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A straight success

The growth of the orthodontic market

Time to level up

How to raise your game for private patients

A risky business

Navigating incorporation

PLUS

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AWARDS: A WORD
FROM OUR SPONSORS

A bold venture

How I Did It: Dental on the Banks



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It's the thought that counts

Siobhan Hiscott

Group managing editor

Attention to detail is crucial in any business, and dental practices are certainly no different. In dentistry, no matter where you look – be it clinical practice, team leadership or managing patient expectations – achieving successful outcomes typically boils down to thoroughness, accuracy and consistency.

In terms of the all-important patient experience, it's vital that patients feel genuinely cared for and not like just another number.

Indeed, as Ahmad Nounu so eloquently puts it, 'when patients choose private dentistry, the overall experience matters'.

In his article on page 51 of this edition of *Private Dentistry*, Ahmad delves into patients' expectations of private dentistry and how practices can meet – and potentially also exceed – them.

In a profession built on trust, every touchpoint matters.

From the way the reception team greets patients, to the ambiance of the practice, and even the follow-up communication after a procedure, these small actions build a foundation of trust and confidence.

Ensuring accurate appointment scheduling, remembering a patient's

preferences (like their favourite music or need for extra comfort measures), or offering timely and clear explanations of procedures shows a commitment to patient care that goes beyond the purely clinical.

When team members demonstrate they are listening – whether by remembering to check on a patient's concerns or following up after treatment – it builds rapport and fosters long-term loyalty. For instance, making a quick call to check in after a complex procedure or offering helpful aftercare instructions not only shows professionalism but also reinforces a sense of personal care.

When it comes down to it, attention to detail helps patients feel valued, reducing anxiety and increasing satisfaction.

The benefits of focusing on a positive patient experience extend far beyond a single visit. Satisfied patients are much more likely to return and to recommend your practice to family and friends.

And we all know that word-of-mouth referrals are some of the most powerful marketing a practice can have. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to tell you they're driven by positive patient experiences.

In the end, a dental practice that values attention to detail doesn't just provide excellent care: it creates an environment where patients feel truly looked after, ensuring their loyalty and securing success for years to come.



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DENTISTRY

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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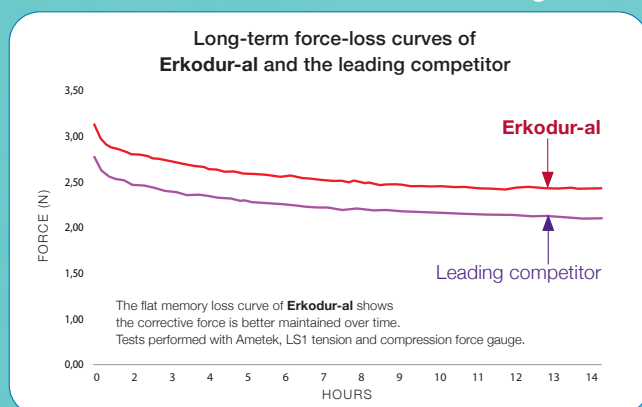
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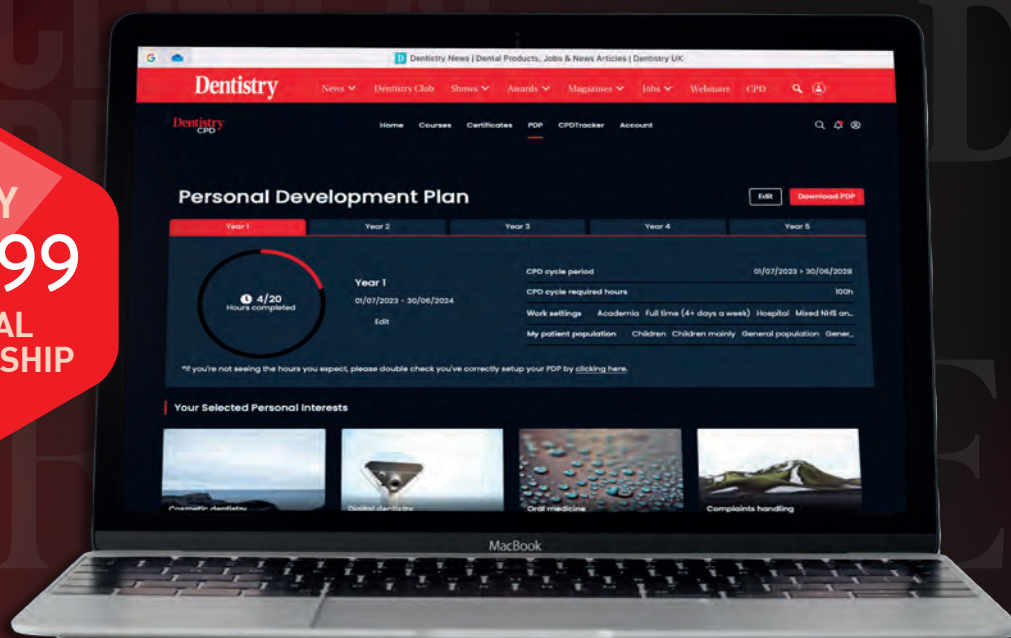
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Dentistry graduates earn the most, according to annual survey

An annual graduate survey named dentistry as the most lucrative degree subject, with graduates earning an average salary of £42,000.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) survey approaches all recipients of UK higher education qualifications 15 months after graduation. The most recent data released in 2024 relates to the 2021/22 cohort. Among the survey questions is a discussion of the graduates' employment status and salary.

The average salary for dentistry graduates was £42,000 – £7,000 higher than the next most lucrative subjects. Medicine, pharmacology and pharmacy and veterinary medicine shared the second-place spot, with an average salary of £35,000.

Some 16% of medicine and dentistry graduates earned a salary between £33,000 and £35,999. A further 13% earned between £36,000 and £38,999, with only 5% earning less than £27,000. The largest group of graduates in this subject category (17%) were earning more than £51,000.

Medicine and dentistry therefore had the highest percentage of graduates in the top salary group. The subject area with the lowest percentage of graduates earning more than £51,000 was media, journalism and communications, at 1%.

Some 97% of dentistry and medicine graduates were found to be in high skilled employment. This is compared to figures such as 51% for agriculture and food and 68% for psychology.

Almost seven in 10 (69%) of medical and dental graduates were in full-time work at the time of the survey. A further 19% were in further study and 7% were in part-time employment. Just 2% considered themselves to be unemployed, though 3% were occupied with non-work activities such as travel or caring. The subject area with the highest unemployment percentage was computing, at 8%.

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

Of the UK universities that offer dentistry courses, University College London had the highest number of dental and medical graduates in full-time work. This was followed by Queen Mary University of London, King's College London and the University of Manchester.

Out of more than 380,000 graduates who responded to the survey overall, around 60% were in full-time work while 5% were unemployed. Therefore, medicine and dentistry graduates had both a higher level of full-time employment and a lower level of unemployment compared to the national average.



North of England Dentistry Show 2025: save the date!

After a successful 2024 show, the north's largest dental showcase – the North of England Dentistry Show – will be returning to Manchester on 8 March 2025.

Delivered by leading dental clinicians and experts, all lectures presented at the show will offer CPD, and attendees will be able to discover hundreds of brands in the exhibition hall, featuring dentistry's leading products alongside the latest innovations to empower daily practice.

The North of England Dentistry Show is a one-day event designed for the whole dental team, so regardless of your role in the practice, you'll leave with a renewed passion for dentistry.

This year's event proved popular, with more than 1,200 dental professionals walking through the doors of Manchester Central to take advantage of everything on offer in the exhibition and conference centre.

Plans are well underway for the 2025 show. Watch this space for details on the lecture programme and speaker line-up, as well as offerings from the attending exhibitors.



For all the latest information and to register for next year's unmissable event, visit dentistry.co.uk/shows/north-of-england-dentistry-show.



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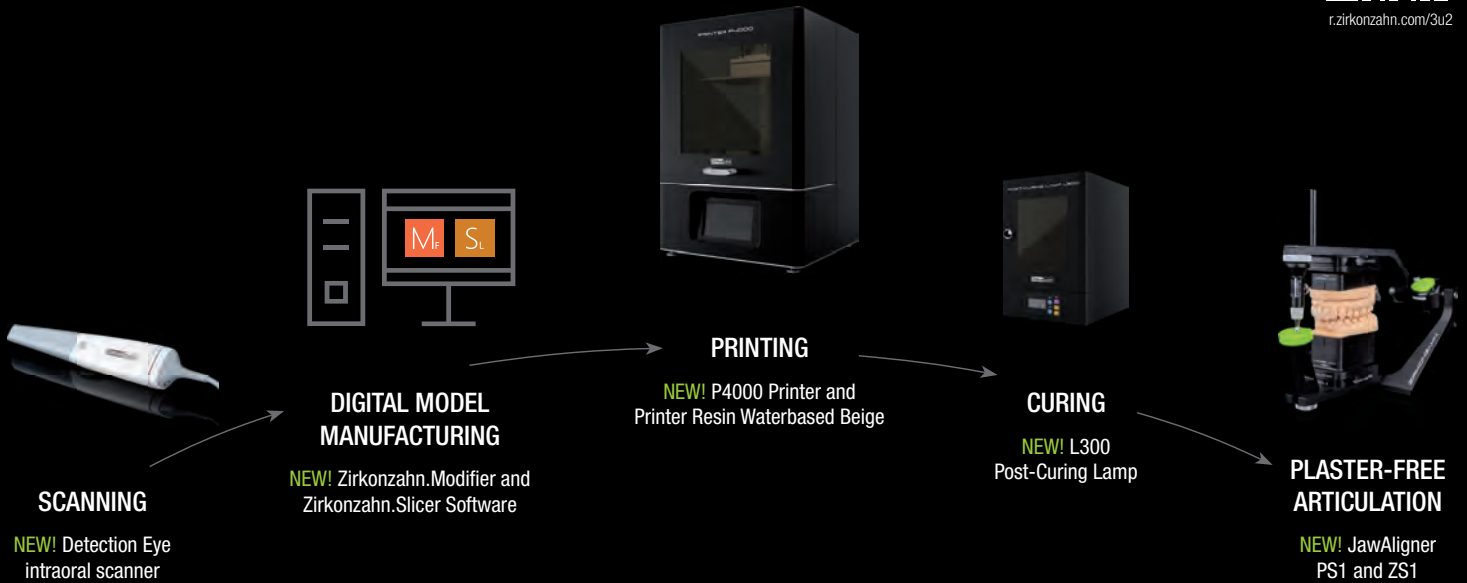


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Private healthcare essential for acceptable living standard, according to report

A report has revealed a 'critical shift in public expectations' surrounding healthcare, with a budget for private care now included in the minimum standard for living.

Each year, Loughborough University and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) produce a report on the minimum income standard (MIS) for working-age adults based on public opinion. For the first time in its 16-year history, this year's MIS includes a £200 budget for private healthcare. Services included within this budget might include dentistry, physiotherapy and counselling.

