considered, leading to more holistic and integrated treatment outcomes

- **Long-term stability:** by addressing underlying dental issues and incorporating appropriate adjunctive treatments, comprehensive treatment planning helps to establish a stable and harmonious occlusion. This reduces the likelihood of relapse and enhances the long-term stability of orthodontic outcomes, ensuring lasting results for patients.

Q What are you excited for in dentistry in the future?

A I'm thrilled about the exciting advancements unfolding in dentistry's future. Specifically, I'm looking forward to the enhanced predictability afforded by digital dentistry, which streamlines processes and improves outcomes.

Additionally, the ongoing interdisciplinary growth promises to revolutionise patient care by fostering collaboration among various dental specialties. The emergence of a new generation of dental professionals who prioritise teamwork will further elevate standards of care and patient experiences.

Moreover, the integration of our expanding digital knowledge base holds immense potential for optimising treatment approaches and patient outcomes.

The implementation of cutting-edge devices and technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), is poised to revolutionise diagnosis and treatment planning, enhancing precision and efficiency.

Equally significant is the development and implementation of innovative strategies and protocols tailored to modern dentistry's evolving landscape. By embracing these advancements and integrating them seamlessly into our practices, we can ensure that we continue to deliver the highest quality of care while remaining at the forefront of dental innovation.

Zirkonzahn Preparation Course for dentists

Zirkonzahn's two-day introductory course about minimally invasive tooth preparation

A new course has been launched within 'The Zirkonzahn School', the extensive educational programme for dentists and dental technicians developed by the Italian company Zirkonzahn (South Tyrol). The new course focuses on the importance of a conservative approach to dental treatments, combining digital and analogue workflow steps. It is conceived for all dentists willing to practice and improve skills on minimally invasive tooth preparation for different clinical situations.

COURSE PROGRAMME

Day 1 – from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm:

- Explanation of the importance of minimally invasive preparation
- Step-by-step demonstration of the five tooth preparation phases to produce zirconia crowns, which each participant will re-apply on their own models

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Day 2 – from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm:

- Finalisation of the preparations
- Digital scanning of the final models with the new Detection Eye intraoral scanner
- Verifying the accuracy of the preparations in the software
- Introduction to the cementation technique and demonstration
- Crown cementation on the prepared models

The course will be held on 26-27 September by a qualified dentist and allows a maximum of six participants. It takes place at Zirkonzahn Education Center Brunico, one of Zirkonzahn's nine training centres located in South Tyrol (Italy), which was designed to host events focusing on interdisciplinary collaboration between clinics and laboratories.

For more information and registration, scan the QR code, call +39 0474 066 650 or email education@zirkonzahn.com.



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How to create a winning awards entry

The **Private Dentistry Awards** 2024 are set to return this November. Here, this year's judges give their advice on crafting the perfect entry

There is still time to submit your entry to the Private Dentistry Awards 2024. You could be lifting one of the coveted awards at the ceremony – but first, you need to create your prize-winning submission!

The deadline for entries is 11 September, so make sure you use the months ahead to get them in perfect shape ahead of the event itself, at the luxurious Grosvenor House Hotel on 8 November.

This month, we asked some of our judges for their top tips on crafting a winning entry. Here's what they said!

FOCUS ON THE CRITERIA

Take time to read the criteria for each category, as only those that meet the requirements will be in with a chance of awards night glory! Be sure to answer the questions and keep within the word count.

'Answer the question and provide evidence to support that answer in as much detail as possible,' advises Bethany Rushworth.

'Lots of [previous] entries were brilliant but scored low as they just didn't answer the question!'

'Make it easy for me to give you a good score on each element – create headlines that match the criteria, and then show me how you meet it,'

PRIVATE DENTISTRY AWARDS 2024

suggests Mark Topley. 'Avoid "cookie cutter" entries – match each submission to the criteria of the category. If I have to wade through pages of irrelevant content to find what I am looking for in my category, I may well miss it.'

'As a minimum, you should be able to meet all the criteria,' says Joe Lovett. 'You should look to go above and beyond the criteria in order to differentiate yourself from the competition.'

CRAFT THE PERFECT PITCH

Once you've decided what to say, it's time to get it down in writing. This might feel like a challenge, but with the following advice from the judging panel, you'll find it a breeze!

'Keep your submission to the point but interesting – it is always great to see your personality coming through,' says Cat Edney. 'Showcase your clinical ability and how you prioritise patient care. Evidence-based technology and techniques or well-documented patient

journeys always tell me this clinician goes the extra mile.'

Linzy Baker says: 'Convey your personality/team personalities – show us who you are.'

Chris Barrow suggests using 'stories about real people who make a positive difference; stories about entrepreneurialism; stories about beating the odds and doing things people said could not be done'.

'Entries should try to be concise and comprehensive,' suggests Maria Papavergos, 'choosing quality case studies over quantity.'

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

When it comes to supporting material, the consensus from the judges is to back up your claims while keeping the entry concise and relevant.

Bhavna Doshi suggests: 'Support your submissions with concrete evidence – be it through data, visuals, or narratives.'

But don't go overboard, warns Chris

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Barrow, and avoid submitting “too much supporting evidence, for example, page after page of patient testimonials and reviews – we get it!”

MAKE YOUR ENTRY SHINE

You’ve found the words to explain and celebrate your work, along with the supporting material to back it up – now you’ll want to make your entry stand out through its presentation.

As Chris Barrow says: ‘The judges may have multiple submissions to work through. Ask yourself: “How can we

capture their attention?”’

‘Do not underestimate the importance of how your entry is presented,’ says Joe Lovett. ‘Demonstrating care and attention and putting effort into an aesthetically pleasing entry holds a lot of weight with the judges.’

‘Make it readable,’ suggests Linzy Baker. ‘Pages and pages of simple text are hard to get through. An easy-to-read eye-catching presentation keeps us interested!’

And the final word goes to Mark Topley, who says: ‘Keep it simple, keep it clear,

keep it easy to read but still attractive.

‘Finally, rather than picturing the judges reading your entry over a leisurely glass of wine one evening, with all the time in the world to look through it, imagine the reality: a full day of judging lots of great entries and limited time to spend on each one.

‘Make yours a joy to read, simple to assess and easy to give you top marks.’

For further information, visit dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards.

Martin Attariani’s top tips

1. Familiarise yourself with the specific categories and criteria. This will help you understand what the judges are looking for and enable you to tailor your submission accordingly
2. Highlight your accomplishments, innovations and successes. Emphasise what sets you apart and how your work has made a positive impact on patients, colleagues or the dental community
3. Back up your claims with evidence and supporting materials. Include testimonials, case studies, before and after photos and any other relevant documentation
4. Stick to the word limits and ensure that every point you make is relevant and impactful. Use clear and concise language
5. Use storytelling techniques to engage the judges and make your submission memorable. Share anecdotes, patient success stories or personal experiences that illustrate the impact of your work and demonstrate your passion for dentistry
6. Acknowledge the contributions of your team members and any collaborative efforts that have been instrumental in your achievements
7. Before submitting your final entry, seek feedback from trusted colleagues or mentors. They can provide valuable insights and suggestions
8. Believe in your abilities and be authentic in your submission. Let your passion for dentistry shine through
9. Remember, the Private Dentistry Awards are an opportunity to showcase your achievements and celebrate excellence in the field. By following these tips, you can empower yourself with confidence and increase your chances of success.



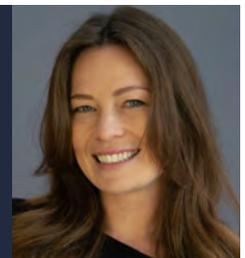
Maria Papavergos’s words of advice

1. Try to be concise and comprehensive, choosing quality case studies over quantity
2. Choose a clear, professional format to present your entry, such as Powerpoint, with all the required information in one place, avoiding links to different pages
3. Make sure you fulfil all the required criteria and make it clear how you stand out
4. Remember, judges are looking for a demonstration of your values as well!



Cat Edney’s handy hints

1. Read the category and make sure you answer the brief
2. Keep your submission to the point but interesting – it is always great to see your personality coming through
3. Showcase your clinical ability and how you prioritise patient care. Evidence-based technology and techniques or well-documented patient journeys always tell me this clinician goes the extra mile.





Envisage Dental:

a natural partner for private dental clinics

Brett Garner of Serenity Dental explains his decision to partner with Envisage Dental

For almost two decades, Dr Brett Garner has built Serenity Dental into a 5-chair high quality private dental clinic in Hampshire. His journey from being a local patient to becoming an associate and then finally to practice ownership is nothing short of inspiring. After 15 years of ownership and developing the clinic to the highest standards possible, Brett decided the time was right to plan for the next chapter. Brett wanted to find a group that would maintain clinical freedom as well as support him and his team with the administrative burdens of running a practice of this size, which led Brett to partner with Envisage Dental. After completing the sale last year, Brett reflects on his journey to date.

Brett's decision to partner with Envisage stemmed from a desire to focus on dentistry without the administrative burdens of practice ownership. Like many, he faced challenges balancing clinical excellence with the demands of running a business.

Brett wanted to find a group that would provide full clinical freedom, support his team and remove the administrative burdens of running a clinic. After meeting with multiple parties, Brett

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAS BEEN GREAT ABOUT JOINING ENVISAGE HAS BEEN MAINTAINING CLINICAL FREEDOM... THERE'S BEEN NO ONE TELLING ME WHAT TO DO, HOW TO DO IT... THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I'D WANT TO PRACTISE



Brett Garner, Serenity Dental

Scan to watch the full video

decided to partner with Envisage Dental. The freedom to focus solely on patient care has rejuvenated his passion for dentistry, bringing joy and fulfilment to his professional and personal life.