JRF chief analyst Peter Matejic said this shift in public perception was due to a lack of availability of NHS services.

'In previous years it would have been unthinkable that cash to pay for health treatments would be necessary for a minimum standard of living,' he said. 'But this research shows that the public feel they can no longer count on the NHS to provide a universal service that's free at the point of delivery because some NHS services are now so difficult to access.'

LIVING WITH DIGNITY

The MIS is intended to give an impression of the minimum income required to live with 'dignity' in the UK. Professor Abigail Davis, Loughborough University, said: 'This is about meeting those basic needs, but it's also about being able to take part in the world, not feeling excluded or on the edge of society.'

According to the report, many households do not meet the MIS and are therefore 'unable to afford everyday life'. None of the household types that were out of work or looking for work met the minimum income standard. A single adult receiving out-of-work benefits is estimated to earn 28% of MIS, needing £218 more weekly to meet the standard.

Most households earning the national living wage (NLW) also did not meet the MIS. Only couples with no children could reach MIS while earning NLW. A single adult working full-time at NLW would achieve 81% of the minimum income standard, a shortage of £57 per week. Similarly, a couple with two children who were both earning NLW full time would reach 84% of MIS. The household would need an additional £127 per week to meet the standard.

INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Professor Davis added: 'Meeting a minimum acceptable standard of living continues to be a real challenge for so many households. As this latest research has highlighted, the lack of investment in public services over the past decade has made meeting this standard even more difficult, as costs have shifted from the state to individuals.'

Mr Matejic said: 'It's not right that people are unable to take part in our society and are living in poor health for years because of their low income.'

'The government must improve our public services, make work more secure and reform our social security system so that we all have an adequate safety net to rely on if more people are to have a decent standard of living.'

Dental volunteer charity celebrates 20 years of impact in Tanzania

A volunteer programme that works to improve oral health in communities in Tanzania is marking its 20th anniversary with a fundraising campaign.

Bridge2aid works with local communities to train dental professionals, teachers and health workers in the African nation. The charity focuses on the Mwanza region of Tanzania, where 76% of adults and 38% of children live with untreated dental caries and without access to dental care.

As part of its anniversary celebrations, Bridge2aid has launched the #20for20 campaign, and is asking for donations of £20 to make up a target of £20,000. To donate, visit bridge2aid.enthuse.com/cf/20for20.

The charity has also called for volunteers to join its next outreach/training programme in Mwanza, from 19 October to 2 November this year. The trip will provide screening in primary schools, training to local dental therapists, basic dental treatment, oral health education and post-programme mentoring to those in the community. There will be programmes focusing on oral health education in February, March and May next year, with further outreach programmes in February and June. For more details, visit bridge2aid.org.



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Best behaviour

Chris Barrow on the learnings of your nine greatest leaders



CHRIS
BARROW

Leadership is back under the spotlight again. Let's face it, we've had a ringside seat in leadership contests on both sides of the Atlantic, one resolved and the other yet to be put to the vote.

There are plenty of reasons to take sides based on ideology, but I wonder how many 'moderate' voters in the UK and USA will have been influenced by the behaviours of those who want our support?

That's a global stage, of course – where in Western democracies the behaviours of our leaders are scrutinised and count for something, good or bad.

Presidents can be brought down if they fumble their words, and prime ministers if they leave sacred beaches early.

Not so in other regimes, where the leaders stay behind closed doors, behind walls of ideological fundamentalism, and behind bullets and bombs.

All very sombre, you might think, but the same applies to every one of us who occupy a leadership position, which I have often defined as:

- The custodian of the vision – 'this is where we are going'
- The beacon of light in the darkness – 'follow me and I'll keep you safe'
- The example of the standards of behaviour and performance – 'do as I do'.

AN EXERCISE IN LEADERSHIP

I've just celebrated my 71st birthday and my 55th year of full-time work. For more than half a century, I've observed leadership globally as well as in every business and venture with which I have been involved.

Here's an interesting exercise I've learned over those years:

- Step one: write a list of three great

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leaders who impressed you when you read about them in history books – people who were dead before you were born

- Step two: add a further three names of great leaders who have impressed you while you have lived
- Step three: finally, list three great leaders who have directly influenced your life – family, teacher, friend, colleague, key opinion leader in your chosen field. When that list of nine names is complete, write them down on a sheet or whiteboard, put the kettle on, make a nice brew and just sit back and look at those names to complete the final part of the exercise...
- Step four: list three characteristics that you think these people shared. Examples could include:
 - Resilience
 - Kindness
 - Selfless living.

Make your own list. Then carry that with you through your life as a mantra for the characteristics with which you lead others – whether you are an owner, manager, clinician.

We lead patients, team members, suppliers, family, friends and colleagues.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

I'm very excited at the prospects for the independent, private, owner-managed dental business over the next months and years.

While the broken NHS dental system explores solutions that will take years to implement, while the dental corporates and groups circle the wagons to protect their EBITDA, and while the media continues to warn the public about dental deserts and Turkey teeth, we have a golden opportunity to provide leadership to patients, clinicians and teams alike.

Those patients, team members and clinicians will listen to your ideology (how you think dentistry should be delivered), but they will be more mindful of your behaviour, so:

- Make sure it's good behaviour at all times
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Dental on the Banks

To celebrate Dental on the Banks' fifth birthday, we hear from owners and specialist orthodontists **Ramtin** and **Damon Taheri** who bring a wealth of experience and a world of luxury to a Dorset coastal town with their exceptional clinic

We opened Dental on the Banks (DOTB) in 2019, just before the pandemic, breathing new life into a former

bank building in the affluent suburb of Canford Cliffs in Poole, Dorset. Our vision was clear: to redefine dental care in an affluent area, where luxury met precision, and fill a void in the market with something exceptional.

Nothing in the locale matched the luxurious atmosphere we had planned or the calibre of high-end dentistry and orthodontics we envisioned delivering. We have since established a dental clinic that exceeds patient expectations, where appointments are eagerly anticipated rather than dreaded or met with indifference.

Every aspect of DOTB's design exemplifies comfort, excellence and personalised attention. It's a dental space that our community can boast about – and one that is a significant departure from the conventional 'high street practice'.

From the outset, we had two advantages. First, we have lived in this town since we were young, moving from Sweden as children. We knew the community, so we were able to create a business that resonated. Second, our mother, Dr Zohreh Yazdani, a hugely accomplished cosmetic dentist and our inspiration, had sold her dental

WORD OF MOUTH TOOK OVER, AND OFF WE WENT. BUT WE NEVER EXPECTED IT TO GROW AT SUCH A PACE

clinic some years beforehand, so we were well-placed to create a family business.

Once we found the ideal premises, we had to compete with many other interested parties to secure it. We managed to do so, and it

seemed like fate. The clinic initially included two surgeries, an X-ray room, a consultation room and a decontamination area. Ramtin came up with the name Dental on the Banks, reflecting the Sandbanks connection.

AN AESTHETIC JOURNEY

Our aesthetic journey began with our logo. Our colour palette, branding and overall style developed from there. We collaborated with local trades, sharing our concepts, and they breathed life into them.

Throughout the design evolution, tweaks were made, yet everything seamlessly fell into place. The whole process was very organic.

Transforming the building required a considerable investment of time and money. But even before we started our search, we had written down our plans and systems to create the ideal patient experience – one that is more akin to how we would want to be treated at a five-star hotel than a dental practice.

As children, we were blessed with opportunities to travel widely with our parents, and many of these experiences informed us about DOTB's overall design and ambience. We knew we had to centre our aspirations on that high-end hotel experience to overhaul the reputation of a dental practice, focusing on creating a spa-like experience for our patients.

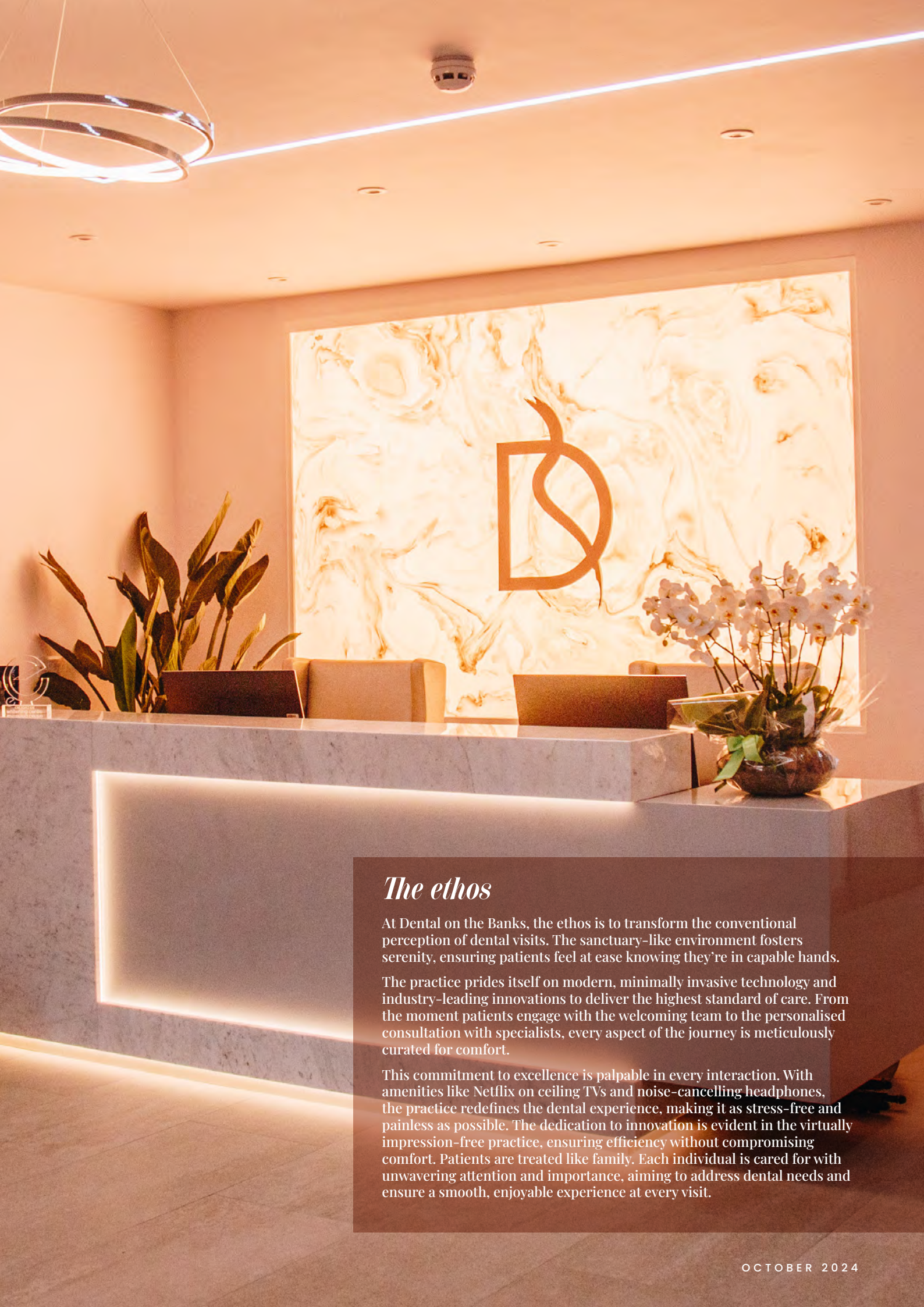
Step inside...