Envisage places a huge emphasis on building relationships and collaborating with local teams. Clinics remain locally empowered whilst benefitting from a team of experts who offer insights into best practice.

Brett and his team now benefit from full support in Operations, Payroll,

Marketing, Recruitment, Compliance, Finance, Data Analytics, HR, Procurement and much more. This allows teams to

really focus on delivering the highest quality of patient care. Due to our focus on private dentistry, clinics always receive highly personalised support from our team of experts. Our commitment to embracing the DNA of each clinic whilst providing localised support resonates with partners and colleagues across the group.


envisage

REDEFINING GROUP DENTISTRY

Envisage Dental is focused on partnering with high quality private clinics who want to work in a unique and local way rather than having to adopt a 'one size fits all' corporate approach. If you have a private dental clinic and are thinking about your next chapter, contact Jon Toh: jon@envisage-dental.co.uk | 07881436719

The business guru

Sandeep Kumar shares his thoughts about the challenges that Dental Practice Accelerator winner Hannan Saleem and his practice face and provides his insights and recommendations for their success

Despite Hannan not being from a dental background, I'm confident that if he surrounds himself with the right people and embraces the mentorship from the Dental Practice Accelerator (DPA) team his ambition and attitude will help him realise his goals.

This article will share some core recommendations that I believe Hannan needs to take on board.

1. LEARN FROM OTHERS, BUT CARVE YOUR OWN PATH

Hannan needs to accept that while he

can learn from myself and the other DPA mentors, he really needs to take a step back and consider how best to take those learnings and apply them to his own business. A copy and paste approach just doesn't work. Each practice has its own challenges – varying demographics, local competition and unique selling points – and these all need to be considered to drive successful change. Listening and learning but then adapting is key.

2. INVEST IN YOUR TEAM

It's a cliché, but the bigger your dream, the more important your team. Hannan needs to make sure

he's got the right team members in the right roles to really drive the business forward. The team needs to understand and share Hannan's goal – if it doesn't, success will be hard to deliver. Regular huddles, honest and open communication and transparency with commercials will all help to keep the team motivated.

3. BECOME A CUSTOMER IN YOUR OWN BUSINESS

For Hannan to really appreciate how his patients see his practice, he needs to see it with his own eyes. I suggest that Hannan take a couple of hours one day to just sit in his own waiting room and observe. How long does the phone take to get answered? How are patients greeted? What is the general vibe and feeling within the practice? Understanding first-hand what it is like to be a patient will help to deliver the best possible patient experience.

4. DIGITAL IS HERE NOW, NOT IN THE FUTURE

It's all too easy to think a truly digital world is still in the future. But it's not – it's now. It's important that Hannan considers his patients and their everyday life. Digitising processes and making interactions with the practice as seamless as possible will all contribute to patient experience.

Key areas to consider are investing in a really easy-to-use website that is optimised for mobile, implementing online booking, using a digital lead follow-up tool like Dengro to nurture



Dr Sandeep Kumar The business guru

As one of Europe's leading Invisalign Diamond Apex providers, Sandeep has created more than 6,000 beautiful new smiles with Invisalign in his private clinics.

Sandeep is the founder of three successful private clinic brands – Mismile, Smile Stylist and Smmmile – the Mismile Network and a 'Mastering your Invisalign business' initiative.

In addition, Sandeep shares his thoughts and opinions with the wider industry and can often be found on stage speaking and training others on the opportunities Invisalign can harness.



and remind patients as well as using digital tools to enhance the patient journey. The Itero scanner also comes into play here. Used correctly, it not only supports the clinical aspect of the patient journey, but also works as an invaluable communication and conversion tool.

5. WORLD-CLASS BASICS

Getting the basics of customer service right will stand Hannan and his team in good stead. Taking a lead from other service-led industries – hotels, restaurants and high-end spas – will help the practice to stand out.

Greeting patients by their first name, responding to new patient enquiries as soon as possible and being genuinely interested in patients are all critical everyday basics. Sweating the small stuff really does make a difference.

Sandeep's top tips

1. Learn from others, but carve your own path to success
2. Ensure the team shares the practice's goals and vision
3. Be a customer in your own business
4. Digital is now, not the future
5. Remember the world-class basics
6. Take time to work on the business, not just in the business.



COMMON CHALLENGES

Many practices that are trying to scale will encounter the same common problems, and Hannan and his team need to address these too...

Lack of clarity on the bigger goal

I work with a lot of principals and practice owners who have forgotten one critical element of their long-term business plan – actually defining what they want to achieve. This might be a revenue goal, or a profit target or it might be as simple as a new patient target.

Without that clear goal, it will be impossible to define an action plan to drive success.

An unmotivated team

All too often I see a principal or practice owner excited about their vision but despondent because their team isn't helping them to drive forward. Unpacking this usually reveals one thing – that the team is unaware of the vision.

The team members are unaware of their role in helping to make this happen, or, more brutally, they don't

know 'what's in it for them'. It's really important to remember that you can't do this on your own, and having a motivated team will be critical for success.

Working in the business, not on the business

Scaling a business takes time and focus. I strongly advise practice owners and principals to carve out time to work on their business. This might mean reducing their clinical hours, or simply blocking out time on a regular basis for uninterrupted thinking time. Without this, realising scale is near impossible.

AN EXCITING FUTURE

Despite the challenges that Hannan faces, I'm confident there is a huge opportunity for him and his team to deliver great things.

Defining his goal, starting with the basics and including his team on his journey will all help to drive the business forward.

I'm excited to support Hannan and can't wait to see where he reaches.

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.

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What to look for in a 3D imaging machine

Ben Caswell identifies what to consider before buying an extraoral 3D machine

With the advent of increasingly sophisticated implants and orthodontic solutions on the market, the question of digital dentistry's importance has already been answered. The benefits of going digital are clear for both practitioner and patient, thanks to increased accuracy in diagnosis and greater precision in treatment planning, improved communication and treatment outcomes, greater efficiency and a safer X-ray experience thanks to reduced radiation exposure from digital versus traditional X-rays.

For many practices, the future is now, and they have already invested in the benefits of digital imaging solutions – ranging from sensors and phosphor plate scanners right up to heavy-duty CBCT machines. Standing in the middle of this range is a hero product, the extraoral 3D machine.

When it comes to a significant capital equipment investment, you want to know that you're spending your money as wisely as possible. With a wide range of models on offer, it's critical to ensure that you're not choosing price as your main product differentiator. Broadly speaking, there are two sets of criteria to consider closely: those that will directly benefit you as a practitioner, to make your work both easier and more sophisticated, and those that will also benefit your patients. In the world of private dentistry, where patients are increasingly aware of their own choices and becoming more like consumers, such assets are set to become more prevalent in this sector.

EASE OF OPERATION

For the operator, ease of operation is the number one priority. If you are confident and can make it work quickly, you can make it work efficiently:

- Look for a system with open architecture. The Kavo Proxam 3DQ machine allows for a range of positions for the patient. For example, easy face to face positioning helps to manage and calm anxious patients
- A large, vertical range of motion will improve the positioning options for wider range of patients, creating comfort for tall people, children and those in wheelchairs
- While maximum volume size is important, look for a machine that can offer large pre-configured programs for a wide range of diagnostic applications potentially including ENT options for quick and efficient setup every time
- An intuitive, quick and simple image processing function that will allow you to get the perfect capture.



Ben Caswell

Ben is digital solutions manager at Kavo UK & Ireland.

IMAGE QUALITY

In addition to the positioning options and general ease of use, once you've captured the patient image, you'll want to be assured that the output is as precise as it can be. Therefore, look closely into the image quality features on offer, such as:

- An ultra-low dose function can reduce the effective radiation without any statistical reduction in image quality. For example, the Kavo Proxam 3DQ does this by an average of 77% to ensure patient safeguarding against unnecessary exposure
- Scout Recording, which can help identify optimal positioning before 3D images are finalised, reducing the risk of taking additional images due to poor patient positioning
- An Endo mode voxel size of 75 will produce detailed images with high resolution
- Can the machine's software automatically correct motion artifacts if a patient moves during image collection? The Kavo Proxam 3DQ Calm mode minimises the need for retakes, giving greater accuracy and a safer clinical situation
- Does the 3D machine have software that reduces metal artifacts streaks and shadows from existing patient restorations? The Kavo Proxam 3DQ ARA mode removes these artifacts, creating clear images
- Optimal noise reduction, sometimes referred to as AINO, enables low radiation dose while ensuring high image quality through the use of extremely small voxel sizes – basically an all-round winning situation. Kavo Proxam's 3DQ machine will do this automatically, even when using its low dose function
- Finally, a dental software platform that allows you to view 3D images in the highest resolution possible, whether you are using Windows or Mac operating systems. The Kavo Proxam 3DQ utilises Romexis software for this purpose.

TEST DRIVE

To be guided through these principles, come along to one of the events on the Kavo Innovations Tour 2024, where Kavo is showcasing the Proxam digital imaging range in a state-of-the-art mobile showroom.

Taking place across the UK from 25 June to 5 July, you can test-drive an extraoral 3D machine, hear from high-profile speakers, earn free CPD – and maybe even meet professional sports stars and test-drive the latest Mercedes-Benz cars! Register your interest by emailing info@kavo.co.uk or visiting www.kavo.com/en-uk/news/kavos-roadshow-2024.



The value of knowledge and guidance

Ahmad Nounu discusses why continuous education and mentorship is the best way to move forward in your career

In the ever-evolving landscape of dentistry, the pursuit of knowledge and the guidance of experienced mentors have become indispensable tools for success. Dr Ahmad Nounu (Doctor A), renowned for his pioneering work in private dentistry through the Private Dental Mentor (PDM) course, lives by this ethos. His journey towards excellence and a commitment to patient-centric care exemplifies the profound influence of continuous education and mentorship in shaping the careers of dental professionals.