THE PRACTICE
Dental on the Banks
20 Haven Road
Canford Cliffs
Poole
BH13 7LP

TELEPHONE
01202 022 248

WEBSITE
www.dentalonthebanks.co.uk

EMAIL
contact@dentalonthebanks.co.uk



The ethos

At Dental on the Banks, the ethos is to transform the conventional perception of dental visits. The sanctuary-like environment fosters serenity, ensuring patients feel at ease knowing they're in capable hands.

The practice prides itself on modern, minimally invasive technology and industry-leading innovations to deliver the highest standard of care. From the moment patients engage with the welcoming team to the personalised consultation with specialists, every aspect of the journey is meticulously curated for comfort.

This commitment to excellence is palpable in every interaction. With amenities like Netflix on ceiling TVs and noise-cancelling headphones, the practice redefines the dental experience, making it as stress-free and painless as possible. The dedication to innovation is evident in the virtually impression-free practice, ensuring efficiency without compromising comfort. Patients are treated like family. Each individual is cared for with unwavering attention and importance, aiming to address dental needs and ensure a smooth, enjoyable experience at every visit.

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The team

OWNERS

Ramtin Taheri, Damon Taheri, Zohreh Yazdani

PHARMACIST

Shadi Tabatabaei

DENTISTS

Junaid Malik, Jason Lai

GENERAL AND COSMETIC DENTIST

Sherry Aboutarabi

SPECIALIST IN PERIODONTICS, PROSTHODONTICS AND RESTORATIVE DENTISTRY

George Bourne

SPECIALIST PROSTHODONTIST

John Krezel

DENTAL THERAPIST

Grace Emmanuel

BUSINESS MANAGER

Rachel Miller



From day one, we reimagined the traditional waiting or reception area as a hotel lobby, complete with Diptyque fragrances and candles, to create a distinct and discreet ambience. Utilising signature scents through plug-in diffusers enhanced the atmosphere, making patients feel more comfortable and relaxed.

Damon is primarily responsible for how the practice looks and has done an excellent job of balancing aesthetics with functionality, which often poses a challenge for dental clinics. Soft lighting and soothing colours create an ambience of relaxation and wellbeing, while the technology ensures high-quality dental care.

Attention to detail, such as ergonomic furniture and ambient music, further enhances that all-important patient

experience, making it comfortable and stress-free. We have a selfie area framed with a blue tree motif where we take our 'after' photos, and it is also one of the areas where patients like to take selfies of themselves.

GROWTH AT A PACE

Sandbanks is an affluent area, and people started to take notice. Local footballers began coming in, others followed, and it just snowballed. We began seeing this flow of patients into the clinic because we had created a very different patient experience. Word of mouth took over, and off we went. But we never expected it to grow at such a pace.

We expanded our facilities last year, adding a mezzanine floor to accommodate our growing clientele. This includes

HOW I DID IT

two new surgeries, a treatment coordination room, an additional bathroom and offices. Planning permission took a year to obtain, and the work was completed in May 2023.

Regarding branding, everything is in harmony with the downstairs area, including an illuminated marble wall emblazoned with our logo to match our ground-floor lobby.

The mezzanine lobby area has clear glass panelling that retains a light and airy feel similar to the open glass design of our consultation room downstairs. The walls have beautifully built-out backlit and recessed areas, and we have incorporated a touch of botanical elegance with lush greenery.

Since opening, we have steadily increased our original team of six. We are also proud to be among the top 300 Invisalign orthodontic specialists worldwide, with DOTB being a Diamond Apex provider.

We are also the official dentist of AFC Bournemouth – and we are thrilled this partnership was renewed for this season, making it three years in a row now.

A LUXURIOUS JOURNEY

Dentistry is more than a one-off visit; it should be an unforgettable, luxurious journey. It's not just about the results. Patients should feel special, cared for and cherished, and we emphasise this personalised attention in every corner of the practice. However, we must also deliver on this clinically.

We have always wanted to offer a full service with everything under one roof, and we have future-proofed the business by investing in digital equipment, such as Itero intraoral scanners and Icam scanners. The technology is efficient for treatments but non-invasive.

We research the equipment we use and always do our due diligence. We test anything new in one surgery before rolling it out to get the best results for the patient. Our clinical care complements our premium look, and we



always look at ways to improve to ensure our practice remains at the forefront of dental technology.

As one of our patients recently put it: 'Incredible first impression! It has a perfect balance of being beautifully presented as a practice, extremely professional yet approachable and helpful staff.'

We like to think DOTB is a really cool place – it just happens to be a dental clinic.



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A break from the *norm*

Elizabeth Eilertsen explains how she opened a practice that aims to put patients at ease

My associate life was being tarnished by the need to patch over patients' disquiet after previous experiences of dental care. I felt compelled to design, build and open a practice that stood apart from the 'normal'.

I was inspired to give back to the local community, offering patients an alternative dental experience and staff a dynamic job opportunity. My aim: to create a brand founded on prevention, putting the patient first.

I drew upon my own architectural and photographic background for the design, with the patient journey as the starting point. Using my knowledge of space and psychology, choosing a disused commercial office space allowed me to create a bespoke environment for our service.

The entire practice was thoroughly planned in terms of colour and ambience. During study for an arts degree, I had researched the effects of space, colour and setting on the experience of the building user.

During dental school, I was interested in minimising patient anxiety, which I wrote a submission about for the SAAD researched essay competition. These aspects of my past career both laid the foundation for the design of this project.

PATIENT EXPERIENCE

The brand puts patient-centred care front and centre. The experiences of anxious patients have been significant to me during my career, so it was

important to create a relaxing environment to provide dental care.

There is a clear distinction between public and working spaces in the practice. The patient is guided throughout their visit, starting from their arrival in the car park. Our aim for the reception is to make it feel more like a hotel concierge service, where patients are greeted and invited to wait privately in the lounge.

The public lounge area supports a relaxing colour scheme (we used Farrow & Ball's Cromarty, which is a muted olive-green). The furnishing and low-level lighting are designed to emulate something more like a living room than a dental waiting room, further reducing patient anxiety.

Moving into the treatment areas, the patient is collected by the staff and guided to the appropriate colour-themed surgery. The clinical spaces are defined with a clean white, and surgeries in the circulation area have glazed walls, creating a light and airy feel to the spaces but with a privacy panel of branded frosting.

It is known that anxious patients often remember the colour of a room rather than a specific dentist. So, the base



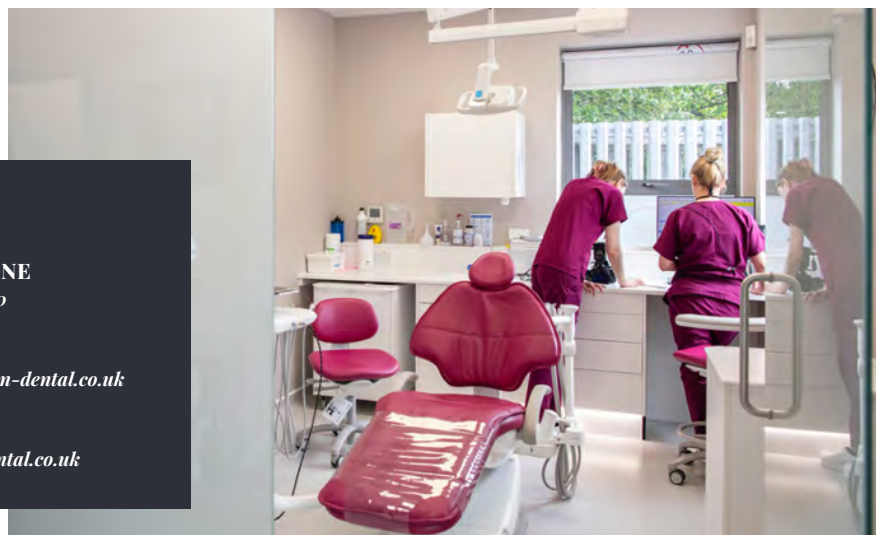
Step inside...

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colour scheme for the surgeries was a tasteful mushroom with white cabinetry. We then use the upholstery for the chairs as the feature colour. Our chairs, from A-dec, are Diplomat Blue, Green, Sorbet, Cyan, and Orange. One of the reasons why we chose A-dec was because of its wide range of upholstery colours and finishes.

LOCATION

When searching for the right property, location and accessibility were key. One of the most common complaints patients have is a lack of parking spaces. I took this into consideration, looking for something other than a simple high street fix.

The location I settled on was an 'empty box' of disused office space. Fortuitously, the building was near a new transport link road, which would increase the traffic on the doorstep. I had decided long before finding the building that I wanted to use A-dec chairs, and that cemented my pathway. The local A-dec suppliers, Decadent, helped from the initial concept phase right through to the installation of the whole project.

Alex from Decadent proved to be an extremely useful contact as he not only put me in touch with its trusted building team, I-con and UV-design, but also took the time at the start of the project to take me to A-dec's Bracknell's showroom (one of three) for an in-depth consultation.

Alex and I were introduced to John Dargue, A-dec's territory manager for the south west of England and south Wales. John listened to my journey and vision of what I wanted to achieve with the practice.

I was then able to try out different dental packages, which enabled me to choose equipment that was best suited to my requirements. John answered all my questions fully and explained the functionalities of each feature.



FORM AND FUNCTION

When considering the practice set-up and, specifically, the chair, I wanted form, function and reliability. Studying at Peninsula Dental School, I was aware of the use of different chairs brands. I knew the sheer volume of use that the school chairs were subjected to through years of students, and their patients would give them a good reference.