'Continuous education is paramount in dentistry,' he explains. 'It's not just about fulfilling professional requirements; it's about a commitment to excellence, to providing the highest standard of care to our patients.' Each learning experience has not only enriched his understanding but has also honed his skills, culminating in his emergence as a skilled and knowledgeable practitioner valued in the dental community.

Adapting to evolving patient needs and preferences is essential, he says. 'Every patient is unique, with their own set of expectations and concerns. By listening attentively to their feedback and staying attuned to their needs, we can tailor our services to meet their requirements effectively. Adapting to evolving patient needs requires flexibility and open-mindedness,' he explains.

'It's about building trust and rapport with our patients, so they feel confident in the care they receive.'



Dr Ahmad Nounu

Dr Ahmad Nounu is the visionary behind the Private Dental Mentor (PDM) course, offering a new pathway into private dentistry.

COMMUNICATION AND INNOVATION

'Communication with patients is a topic that we cover in the two-day courses that we are holding in three venues around the UK this year, and it plays a significant part in the role of a dentist,' explains Doctor A. 'We aim to instil confidence, effective communication and the ability to manage patient care independently while collaborating with specialists when needed. This is paramount in private dentistry.'

Embracing innovation is another cornerstone of his approach. From modern photography techniques to high-quality restorations, he integrates cutting-edge methods into his practice, elevating the level of care he provides. 'Innovation allows us to offer more efficient, precise and comfortable treatments,' he explains. Dentistry, he believes, is about constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of patients.

GUIDANCE FROM EXPERTS

Mentorship has also been instrumental in his professional growth. Many dental professionals benefit from mentoring, whether they're newly qualified, returning following a break or facing difficulties in their careers.

These relationships often address specific learning goals but can extend to work-life balance, self-confidence and personal-professional integration.

Mentoring fosters a safe environment for mentees to share issues, requiring time and mutual understanding to build trust. It's a two-way street, offering satisfaction for both mentor and mentee, with benefits including insight, skill development and support in navigating challenges.

He recalls the guidance and support he had received from experienced practitioners throughout his career, guiding him through challenges and helping him navigate complex cases. 'Having a mentor to turn to for advice and guidance is invaluable,' he says. 'Their wisdom and experience provide invaluable insights that you can't find in textbooks or lectures.'

Education has allowed Doctor A to offer the latest treatment options to his patients. From advanced implant techniques to minimally invasive procedures, he expanded his skill set to meet the diverse needs of his patients.

'Education is the foundation of excellence in dentistry,' he says. 'By investing in our knowledge and skills, we can provide our patients with the highest quality of care possible.'

Doctor A's journey has led him to create his innovative PDM courses, in which he continues to inspire and empower dental professionals, equipping them with the essential skills and confidence needed to excel in private practice.

'Never stop learning,' he says. 'Continuous education is the key to success in dentistry. By investing in our knowledge and skills, we can enrich our practices, enhance patient outcomes and elevate the standard of care in our profession.'

To enrol in Dr Ahmad Nounu's Private Dental Mentor two-day courses, held in Bristol on 29-30 June, London on 6-7 July and Birmingham on 14-15 September, scan the QR code.



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Thirty years of dental innovation

Alex Guest talks about Biohorizons Camlog's heritage, growth and reputation over the past 30 years

Q Can you share the company's original vision and how it has evolved over time?

A The original vision was to enhance the quality of life for patients with missing teeth by providing innovative dental implants and tissue regeneration products. We aimed to accomplish this by offering clinicians innovative and evidence-based dental implants and tissue regeneration products. This vision stemmed from understanding the significant impact missing teeth can have on individuals' oral health, wellbeing and self-confidence.

Over the years, our company has evolved by staying true to its core values and adapting to advancements in dental technology and research. While our focus remains on improving the quality of life for patients with missing teeth, we have expanded our product offerings to provide comprehensive solutions for various dental needs.

Q What key achievements has the company been most proud of?

A We take pride in several milestones, such as our collaboration with implant pioneer Dr Carl Misch, who was instrumental in the development of our early implant systems. Biohorizons made a significant breakthrough in implant technology with the development of the Laser-Lok surface more than 30 years ago, which has shown impressive biologic responses, inhibiting epithelial downgrowth and promoting connective tissue attachment.

The early foundations of the Camlog brand by Dr Axel Kirsch, with the establishment of Altatec in 1994 and

then Camlog in 1999, has significantly contributed to implant innovation over the years, notably through the Conelog system.

Our leadership in the German market and introduction of the Promote surface further demonstrate our commitment to excellence and innovation.

Q How has the company grown and changed since its inception?

A From modest beginnings with two employees in a single country, the company has flourished into a global organisation with more than 25,000 employees, including Team Schein Members, head offices in the USA, Switzerland and Germany and which operates in more than 90 countries.

Q How has the dental industry changed over the years, and how has the company adapted?

A Continuing its dedication to enhancing patient outcomes, Biohorizons Camlog has consistently pursued advancements in implant materials and design. While titanium remains the predominant material choice, recent years have witnessed the introduction of new materials aimed at optimising bone fusion. These innovative materials complement the existing repertoire, ensuring a more robust integration between the implants and the surrounding bone tissue. Laser-Lok has shown to be superior in maintaining crestal bone (Pecora et al, 2009; Botos et al, 2011).

Our commitment to comprehensive solutions has led us to embrace innovative materials, refined surface treatments and ground-breaking bone regenerative products. Our Laser-Lok surface, Promote surface and the patented Conelog implant system

from Camlog are prime examples of technological advancements that have set us apart in the implant industry.

Q Are there any industry trends or emerging technologies that the company is excited about?

A The future of dental implant technology holds great promise, with continued advancements in the implementation of 3D printing, guided implant surgery and antibacterial coatings. Additionally, digital imaging techniques will continue to be pivotal in treatment planning, enabling dentists to accurately assess bone density and ensure optimal implant placement.

Q What are the future key goals and aspirations of the company?

A Our key goals include continuing to provide evidence-based products, establishing reproducible workflows and creating dental implants designed to improve aesthetics, function and quality of life.

We're constantly exploring projects, partnerships and acquisitions that complement our business and are aligned with our strategic goals. As part of the Henry Schein Global Oral Reconstruction Group, we have an ability to factor in the wider dental workflow, establishing ourselves as 360 degree partner, not just for dental implants but for dentistry as a whole. By aligning these goals with our commitment to stay at the forefront of technology and innovation, we aim to solidify our position as a trusted leader in the industry.

For article references, email patrick.ward@fmc.co.uk.



Alex Guest

Alex is UK and Ireland general manager of Biohorizons Camlog.

Scan the QR code to find out more about Biohorizons Camlog.





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Whitening for under-18s

Kiran Shankla explores the shift in regulations regarding tooth whitening for under-18s and its impact on dental care, from historical restrictions to current treatment protocols and considerations

Until May 2014, whitening in under-18s was not permitted under any circumstances by the General Dental Council (GDC) nor by UK law. Under the EC directive, products containing more than 0.1% hydrogen peroxide could not be used by anyone under the age of 18 (Kelleher, 2024).

CURRENT REGULATIONS

In May 2014, the GDC revised its position, allowing bleaching to take place if it was wholly to treat or prevent disease (Greenwall-Cohen et al, 2018). It is essential to understand the psychological and psychosocial effects of discoloured teeth and the negative impact it can have on a child's life if treatment is delayed. It is important to try and treat the lesions to prevent mental health conditions from occurring and bullying by peers (Marty, 2016).

Suggested indications for bleaching for those under the age of 18 include:

- Severe and moderate discolouration
- Enamel conditions
- White lesions, white markings and white flecks
- Brown, orange and yellow staining
- Coronal defects
- Molar incisor hypomineralisation (MIH)
- Hereditary factors
- Traumatized/non-vital discoloured anterior tooth/teeth
- Systemic diseases with dental effects (diseases of the liver or kidneys or haemorrhagic diseases) (Greenwall-Cohen et al, 2018).

These changes have made it easier for dental professionals to carry out

whitening in those under 18. However, caution should always be taken, as whitening in under-18s is still illegal in the UK and legal advice should be taken from indemnity providers as not all will cover this treatment.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

When patients present with discolouration, it is our duty to provide options and solutions. There have been significant advancements in whitening technology, particularly with the introduction of SDI's Pola products, which provide different options tailored to each patient. With Pola's formulations, including low-concentration hydrogen peroxide solutions, dentists can provide whitening treatments to minors with greater confidence.

The shift in regulations has not only expanded treatment possibilities but also addressed the physical and psychological impacts of teeth discolouration in young patients.

If you cannot provide the treatment, an offer of a referral should be made to help with patient choice. Patients and parents should be informed of the risk of tooth loss for each option and the long-term maintenance and success.

Currently, the only dental treatment that requires no removal of tooth tissue is whitening and this should always be the first choice of treatment before picking up a drill. The risks and benefits of whitening should be discussed to gain consent before treatment. Patients should also be informed further treatment may be required, such as resin infiltration after whitening (Wallace and Deery, 2015).

EXAMINATION

A detailed verbal history should be taken

to help establish a diagnosis for the discolourations. Ask these questions:

- At what age did you notice changes to the teeth?
- How many teeth are involved?
- Did you have any issues pre/per/postnatal?
- Do you think the discolouration is getting worse or the same?
- Does the presence of these discolourations impact your child's life?
- Have you had any dental treatment before today?

A clinical examination should be done to assess the number of teeth impacted, the depth of the discolourations, if there is any enamel loss/hypomineralisation, if any further treatment is required etc.