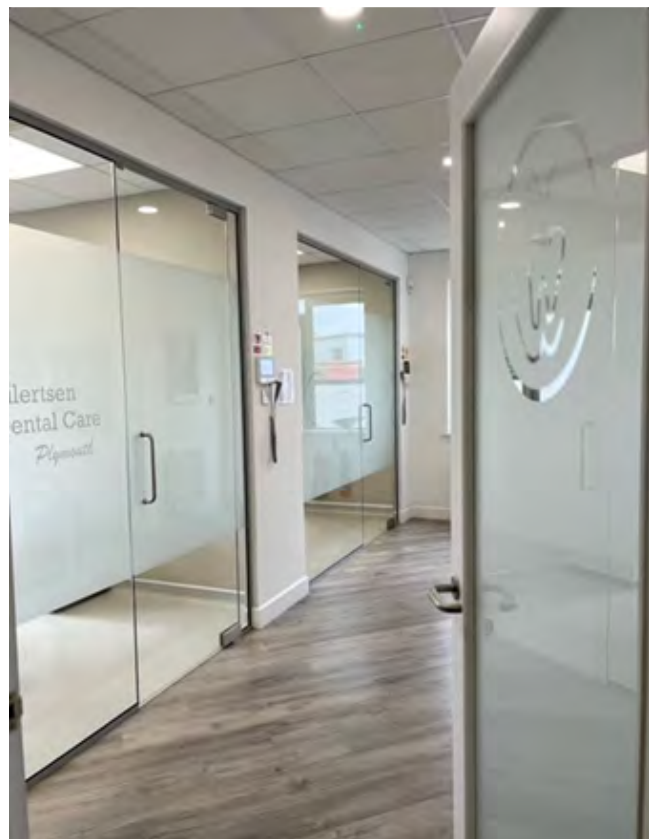
This, as well as the showroom appointment where John had discussed not just a dental chair's function and reliability, but also its important role in the patient's overall experience, had solidified my decision to use A-dec chairs.

I chose Decadent as the supplier, and the team organised the fit out. It was fantastic throughout the planning stage and right through to the build stage. The team at Decadent, alongside A-dec's customer service team, has continued to be supportive and helpful since opening and is always on hand to answer questions or help with issues.

After my visit to A-dec's showroom and seeing the quality and finish, we ended up fitting four A-dec 500 chairs. Alongside many benefits, these chairs have a soft start and stop function, which helps reduce the anxiety of the patient. We plan to finish the final surgery soon.

Working closely with the builders from the outset, I was able to make on-the-spot changes. Some alterations were made to maximise the space available. However, the essence of the space remained. A testament to the I-con, A-dec equipment and Decadent team, the build process was generally straightforward, apart from needing to install a powered drainage system, a drawback of changing an office into a five-surgery practice.

My biggest hurdle in the whole process was achieving the financial backing. High street banks were hesitant to lend, but Vector Finance was able to help secure funding to support my own input.





By June 2022, I had amassed a small team, and we were ready to welcome our first patient. However, this was delayed by two months as we waited for a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection.

The practice was finally signed off in August 2022 and, with days to spare, Software of Excellence and the internet cables were finally installed. The team was raring to go!

MARKETING

Throughout the planning, patients were able register their interest even before the building was completed.

I produced large A0-sized posters advertising the fact there was a new dental practice being installed, with QR codes linking to a Jotform database. There were Facebook and Instagram pages and an email address for patients to get in touch with us.

Targeted marketing, determination and the commitment of our team to introduce and welcome patients to the practice have played a huge role in its growth.

We initially began canvassing on foot, posting leaflets through residential doors. Again, I drew on my own background, producing designs that are then printed by Chris at Print Options in Cornwall.

Our marketing and word of mouth recommendations have been the biggest contributors to our success to date.

Opening a squat dental practice is a huge investment, in terms of both time and finances.

I have gone on to take part-time work at the university, teaching first- and second-year dental and dental therapy and hygiene students.

TEAM SPIRIT

To develop the team's dynamism, I have been encouraging events that are not core parts of the practice. In the first year, we saw some members of the team train and run in part of the Plymouth Marathon.

Having trained at Peninsula Dental School, I have maintained a good relationship with it, pursuing a master's in oral surgery, which I completed in November 2023. As a practice, we have significant links between the university and our staff, as several have trained there. Some of our nurses have engaged in training there and we have others who are aiming to join the dental therapy BSc in the future.

We also have an outreach team, which went to the local school to deliver oral hygiene instruction to the children. This is something I am keen to further develop. We are also strengthening links between the practice and Peninsula Dental School, which is a pioneer of interprofessional and community engagement, as part of its holistic teaching of undergraduate dental, dental therapy and hygiene courses. This year, we will also develop a series of sessions aimed at developing further training for all the team.

I would repeat this process in a heartbeat and indeed plan to in the future.

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London calling

Sarika Shah was captivated by a historic dock in the heart of the city, which went on to lay the foundations for her new coaching role

Women in dentistry often face gender bias, which requires them to work harder to prove their capabilities and overcome stereotypes. Balancing leadership responsibilities with childcare and household commitments can also be challenging for those who run their own business, impacting their work-life balance.

However, despite this, many female dentists find time to advocate for gender equality and help others navigate that same path. As is often said, if you want anything done, ask a busy person.

Sarika Shah is no exception. As the founder and owner of Platinum Dental Care, located in the Port East Building in London's Canary Wharf, she is ever mindful of the journey she has taken – and the stumbling blocks she encountered along the way. The challenges she faces juggling her clinic and business responsibilities with motherhood have shaped her leadership style and propelled her into a more advisory role. But more on this later.

In 2017, when Sarika and her husband, Rishi, who has a banking background, were considering investing in a dental practice, proximity played a part. They initially focused their search on the capital's suburbs. However, with a home in the city and, at the time, making regular visits to London's Harley Street for IVF treatment, a former dental practice in West India Quay caught their eye – and captured their hearts.

KNOWING THE DEMOGRAPHIC

With Rishi well-placed to understand the demographics and needs of a corporate clientele, they seized the opportunity. The convenience of not having to commute also had massive appeal.

'We were considering practices on the outskirts of London, but Rishi was working in the City, and we lived in Canada Water, just across the river from West India Quay. As a banker, he understood the demographic well – so our market research was relatively straightforward,' she laughs. 'Many of our patients are in corporate roles – banking, IT and law – and often work long hours, so they prefer to have essential services and amenities within a short distance from their workplace and homes.'

The clinic is charmingly unique and situated in a converted dock building. On her initial visit, Sarika immediately felt a connection.

The exposed brickwork and wood created a warm, welcoming atmosphere, starkly contrasting the clinical environments often associated with dental practices.

Step inside...

THE PRACTICE
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E14 4AE

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020 7531 1717

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WEBSITE
info@platinumdentalcare.co.uk



PRACTICE DESIGN

Over the coming years, they undertook two refurbishments, meticulously blending the old with the new to maintain the building's character while ensuring a premium feel.

Sarika recalls: 'The building felt very earthed, with a good vibe and energy. In refurbishing it, we had to ensure we kept everything in tune. We redesigned the surgeries and introduced two more surgeries and some office space. Rishi and I were very much involved with that – it was essential to blend seamlessly with the existing architecture, and even the colour of the wood matches.'

'We are detail-oriented, and minor observations can impact the most. Our patients are professionals, and I believe they appreciate that.'

'Walking into our front-of-house space, everything looks premium. We wanted to create a clinic with a hint of a boutique hotel, and our practice branding reflects this.'

'Ours is a dental practice focusing on patient care that embraces elements of the corporate world.'

PRIORITISING QUALITY

Sarika prioritised quality in every aspect of developing her practice – from materials and equipment to furnishing and the overall patient journey.

'We chose high-quality equipment, materials and tools to enhance the clinical experience,' says Sarika. 'As an associate, I worked with Belmont's folding leg-rest chairs because communication has always been important. Sitting the patient up to have a conversation at eye level is key to delivering the service I want to provide. I didn't wish to sit side by side, so we purchased three chairs in the luxury leather upholstery, allowing for better patient interaction and blending perfectly with the high-end appeal to our patient base.'

Offering a multidisciplinary approach, Platinum Dental Care continues to expand its cosmetic dentistry services.

'Dentistry is a delicate combination of art, science and communication,' says Sarika. 'I believe in developing partnerships with my patients by breaking down their anxieties, making bonds and building trust to create the perfect result.'

'My biggest achievement is when this result becomes life-changing for patients by making them more confident about their smiles and themselves.'

FLOURISH AS A FEMALE

This desire to change lives is reflected in her latest venture, too – but this time with her professional colleagues. Flourish as a Female is a two-day in-person course on self-leadership for all women across the industry. Participants can also have one-to-one mentoring or coaching with her. The initiative was borne out of her own experiences.

'Empowering women to find their voice is vital,' she says. 'Supporting other women on their journey is essential if you've found success in a particular area. Although success can be challenging, especially for women, shifting our mindset towards helping others succeed is crucial.'

'At 42, my experiences and observations have driven me to find my purpose. I am passionate about giving back, whether as a certified performance and mindset coach or in personal, clinical and business contexts. I see numerous ways to assist other women.'



Although the industry is rapidly evolving, traditional norms often burden women with household duties and childcare responsibilities, but Sarika maintains that open conversations are critical. She suggests we all need to find alternative solutions rather than close doors.

'When I was pregnant, I experienced a significant identity shift internally, mentally and hormonally,' she says. 'Self-leadership became a challenge, especially with a three-year-old son. It's a topic not often discussed. It's about changing mindsets and discussing things with partners. Rishi and I have had to do this. It's not an easy conversation because not everyone is open to it, but it can make a difference.'

And this applies to the workplace, too.

'At our practice, open communication is crucial. Regarding maternity leave, I ensure that associates feel supported and their roles are covered during their absence. This benefits everyone – from a business and personal perspective.'

'We plan for CPD, so they stay updated, which helps them avoid feeling deskilled or undervalued upon returning to work.'

'Maintaining an open space for discussion and being flexible ensures good staff retention. As practice owners, we must respect and value each team member's contributions, provide autonomy, encourage growth and foster a collaborative environment.'

'Building a human connection and breaking down hierarchical barriers contribute to a motivated and balanced work environment. And yes, while money is important, creating a supportive, inclusive and balanced workplace is crucial for a happy team, overall efficiency and everyone's long-term success.'



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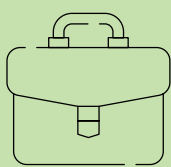
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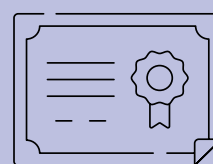
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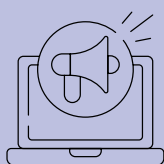
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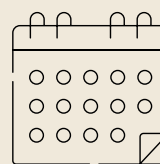
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FIND OUT MORE





The *perils* of company ownership

An ill-planned incorporation can turn sour. Here **Nathan Poole** highlights some of the key issues around incorporation and explains the risks that might await the unprepared

Q Do you recommend that your dentist clients incorporate?

A Yes and no! Some of our clients enjoy the challenges and opportunities that being incorporated brings and are happy to set aside time getting to grips with those issues. If clients prefer simplicity, then being self-employed can still be beneficial and we recommend they don't incorporate.

Often the best option when buying a practice using a large loan is to do so through a limited company because this brings significant tax advantages.



Nathan Poole

Nathan, a fellow member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, has made dentistry the focus of his working life, guiding dentists through the challenges they face to help them achieve fantastic results. He joined Ross Brooke Dental in 2020.

Q Are you aware of dentists who have got into difficulty?

A Sadly, yes. We are sometimes called upon to help dentists who incorporated without a good accountant. Usually, it's when it's time to sell their business that they or their broker realise they need help. It takes some effort to disentangle their affairs, which can delay the practice sale.

We expect to help our clients if they choose to incorporate so



they are never in the position of having to unpick a poorly managed incorporation.

Q It's surely the point of incorporation to protect yourself financially, so how can things go wrong?

A It's true that by setting up a company you are distanced from exposure to business debt – but you need to know what you are doing.

Moving the goodwill that belongs to a sole practitioner or a partnership into a limited liability company takes some finessing. Careful planning of how much and when funds are extracted is essential.

Through incorporation you can limit your tax liability, but you need to know what you are doing to make the most of it.

Q What kind of mistakes can be made?

A Well, one common example is the dentist who sees that their company has lots of money in the bank and decides to invest that money within the company.

When the time comes to sell the dental practice, any investments in the company could become part of the sale transaction.

Most often, the dentist will want to retain any investments and cash in the company and only sell the goodwill.

Restructuring the company to move the investments out, so only the dental practice is sold, can be complex.

Q What other kinds of difficulties can occur?

A By selling the goodwill and assets of the dental practice to a company, you are changing its status. As a result, you will need to inform all stakeholders about the change: your landlord, the Care Quality Commission, your bank (if you have a loan), the NHS (if you have a contract) and any patient membership scheme that you are signed up with.

Forget to inform any one of these organisations, and you could find yourself in difficulty.

Q So you don't personally own the dental practice goodwill anymore?

A Correct. Your company owns the goodwill, and you operate

through a limited company, which means there are restrictions on how you manage the company finances.

Most dental incorporations start with a high value of assets as the dental practice goodwill has been acquired by the company.

Q What else should dentists be aware of?

A When you sell the goodwill to the company, there will not be enough assets for the company to pay for it, so you create a director's loan account (DLA).

Instead of taking dividends, you can repay money from the company through the director's loan.

For our incorporated clients, the DLA is central to planning how we can maximise profits and minimise tax.

You may choose to pay no tax in some years but then plan to pay tax at the lower rate in future years.

You can also use the director's loan to average your earnings.

Q This is interesting. How do you do this?

A So, if you have a year when you take out a significant amount of money, you can choose not to balance the director's loan

THERE MAY BE CONSEQUENCES OF TAKING MONEY OUT OF THE COMPANY ON A WHIM

with dividends, which means you may owe money to the company.

In following years, when drawings from the company are lower, we will issue higher dividends to repay that loan, so that you are not paying high amounts of income tax for the year in which you borrowed significant sums of money.

Q Are there any hidden dangers to be aware of?

A If you were to go out of business and there were loans to the director in place, the liquidator would expect you to repay the money owing.

We know of an instance where a company owner was working with an accountant who failed to warn that the company was at risk. The owner thought he was protected from debt, not realising that he was responsible for repayment of the loans.

Fortunately, he was able to borrow £100,000 from his daughters – but who wants to have to turn to their children?

Q So, what is the moral of the story?

A It's very unlikely for a dental practice to go into liquidation, but it's worth being aware that when you have a company, there may be consequences of taking money out of the company on a whim.

The money in the company is not completely yours to do what you want with, unlike the assets of a self-employed person!

If a client wants to incorporate, we will draw up a detailed report examining the pros and cons so they can consider the decision in detail.

The moral of the story is to use your accountant for expert advice, that's what they are there for, not just for filling out and filing tax returns!



Ross Brooke Dental specialist dental accountants works with dentists, orthodontists and other dental specialists. To find out more, visit www.ross-brooke-dental.co.uk.

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Patient finance: help for those who need it

As more people choose to have dental implants and cosmetic dentistry, making treatment easily accessible becomes even more important, says **Toni Batty**

With more than 10 years' experience of using patient finance, Toni is well aware of the difference it can make to treatment uptake. Initially only used for implants, she has seen the scope of treatments covered widen considerably over the years.

'When we started offering implants, the patients were a certain demographic, usually the over 60s,' she explains. 'We are a referral practice, and we do a lot of implants and complex restorative cases. In fact, we have one dentist whose caseload consists mainly of restorative dentistry.'

'Now, our cosmetic dentistry patients are getting much younger. Often, they're young people who want perfect smiles. They want straight, perfect, white teeth.'

'Another of our dentists has a great Instagram following, where he promotes his composite bonding work, and he gets a good take up from this online presence.'

TREATMENT VALUE

As the type of patient seeking cosmetic dentistry has changed, Toni has seen the uptake of patient finance increase. The value of treatments covered by patient finance has widened as well.

'We get a lot of take up of cosmetic dentistry, with some £15,000 to £20,000 treatment plans,' she says. 'But then

we still get those patients who come in who are getting married in six weeks or six months' time and want tooth whitening or some minor restorative treatment. Those could only cost about £350, but patient finance is a way they can afford it as well. In that case, they would obviously only be paying back over a short period of time. So, the patient finance option is not just for the bigger treatments.'

'We like to think it's there for everybody who wants to have a little bit of help.'

However, as well as patient finance being used by people who would otherwise be unable to afford to take up a

treatment plan, she has seen patients using it to hang on to their own cash.

'Some patients are adopting the attitude: "I've got the money in the bank, but 12 months interest-free means I still have that money in case anything else comes along." It means they still keep their buffer for any emergencies that may arise.'

EASIER FOR EVERYONE

However, using patient finance doesn't only make life easier for the patient. As Toni says, using Medenta makes life simpler for her too. 'It's a really easy system to use,' she says. 'The reporting makes it straightforward for me to go in and check things.'

'I also like the fact that you can set up a plan, and the patient gets to know that it's been approved.'

'Sometimes they might come in for an initial consult, and they're told it's going to cost, for example, £6,000, but the treatment might not be starting for another three months.'

'However, they want to know that they've got that finance secured. So, the fact they can be reassured it'll be there is great for them.'

Allowing patients the facility to sign up online is another bonus for Toni. 'I like the fact that it's all done at home,' she says. 'Previously, when

we had to apply in the practice, I had to ask them questions about their finances, and that's not something that people are always

comfortable with. But this is all done online at home. That means all I get to know is the application's been accepted, it's been declined or it's been referred.'

To any practice considering introducing patient finance, Toni would urge them to go ahead. 'One of the big advantages is you get the fees upfront as soon as treatment has started,' she says. 'So, for longer courses of treatment, when the lab bills are coming in, you've already got the money in place and the dentist isn't having to cover it themselves. So, it really does work.'

PATIENT FINANCE IS NOT JUST FOR THE BIGGER TREATMENTS



Toni Batty

Toni is practice manager at Torrington Dental.

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Business *succession* and continuity planning

Rebecca Johnson highlights the importance of continuity planning to protect your business against unexpected eventualities and to ensure business succession

Business continuity and succession planning is a proactive measure that involves identifying critical positions within the practice and ensuring that the correct agreements are in place, underpinned with the right policies, to ensure that disruption to business and caring for patients is kept to a minimum in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

While many practice owners deem protecting their equipment, building and its content as fairly standard, often one of their biggest assets – that being the value of the people and the expertise within the business – is sometimes overlooked.

The people that work within your practice are crucial to its success. Some key questions to think about are:

- Would you be able to continue trading if you lost one of your partners, directors or a key member of staff within the practice? (This may be an employee with a specialist skill set or a practice manager)
- Who would be financially impacted by a partner or key employee being unable to work due to illness or death?
- How would you or any of your partners within the practice be affected by the death or illness of one of you?



Rebecca Johnson

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

- What would this mean to the long-term viability of the business, or the financial impact on the security of your family?

KEY PEOPLE

When considering how to protect your profits by protecting the key people in your business, identifying who these people are is the first step.

To give an illustrative example, let's imagine a practice whose top income generator is a dentist who brings in 50% of the practice revenue. This dentist also has longstanding relationships with all of the patients and is well known and trusted within the local community. Additionally, the practice has just taken on a £70,000 business loan from the bank.

Now, let's imagine that the key dentist is suddenly unable to work due to a serious health condition or death – what would this mean for the business? It is likely, in this scenario, that the profits would drop in their absence, the workload of other members of the practice would increase and locum costs would spiral.

Assuming a suitable locum could be found, the relationships with key patients could suffer as a result of the break in continuity and they may start looking elsewhere for treatment.

In the long term, the practice will need to find a replacement dentist. However, it may be that the

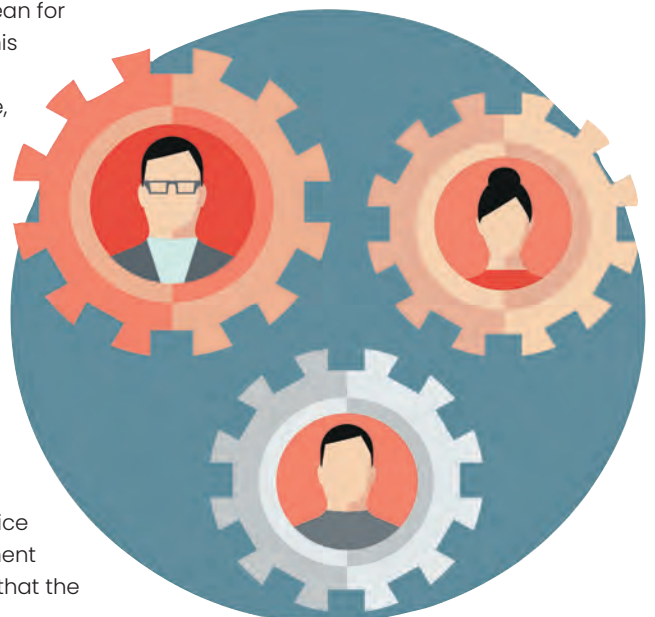
replacement's salary is higher, as they had to be brought in at short notice, and business recovery will be slow while they get up to speed and establish relationships with patients.

The practice may also struggle to maintain loan repayments during this time of instability, and other members of staff may not feel secure in their employment, potentially leading them to look at other job opportunities.

None of these are ideal circumstances when it comes to ensuring the profitability of a business.

If the business had undertaken financial planning and taken out cover for the key income generator, it could have been beneficial. The business would pay for the policy and might even get tax relief on the premiums.

If that dentist unexpectedly and suddenly could no longer work, the



WITHOUT THE RIGHT AGREEMENTS IN PLACE, YOUR BUSINESS AS WELL AS YOUR PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL POSITION COULD BE COMPROMISED

business profits might drop. However, the cover would pay out and provide funds to support the business's profitability. This would allow loans to be repaid and cover any unforeseen associated costs.

This financial support would help the business recover from the impact of the sudden permanent absence of one of the practice's key people.

Other key people within the practice should also be taken into account, as well as the main income generators – it is important to get an overview of the practice as a whole.

We know that we can't prevent uncontrollable events such as illness or even death, but we can protect ourselves in the best possible way against unwanted events that might occur.

PROTECTING OWNERSHIP

Another significant point is around the ownership of the business.