PROTOCOL

- Dental examination – to assess oral hygiene and caries risk
- Periapical radiographs of any dark teeth to establish the cause eg post RCT treatment/calcific metamorphosis/trauma
- A full set of high-quality clinical photographs
- Assessment of the discolourations on the teeth
- Discussion of treatment options
- Consent – verbal and signed
- Construction and delivery of whitening trays
- Review for further treatment.

Young patients with discolouration are always very motivated when whitening and the physical and mental changes of this simple treatment are life changing.

Email patrick.ward@fmc.co.uk for the references that accompany this article.



Kiran Shankla

Kiran is a restorative dentist based at Kendrick View Dental Practice. Follow her cases @shanklasmiles.

Find out more about Pola at sdipola.co.uk.

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BSSPD oral award winner Schottlander

The BSSPD in association with Schottlander oral prize was awarded to Dr Rachael Jablonski from the University of Leeds for her presentation entitled 'The impressed study: improving facial prosthesis construction with contactless scanning and digital workflow'. This translational research project explored the impact of digital manufacturing on facial prosthesis production by using basic science, patient orientated and early population-based research.



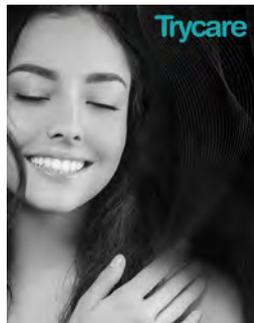
The feasibility randomised control trial recruited 15 participants and had a 27% attrition rate. Around 45% of participants preferred the digitally manufactured facial prostheses compared with 27% who preferred the conventionally manufactured prostheses. The qualitative sub-study recruited 10 participants. Most participants (90%) preferred the digital manufacturing processes. Participants were averagely willing to trade off a three-month wait to commence treatment if it meant they could undergo the digital manufacturing processes. Public engagement activities have been co-developed with patients, artists, clinicians and researchers to disseminate research findings and share the lived experience of people with facial prostheses. Arts exhibition based dissemination events are planned in 2024.

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



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

No gingival barriers are required, which saves time and money. The treatment is the ideal add-on to EMS guided biofilm therapy and can be combined with the hygiene appointment.

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

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

01274 885544

www.trycare.co.uk

The best of Touareg S and Closefit in one

Trycare

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



Unifit spiral implants are tapered implants with a spiral tap that condenses bone during placement for immediate stability. Featuring two large variable threads to facilitate minimally invasive surgery and a bone condensing tapered self-taping tip for accurate placement, improved aesthetics and optimum load distribution, its design allows immediate function for all bone types. Unifit also features Adin's Osseofix calcium phosphate blast surface treatment, built-in platform switch, back-tapered collar with micro-threads engineered to enhance bone regeneration, prevent bone loss and increase bone implant contact.

Comprising a friction grip seven-degree conical connection with six-position star shaped index, Unifit ensures solid abutment fixation that enhances the implant-abutment seal and minimises micromovements. Plus, it enables simple yet flexible implant and abutment alignment and supports self-guiding insertion for clear cut tactile feedback.

All for just £140 plus VAT!

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www.trycare.co.uk/adin

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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). The course fee is £495 plus VAT including all course materials and refreshments.

01274 885544

www.trycare.co.uk

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.

01274 885544

www.trycare.co.uk/osteobiol

Tempit: still going strong!

Trycare

Just as permanent restorations demand specific materials for different applications, temporary restorations have different requirements for different indications.

Available exclusively from Trycare, Centrix offers three specific and proven temporary filling material formulas, providing optimal results in any clinical situation.



For endodontic access cavity sealing and short-term temporary restorations use original Tempit, which is moisture activated and expands slightly to completely seal any cavity. Tempit-E offers all the benefits of Tempit plus it contains eugenol. It offers an anti-inflammatory and local anaesthetic effect that helps facilitate pulpal healing. For indirect inlay and onlay restorations, Tempit L/C sets firm but remains flexible so that it can be easily removed with an instrument without the need for drilling.

Setting in minutes and easy to remove when required, unlike jars that frequently set hard before you can use them, they are supplied in single unit dose capsules. This means they can be dispensed directly, precisely and perfectly every time, saving time, reducing waste and providing the right filling material for each application. Whichever option you use, simply dispense Tempit into the cavity and adapt it to shape. No mixing, no spatulation, no cross-contamination and no messy placement.

www.trycare.co.uk

01274 885544

Complete add-on package for digital workflow

Zirkonzahn

With Zirkonzahn's new Detection Eye intraoral scanner, the patient's jaw can be easily digitised in less than 60 seconds. The scanner is easy to use and the choice of two different tips (standard and small) makes the impression taking more comfortable. The scanner is lightweight, compact and ergonomic. Scanning areas don't need to be pre-treated with powder and its art can be rotated to reach the most ergonomic posture.



Zirkonzahn
Human Zirconium Technology

Once the data has been captured, it can be quickly loaded into the Model Maker software module. The produced model is then transferred to the new Zirkonzahn.slicer software, where it is placed on the virtual printing platform. If needed, special supports can be also generated. The software is conceived for the dental workflow and pre-configured with settings for a seamless and well-calibrated printing process.