To give another example, let's imagine a scenario with three joint directors and shareholders of a practice. Each has invested significant time and money into the practice, and

the value of their share is continuing to grow. If one of them were to die, the others could carry on, although at a reduced turnover. It is highly likely that the shares of the deceased director will pass to their family, who may have no interest in the business or skills to contribute to the practice and may well wish to sell their share of the practice.

If the two remaining shareholders lack the funds to buy the deceased's share, they may be forced into a hasty sale to a third party. This would raise the funds needed to buy out the remaining share from the deceased's family. However, this situation could lead to working with an unanticipated third party.

This new person might not be the best fit for working relationships within the practice or as a key decision maker in business matters, including finances.

Additionally, the remaining shareholders may need to invest more time into the practice to cover the deceased shareholder's work. This could impact profits, unsettle staff and result in unforeseen costs.

If the business structure was a partnership, a similar situation could transpire if the remaining partners did not have the cover in place to be able to buy out the share of the business of the deceased partner.

One noticeable difference here, however, is if no partnership agreement was ever in place, then the Partnership Act of 1890 would be invoked, and, by law, this would mean that the existing partnership would be dissolved and there would be no business.

In both situations, had the shareholders or partners undertaken financial planning that ensured that the correct agreements were in place and underpinned by the right cover, prior to the death of their partner, the

shares of the deceased would still pass to the spouse, but the cover would pay out to the business. And the remaining partners would now be in a position where they would have the money to buy the spouse's share.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

When it comes to thinking about business succession and continuity, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- Have the partners in your practice left instructions or a will regarding their share of the business?
- Do you know what would happen to each partner's share in the business if they died or became critically ill?
- Have the risks of not having adequate protection arrangements in place ever been explained to you?
- Do you have a partnership or shareholder agreement in place?
- If you do have agreements in place, when was the last time they were reviewed and are they still suitable for your needs?

Without the right agreements in place, your business as well as your personal and financial position could be compromised.

If you do have all these documents in place but haven't got the financial policies in place to support them, that could also pose a significant problem as well.

SPECIALIST GUIDANCE

Specialist support and guidance can help to ensure the success and continuity of your business.

A dental specialist financial planner will work with you to understand your business and take the time to properly understand your needs and to create a bespoke business plan to mitigate the risk and ensure that what you have worked so hard to build is safeguarded once in place.

This also involves regularly reviewing your plans to ensure that they remain appropriate to your needs, keeping you in an informed position at all times.

You can book a no-obligation financial review with a dental specialist financial planner at Wesleyan Financial Services online at www.wesleyan.co.uk/financial-advice/specialist-financial-planners/dental or by calling 0800 316 3784.





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Improvements and renovations to premises

part two

In the second of two articles, **Adam Bernstein** explores how to avoid overpaying tax when doing work to improve your premises

Tax should never be the reason for a decision. However, when it comes to business matters such as premises renovation or improvement, understanding the law and principles involved can make a huge difference to the cost implications for dental premises.

Last month, we examined the differences in the types of expenditure. In this second and final part of the story, we turn to how to make the process tax efficient.

DETAILED INVOICING

When works are completed, a single invoice might cover a range of changes to your premises, such as building an extension and redecorating the existing staff kitchen.

In this instance, David Wright, a technical officer at the Association of Taxation Technicians, explains that the cost of the extension would be capital and only recoverable when the premises are sold, but the redecoration is a repair and so can be deducted for tax purposes when incurred.

As a consequence, he advises that 'whenever you commission building work covering more than one task, always ask for the invoices to be subtotalled by area or sub-project as appropriate'.

He says that doing this will help determine what tax relief is available now and what will be treated as capital.

CAPITAL ALLOWANCES

As we saw last month, with most capital expenditure on your premises, you have to wait until you sell to get any tax relief. However, not all is lost, as money spent on 'integral features' can qualify for capital allowances, meaning you can get tax relief much sooner.

Wright outlines that integral features are defined as items that make up your premises, rather than plant and machinery used in your business – 'put simply, they are things "in which" rather than "with which" your business operates'.

He says that qualifying integral features are strictly defined as electrical and lighting systems; hot and cold water systems (excluding kitchen and toilet facilities); lifts, escalators and moving walkways;

powered ventilation systems, and air cooling, heating or purification systems; and external solar shading.

It needs to be remembered that the cost of these assets qualifies for an annual 'writing down allowance' at a rate of 6%, which, says Wright, 'allows tax relief based on a small amount of the asset's value to be claimed each year over the course of its useful life'. He adds a rider – that solar panels, while not strictly integral features, qualify for the same tax treatment.

Now, in comparison to revenue-related expenditure, a 6% writing down allowance isn't particularly generous. However, Wright points out that 'many businesses will be able to get more tax relief sooner by claiming the annual investment allowance (AIA) against the cost of integral features in the year they're acquired'.

In explaining what AIA is, he says that 'it allows businesses to offset against their income up to £1m of expenditure each year on new integral features as well as most plant and machinery... you can't claim the two allowances simultaneously though – it's a choice of either AIA or writing down allowances in the first year'.

For most businesses, AIA will easily cover their eligible capital expenditure.



Adam Bernstein

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

But where a larger business spends more than £1m on qualifying assets, Wright reckons that 'it's most tax efficient to offset AIA against integral features first, as the writing down allowances for ordinary plant and machinery are 18% – three times higher than those available for integral features'.

STRUCTURES AND BUILDINGS ALLOWANCE

It can be painful to wait for tax relief on capital expenditure on buildings. But since October 2018, the cost of buying, constructing or renovating commercial premises for use in a trade can qualify for structures and buildings allowance (SBA). The allowance is currently 3%, meaning the qualifying costs are tax-deductible over 33.3 years.

Wright explains that 'leaseholders can qualify for SBAs on qualifying building works they pay for such as fitting out premises for their use, and if the lease is for more than 35 years they may even be eligible for SBAs on the original construction/renovation costs'.

But he offers words of warning on SBAs. Firstly, 'you can only get relief once, so the value of assets qualifying for capital allowances can't also be included in an SBA claim', and secondly, 'if you sell the premises, the amount of SBAs claimed will be added to your sale proceeds, so tax will eventually become payable on the amount of SBAs claimed'.

In cold cash terms, he says that for incorporated businesses, where capital gains are taxed at the same rate as profits, 'the only impact of SBAs may therefore be on the timing of when tax is payable – claiming SBAs could provide tax relief while the building is owned, with that relief effectively clawed back when the premises are sold'.

RECORD KEEPING

The range of different tax treatments for money spent on your premises is complicated enough when the works are fresh in your mind. But imagine the likelihood of recalling what work was done and successfully unpicking the financial implications years later in the event of an HMRC enquiry?

It's going to be remote, which is why Wright says that 'good record keeping is essential'. Further, he says that aside from the potential need to provide evidence to HMRC, good record keeping could also pay dividends later in the life of your business: 'You receive an invoice for building works covering repairs to your premises as well as some capital improvements, part of which qualify for capital allowances. If you come to sell the premises at a later date, you'll need to know which costs have benefited from tax relief and which can be offset against any profit on the sale.'

For SBA claimants, he warns that 'the fact these allowances can span more than 30 years is another strong incentive to keep accurate records, particularly as claims can be continued by the new owners where a property is sold part-way through that period'.

SUMMARY

Renovating or improving premises is an expensive business, but one thing is certain – taking the time to understand the rules and to work to them will make a project much less expensive.



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Logos: designing your identity

Shaz Memon shares what makes a good logo and the crucial role they play in brand identity

You could say my career started by creating logos that 'pop'. Growing up in a family of designers, as the youngest I was exposed to design tools from the age of eight.

Whenever my brothers left the house, I would try to create logos that were louder and cleverer than theirs.

As a creative designer, I know that the problem with logos that try really hard to be different through eye candy is that they aren't able to stand the test of time.

They aren't easily transferrable to different sizes due to legibility, they don't print well on all substrates, and when benchmarked against the leading brands we all love and transact with, well, it just looks like that glaringly cheap, poorly cut outfit at an exclusive dinner party.

What we love today will change very quickly. Approving a dental brand identity purely based on your own preferences, and without professional support, could mean that you come to hate your identity years on and have to start again much sooner than you would have liked.

This can be a difficult process, as patients have come to recognise the brand identity you once loved!

BRAND IDENTITIES

Brand identities (often confused with logos) evoke a feeling. Through shapes, typography and colours, logos



Large companies, including luxury fashion house Chanel and fast-food chain McDonald's, often use simple logos, which are versatile, impactful and easy to recognise



make us feel something about the brand and our perception of brand identities can change completely with a simple change in styling.

Did you know:

- BP paid \$211 million for a logo
- Accenture paid \$100 million for its rebranding
- Posten Norge, a Norwegian postal service, spent \$55 million on its new logo
- Wolff Olins charged \$625,000 for the infamously bad 2012 Olympic Games logo
- Tropicana lost an estimated \$137 million when its rebranding led to a 20% drop in sales.

I am not suggesting that spending more money equates to better results. Absolutely not. In reality, the designer likely received less than 10% of the total expenditure. Most of the money spent on these large rebrands goes towards consultancy, analysis and revisions, along with losses often caused by design by committee.

Big brands understand the financial impact of branding and identity. They know that defining their vision for the

brand they wish to become, who they want to attract and their roadmap are key to phenomenal execution.

Brand identities can grow, damage or alienate customers (or patients).

VERSATILITY

Before Digimax became dental-only, I once received a design brief from an incredibly talented lady who created custom-made handbags. She said that her bags were far superior to designer brands, and I believe her.

Her design brief was fixated on fitting in as a luxury bag designer while also standing out – which made sense.

When I presented a logo that I felt met this criterion, I heard the sentence that any designer dreads: 'I could have designed this myself in Microsoft Word.'

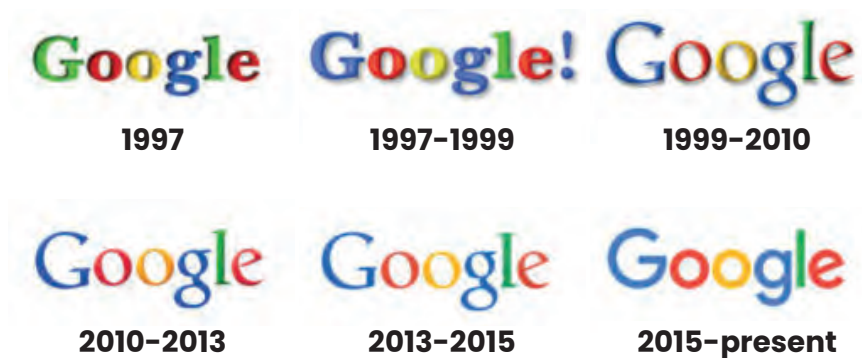
The logo presented was entirely custom, featuring a custom typeface. It was simple, chic and incredibly timeless – yet it was so basic that I could understand why a layperson would make such a comment.

I could see how this brand identity was outstanding by visualising its



Shaz Memon

Shaz is the creative director of Digimax Dental – a dental marketing agency.



Established brands such as Google and Coca-Cola understand the importance of evolving their logos with the times. Updating their logos is a carefully considered process



infinite applications, but the client couldn't. I guess a client needs to really understand branding to some extent and believe in its importance to get the most out of the process.

Large companies often opt for simple logos, despite their substantial budgets for branding. The reason behind this choice lies in the power of simplicity and recognisability.

Simple logos are easier to remember and recognise. They become synonymous with the brand, making it instantly identifiable even without the company name.

Think of the golden arches of McDonald's or the swoosh of Nike. These logos are so simple that they've become iconic.

Moreover, simple logos are versatile. They work well across various mediums, from billboards

to smartphone screens, ensuring consistent branding.

Complex logos can lose their impact when scaled down or simplified, leading to inconsistency in brand representation.

Additionally, simple logos are less likely to become outdated. They are not tied to specific trends or design elements, making them enduring symbols of the brand. This longevity minimises the need for frequent logo changes, reducing associated costs and potential customer confusion.

EVOLUTION

Large companies understand the importance of evolving with the times while maintaining their brand's essence. When they decide to update their logos, it's a carefully considered process.

For example, Google's logo evolution over the years showcases subtle yet impactful changes. It prioritises retaining brand recognition while modernising its image to stay relevant in the digital age.

The challenge for large companies during logo changes is to avoid disengaging their loyal customers.

They achieve this by transparently communicating the reasons behind the change and emphasising their commitment to delivering value. Coca-Cola successfully navigated this when it updated its logo, assuring customers that its core product remained unchanged.

A COMMON MISTAKE

A common mistake novice entrepreneurs make is thinking that the ultra-wealthy love the look of gold, marble and silver. Sure, these are

beautiful colours and textures, but that alone won't be the reason you attract most of your clientele.

You may have experienced this: most patients who can spend significantly on their dental treatment wouldn't stand out from a crowd based on their appearance. Many of the financially comfortable wouldn't describe themselves as rich, nor would they want to select a practice that is oozing with gold leaf. They tend to prioritise and value exceptional care, communication and a brand story over overt luxury.

This is where brands like John Lewis, Marks and Spencer and even Harvey Nichols have nailed it. None of these brands feel intimidating enough for the general population, but if you are affluent you can fit in perfectly and feel welcome!

My advice for private practices offering high-quality dentistry is to appear high-end through simplicity and a timeless design. Remember, dental logos don't need to be teeth!

When creating your dental brand identity, be open with your designer about the practice you wish to become.

Discuss the treatment split, and, ideally, outline your five- to 10-year plan. Share details about the kind of practice you are and who you attract, as this will be important for your designer to keep your brand relatable to the patients you currently attract.

By planning for the future, you can design the perfect identity that meets both current and future objectives.

Visit digimax.dental/branding to find out more about branding packages.



TIMELESS LOGOS

Timeless logos, like Apple's iconic logo, hold immense power. They remain relevant through changing times, fostering trust and loyalty. Dental patients come to associate your logo with quality and reliability, making it a cornerstone of your brand's success. The enduring nature of a timeless logo minimises the need for costly rebranding efforts and ensures a consistent brand image.

The power of positive posture

Barry Oulton asks: 'Are you sitting comfortably?' If not, you could be unknowingly sabotaging both your career and your personal life

Mental health in dentistry isn't just a topic for discussion, it's an urgent call to action. Data reveals that nearly one in five dentists considered suicide in 2019. This isn't just alarming – it's heartbreaking.

The good news? The stigma around mental health is finally starting to crumble. The bad news? Change isn't happening fast enough. Initiatives like World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September (visit www.iasp.info/wspd for more information) are pushing the conversation forward, but we need to do more, and we need to do it now.

I've been there. I know what it feels like to be overwhelmed by mental health challenges, to feel lost, alone and at times suicidal – during my divorce 15 years ago and after losing my mother five years ago.

These aren't just stories; they're reminders that every dentist, at some point, will face mental health struggles, and yet, when I went through mine, there wasn't any support readily available within our profession. That's changed, thank goodness, and there are numerous options now for support and assistance. But here's something you might not expect: one of the most powerful tools to start this change lies within your own body.



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 neuro-linguistic programming (NLP).

THE SILENT INFLUENCER

Stop what you're doing and check your posture. Are you hunched over, shoulders sagging, head bowed? This isn't just a habit – it's a statement. It's a physical manifestation of stress, fatigue, and even depression.

For dentists who spend hours a day in this stance, it's no wonder mental health issues are so prevalent. But here's the twist: the way you sit or stand doesn't just reflect how you feel – it actively shapes it.

Imagine this: every time you slump over, you're reinforcing a cycle of negative emotions. It's like programming your mind to stay stuck in a loop of stress and despair. But here's the empowering part: you can break that loop.

I urge you to watch Amy Cuddy's 20-minute TED talk – 'Your body language may shape who you are' – it could change your life. She proves that 'our bodies change our minds, our minds change our behaviour, and our behaviour changes our outcomes'. This isn't just self-help fluff; it's backed by hard science.

POSITIVE PHYSIOLOGY

Ready to take control? Start by standing up and throwing your arms into a 'V' shape. Picture Rocky Balboa at the top of those famous steps. Now bounce on your toes like a champion. This is a scientifically proven method to boost your confidence and shift your mental state. It's called power posing and it's a game-changer.

Dentistry demands a lot from your body, but that doesn't mean you're

powerless. Ergonomic tools like loupes can dramatically improve your posture, reducing the physical strain that drags you down.

Let's not forget the magic of movement. Remember how good you felt after you last exercised? That's not just coincidence – it's your body flooding itself with endorphins, the natural feel-good chemicals.

A NEW WAY OF LIVING

My own transformation came through neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). When I learnt NLP, I wasn't just learning techniques – I was unlocking a new way to live. As a master practitioner, I've gained the skills to understand and reshape my thoughts, turning my mind from an enemy into an ally. Believe me, this isn't just for the gurus – it's for everyone.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, don't wait – seek professional help now. You're not alone; in fact, mental health charity Mind reports that one in four people experience a mental health problem each year.

But don't stop there. Explore NLP for yourself. Visit barryoulton.com to start your journey. Your mental health isn't just a part of your life, it's the foundation. Build something strong, something resilient and something that can carry you through even the toughest days. Take control of your posture, your mindset and your life. You deserve to thrive, not just survive.

If you are struggling and need help and support, call the Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, on 116 123.



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Great expectations

As more patients turn from the NHS to private dentistry, their expectations for premium care and service are rising, says **Ahmad Nounu**

Private dentistry in the UK is undergoing a significant shift. With the decline of NHS services, patients are increasingly turning to private care, many for the first time. This shift presents both an opportunity and a challenge for private practices.

More than ever, patients expect superior service, advanced care and a personal touch when they choose private dentistry over the NHS. For many, this is a new experience, and their expectations are high.

To meet these evolving expectations, private practices must do more than simply offer appointments. They must focus on providing exceptional value, quality of care and an outstanding patient experience.

THE SHIFT TO PRIVATE CARE

The decline of NHS dentistry is no secret. Long waiting times, limited treatment options and overworked staff have led many patients to seek alternative solutions. With COVID-19 exacerbating the situation, private

dentistry has seen a surge in demand. Many patients are realising that private care offers flexibility, shorter waiting times and more advanced treatments.

For many of these patients, however, private dentistry is uncharted territory. They are accustomed to NHS care, which, although under pressure, is something they have relied on for years.

Transitioning to a paid service for the first time often leads to heightened expectations. Patients expect not just a more convenient service but a markedly better experience. This shift in patient expectation demands that private practices offer more than just clinical care – they need to provide a holistic, patient-centred experience.

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

When patients choose private dentistry, the overall experience matters. Patients are paying for what they perceive to be a premium service, and they want to feel that the extra cost is justified.

The key challenge for private practices is ensuring that every touchpoint of the patient journey reflects the value of private care. From the initial consultation to follow-up visits, every interaction must be

personalised, professional and patient-focused.

One of the most noticeable differences patients expect when transitioning to private care is communication.

In the NHS, consultations are often rushed, and communication is basic and centred on immediate needs, like filling cavities or treating specific issues. In private practices, however, patients expect dental professionals to take the time to explain their options, discuss preventive care and involve them in the decision-making process.

Practices must train their teams to engage in meaningful conversations with patients, building trust and ensuring patients feel heard. This is particularly crucial when discussing treatment plans that might come with a hefty price tag.

Dentists need to have the skills and confidence to explain why a treatment is necessary and the long-term benefits rather than simply presenting it as an option.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Private practices should offer a holistic approach to oral health. Patients increasingly expect dentists to focus on prevention, long-term planning and overall health and wellness.

Practices should take the opportunity to offer comprehensive treatment plans that consider not only the patient's immediate concerns but also their long-term dental health. This might include regular check-ups, cosmetic improvements and advice on maintaining healthy teeth and gums. Offering treatments such as cosmetic dentistry, tooth whitening or orthodontic services can enhance the



Ahmad Nounu

Ahmad is the visionary behind the Private Dental Mentor course, which offers a unique pathway into private dentistry.



appeal of private practices, as many patients look for treatments beyond the basic scope of NHS offerings.

Taking into consideration the ‘pain’ factor and being able to offer patients genuinely ‘pain-free’ dentistry can really set you apart from the NHS experience.

FLEXIBILITY AND CONVENIENCE

Many patients who move to private dentistry do so for convenience. Long NHS waiting lists and limited availability often leave patients frustrated. In contrast, private practices should offer flexible appointment scheduling, online booking systems and minimal waiting times to appeal to those seeking faster care.

Flexibility extends beyond scheduling. As a profession, we don’t love discussing fees and ‘selling’ treatments to our patients, but by building on the confidence to ‘sell’ patients will start to see the value in our offering.

With many patients new to the idea of paying for dental care, supporting this is the ability to offer affordable monthly payments or pay-as-you-go options. This can help patients feel

more comfortable with the transition and ease concerns about the cost of private care.

AVOIDING THE PITFALLS

One of the greatest dangers facing private dentistry is the risk of offering an NHS-quality service at private prices.

Patients who receive substandard care in private settings, especially if it mirrors their NHS experience, may never return to private dentistry again. Worse, they may spread negative feedback that tarnishes the reputation of the practice and private dentistry as a whole.

The crux of the problem lies in the training and preparedness of young dentists entering private practice. Due to the skill gap exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, many new dentists are ill-equipped to deliver the level of care patients expect in private settings. Without sufficient mentorship or experience, these young dentists may offer treatments that resemble NHS care, disappointing patients and damaging the private sector’s reputation.

UPSKILLING

To ensure private practices continue to meet rising patient expectations, it is essential to invest in the training and development of young associates.

Many are eager to move into private practice but lack the confidence and expertise to deliver the high-quality care patients demand. This is where mentorship and structured training programmes, such as the Private Dental Mentor two-day and year-long courses, play a critical role.