At this point, the generated 3D printing data is transferred to Zirkonzahn's P4000 printer either via USB, LAN or Wi-Fi and the large printing volume (20x12.5x20cm) permits the simultaneous production of, for instance, up to 21 Geller models or 15 dental arches. The P4000 system for 3D printing works ideally in combination with the Printer Resins and the Printer Resins Waterbased by Zirkonzahn.

The model can be cleaned in an ultrasonic bath and then cured in the L300 Post-Curing Lamp. It can be mounted into the PS1 articulator or ZS1 Mini-Arti to check the patient's jaw movements without using plaster thanks to the new Jawaligners PS1 or ZS1 (magnetic spacer plates).

www.zirkonzahn.com

Implant training that exceeds expectations

Straumann

Dr Amit Bhalla completed the Campbell Academy's year-long implant course, which is supported by Straumann. He reflects on the training and the impact it has had on his dentistry since: 'I wanted to become proficient at placing and restoring implants and after doing my research I felt that the Campbell Academy was best suited for me to do this.'



straumanngroup

'The training exceeded my expectations with respect to the excellent course content, delivery of the material by superb speakers and ongoing support after the course had finished, which was very important to me. Particular highlights included placing my first implant and performing a sinus lift procedure with Colin Campbell.'

'It was also useful to have access to the Straumann solutions, which include an excellent implant system that can cater for different surgical and anatomical scenarios.'

'Since completing the course, I have been able to successfully implement implant dentistry into our practice with the help of the Campbell Academy.'

www.straumanncourses.com

Enter a new dimension of CBCT

Planmeca

Newly launched in the UK, the Planmeca Viso G3 CBCT unit 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 that matches the style of the Planmeca Romexis software for ease of use.



Combine this with Planmeca Calm – an algorithm that analyses and compensates for slight patient movements during 3D X-ray scanning, resulting in sharper final images – and you'll eliminate the need for retakes.

It is a truly multifunctional CBCT device covering all extraoral imaging needs from 2D to 3D imaging, and it's available to order now.

planmeca.com

Together towards the future

Ivoclar

The Ivoclar Group has announced a partnership with the American technology company Sprinray. With this cooperation, Ivoclar is now setting new standards in the field of 3D printing.

During Sprinray's 3Dnext event in Miami, USA, Ivoclar's CEO Markus Heinz and Sprinray's CEO Amir Mansouri shared their joint vision with the dental sector.

Markus Heinz said: 'We are very pleased to partner with Sprinray – an equal partner with whom we want to set new standards together. The philosophies of our companies complement each other perfectly and we are striving to provide our customers with the best possible support in their daily work.'

Amir Mansouri added: 'Ivoclar and Sprinray both have extensive internal dental expertise. Our aim is to really understand the problems and needs of our customers in order to provide optimally coordinated solutions. With Ivoclar, we are delighted to have one of the dental industry's leading material manufacturers at our side.'

ivoclar.com



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IN THE HOT SEAT

We find out more about the life of **Martina Hodgson**, the owner and principal dentist at the Dental Studio in Wakefield who is also known as the Dental Architect

Q When and where was your last meal out?

A It was to celebrate my 11-year-old son's confirmation, and we went to a lovely local Italian restaurant with his uncle and grandparents.

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

A People always used to say I looked like Helen Blaxendale of *Friends* and *Cold Feet* fame, so I guess her! I think it was the nose.

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

A My absolute favourite song to dance to at university was *You Got the Love* by The Source featuring Candi Staton. Now I'm showing my age. Absolute tune though!

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

A Do the right thing. My husband's late father used to say it, and you can't go wrong if you follow that advice.

Q What's your guilty pleasure?

A Chocolate always (currently it's Cadbury Creme Egg season) and *The Real Housewives of Cheshire!*

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

A I think I would retire to the south of France!

Q What keeps you up at night?

A My team – when there's drama it really upsets me. I just love everyone to be happy and chill!

Q How do you unwind?

A I find it very hard to stop – but I do love having a drink and a laugh with my good friends.

Q Describe your perfect holiday...

A Doing absolutely nothing – lying on a beach for two weeks somewhere hot, talking to no one and enjoying amazing food and drink. When you have kids, two businesses and lots of patients, the demands on your time are quite intense! I look like an extrovert, but I actually can find it very draining, and I love my own space!

Q What was the last gift you gave/received?

A My husband just came back from Everest Base Camp and bought me back a beautiful topaz necklace from Nepal, which is the local stone.

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

A I think one of the books I have found most impactful recently was *Surrounded by Idiots* by Thomas Erikson. It's about personality profiling and has completely changed my understanding of my own personality and those around me. This allows me to improve communication with patients with such great results, as well as how to nurture individual team members and, of course, communicate with family and friends.

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

A Oh gosh, I'm so sorry, it's a before and after of an Invisalign and bonding case I just completed. How sad!



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