Private practices must equip new dentists with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in the private sector. This includes not only technical skills but also patient communication, confidence in discussing treatment plans and an understanding of the business side of dentistry.

By investing in their associates’ professional development, private practices can ensure that their patients receive the exceptional care they expect and deserve.

Discover more about Private Dental Mentor at privatedentalmentor.co.uk.

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Implementing 360-degree appraisals

In the second of three articles, **Pat Langley** discusses how to prepare and implement 360-degree appraisals

A 360-degree appraisal (also known as 'multi-source feedback') is like a traditional appraisal in its concept. It does, however, take a more holistic view of performance management. A 360-degree appraisal should not be used instead of a performance review. Instead, both should be augmented and blended.

A 360-degree appraisal is a process designed to gather feedback from several different sources in order to gain a different and much broader perspective to performance management.

The anonymous views and opinions of multiple colleagues and peers in conjunction with the employee's own self-evaluation provides a more rounded view of overall performance, skills and, most importantly, attitude, motivation and behaviours.

The feedback is collated and processed by the manager and used as a basis for discussion and future development during the 360-degree appraisal itself.

It will provide managers with an insight into the skills and behaviours of individuals who may have previously been unseen. In addition, it allows managers to develop behaviours that are in direct relation to the

practice, mission, values and goals. The 360-degree appraisal can also help the performance management process to become more objective, fair and consistent.

HOW TO PREPARE

It is crucial to carefully prepare your 360-degree appraisal process in order to see beneficial and positive results. Remember, this is a 'human' process and, as with any human resources system, needs to be objective, consistent and, above all, fair.

Here are the key steps in the process.

Explain it to the team

It is important that you take the time to clearly explain to your entire team the purpose and objective of a 360-degree appraisal. Be open and transparent when explaining what you are trying to achieve. Make clear the benefits to team members of conducting 360-degree appraisals.

Most team members will be happy and enthusiastic to become involved in a process that will ultimately benefit them. However, others may be hesitant or nervous. Make it clear that feedback will be anonymous. It is also vital to let team members know that their

feedback will not impact on individual bonuses or rewards.

Choose the right people

When choosing team members to give feedback, consider the following:

- The team member should have worked with the appraisee for at least six months
- Choose team members who have regular interaction. For example, for a dental nurse, you may ask the dentist they work with, a trainee they are supervising, the lead dental nurse or a receptionist
- You may wish to consider external stakeholders, such as referring dentists or locum hygienists.

Design the feedback form

You should be prepared to spend time and energy in creating your feedback form. How do you know what questions to ask? The most valuable way to do this is to discuss and plan your feedback form with the entire team. Ask them, what values and attitudes are important to us as a team? It is crucial to develop your own criteria to ensure the process is appropriate, personal to your practice and 'owned' by the team.



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.



360-degree appraisal: key steps

Here are the key steps to help prepare your 360-degree appraisal process:

1. Explain the purpose and objective of a 360-degree appraisal to the team
2. Choose the right people to give feedback
3. Design the feedback form
4. Create a self-assessment form for the individual appraisee to complete
5. Hand out the assessment forms, giving team members a deadline for completion and return
6. Upon completion, collate the information, ratings and scores from the anonymous feedback forms
7. Plan delivery of the performance review
8. Discuss the results with the appraisee and offer guidance and support in creating their personal development plan.

Individual assessment

In addition, you will need to create a self-assessment form for the individual appraisee to complete. The individual assessment form will mirror the team feedback form to some degree but will also ask more in-depth questions to the appraisee in terms of their own specific goals, achievements and performance. The individual assessment will be more detailed and will require more consideration.

Hand out the assessment forms

Give team members a deadline for completion and return. If you are implementing a 360-degree appraisal system for the first time, you may wish to reiterate the purpose and benefits of the process and the guarantee of anonymity.

Summary and review

Once you have received the feedback forms, spend some time collating the information, ratings and scores from the anonymous feedback forms. Along with your own feedback, create a summary of performance, attitudes and behaviours based on your practice values and beliefs and calculate an average rating for each feedback question. Write a detailed review that you can share with the appraisee during your meeting.

Plan delivery

As with any performance review, think about the time, location and environment of your performance review. Have you allowed enough time? Will you be free from interruption? In addition, think about how you will deliver the feedback and the main points that you would like to get across.

Remember that a 360-degree appraisal is a development tool designed to motivate and develop team members to their full potential. Think about how your feedback will determine and execute development, and consider how it will nurture positive behaviour.

Results

Discuss the results with the appraisee and offer guidance and support in creating their personal development plan (PDP). The key is in the follow-up. There is simply no point in implementing this process unless you are prepared to work with each team member on their PDP and schedule regular review meetings to discuss progress.

FEEDBACK

The feedback survey should include a series of 20 to 50 questions that measure a range of competencies, behaviours and abilities relevant to the successful performance of an individual and the business in which they work. Chosen team members rate individuals, usually using a five- or 10-point Likert scale, which allows questions to be measured in a quantitative manner.

The Likert scale is a quantitative scale where feedback raters choose an option that best represents their view. The scale can be one to five or one to 10, with one being 'poor'. It can also be used to assess how readily someone 'agrees' or 'disagrees' with a question or statement. Each survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

Key subject headings can be used by your team to consider and devise a range of four or five questions per subject heading based on your group values. Make sure that each question is specific and clear. Here are some key subject headings:

- Communication (an example statement here could be: 'He/she delivers written communication in a clear, considered and legible manner')
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Trust and integrity
- Patient care
- Planning and organisation.

The range of feedback will depend on the different perspectives of each team member giving feedback. This is the whole point of the exercise – to gather a range of varying responses in order to build a more holistic view of the appraisee's core performance and competency.

In addition to the rated questions, you should ask two or three direct, open-ended questions that require a more considered response to the performance of the individual. For example:

- In your opinion, what do you consider to be his/her prevalent strengths within the team?
- What do you most/least enjoy about working with this team member?
- In your opinion, what do you consider to be his/her prevalent strengths within the team?

Next month, I will go into more depth about the positives and pitfalls of using 360-degree appraisals.

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Prepare your practice for facial aesthetics

In their fourth article, **Shabnam Zai** and **Gizem Seymenoglu** cover the equipment, supplies and training your practice needs to expand into facial aesthetics

Once you've acquired the necessary training and certifications in facial aesthetics, the next step is to prepare your practice for these treatments.

Many training courses will advise on what products to buy. This article will guide you through the essential equipment, supplies and staff training needed to seamlessly integrate facial aesthetics into your dental practice.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

High-quality syringes and needles

Use premium-quality syringes and needles for precise and safe administration of injectables like Botox and dermal fillers.

Investing in the best tools ensures optimal results and minimises negative side effects. High-quality instruments provide greater control and accuracy, essential for delicate facial areas.

Dermal fillers and Botox

Source your dermal fillers and Botox from reputable suppliers to guarantee the quality and safety of the products. Preferred suppliers include Wigmore Medical, Med FX and Healthxchange Pharmacy.



Shabnam Zai

Shabnam is a cosmetic dentist, mentor and clinical director at West House Dental in Pinner. She also hosts the Filling the Gap podcast. See shabnamzai.com.



Gizem Seymenoglu

Gizem is a facial aesthetics practitioner. She runs a successful clinic in south west London and also sees patients at West House Dental.

Using products from trusted sources not only ensures safety but also maintains the efficacy of treatments.

Setting up accounts with suppliers can take time as they are required to make formal checks for prescription-only medicines. They usually ask you to provide proof of identity, proof of indemnity, and sometimes proof of qualifications, as well as your GDC number.

You can order stock on a case-by-case basis at the beginning, though having some stock in-house is good for time-sensitive patients and as a backup if needed.

Clean workstations

Maintain a clean and sterile environment for performing facial aesthetic procedures. Ensure that your treatment areas are equipped with all necessary decontamination equipment and disposable supplies.

This is easier in a dental practice but should be considered more when clinicians are treating in non-dental environments. Regular cleaning protocols and proper storage of tools and materials are vital for patient safety and reducing infection risks.

Additional equipment

Depending on the treatments you offer, you may need specialised equipment such as microneedling devices, laser machines,

radiofrequency needling devices and chemical peel applicators. Investing in the latest technology can expand your service offerings and attract a broader patient base.

Chair or bed

Many dental practices may have a clinical room that is not at full capacity, and a dental chair is perfect

for reclining and providing facial aesthetic treatments. If principals do not have a spare surgery, you can purchase a treatment bed (like those in massage parlours) and

provide treatments in any empty room very easily.

Associates can provide treatment in the clinical rooms while they provide their normal dental treatments. They may also choose to work in external, non-dental clinics, such as hairdressers or beauty clinics, to reach a different pool of clients.

Photography

Photography is an indispensable tool in facial aesthetics, serving multiple purposes from clinical documentation to marketing. High-quality before-and-after photos are essential for evaluating treatment outcomes, educating patients and demonstrating the effectiveness of your work.

A DENTAL CHAIR IS PERFECT FOR RECLINING AND PROVIDING FACIAL AESTHETIC TREATMENTS

BEST PRACTICE

Taking good photos involves consistent lighting, proper framing and a neutral background. Ensure that you capture the entire face from multiple angles to provide a comprehensive view of the results. Using a camera with high resolution is recommended to highlight subtle changes and details.

It's important to log and store these images securely, maintaining patient confidentiality in compliance with general data protection regulation. Implementing a systematic approach to cataloguing photos, such as by patient ID and date, helps in easy retrieval and comparison over time. Additionally, obtaining patient consent for using their photos in marketing materials is crucial, as it builds trust and adheres to legal requirements.

Proper photographic documentation not only enhances patient communication and satisfaction but also supports your ongoing professional development and quality improvement within the practice.

STAFF TRAINING

Training your team

Your staff play a crucial role in the successful integration of facial aesthetics into your practice.

Provide comprehensive training that covers theoretical knowledge and practical skills. A well-trained team can enhance patient experiences and streamline treatment processes. They should understand what problems the treatments solve and the results achievable.

Front-of-house and other members of the dental team can cross-refer and educate patients on treatments offered and really get the new services busy from day one. Representatives of aesthetic suppliers are happy to come and assist practices in setting up, ordering stock and training the team.

Training should include recognising potential complications and knowing when to alert the clinician.

Workshops and seminars

Encourage your team to attend workshops and seminars on facial aesthetics. These learning opportunities can improve their understanding of the treatments and their ability to assist during procedures.



Continuing education helps your team stay current with the latest techniques and trends. It also creates excitement and greater engagement within the team.

Patient consultation and aftercare

Train your staff to handle patient onboarding and aftercare effectively. They should be knowledgeable about the treatments offered, potential risks and post-treatment care instructions.

Providing exceptional patient care at every step of the treatment journey enhances patient satisfaction and loyalty. This also alleviates the pressure on the clinician to manage everything, allowing for a more efficient workflow.

PRACTICE LAYOUT AND WORKFLOW

Designing the treatment area

The dental chair is the perfect environment to provide facial aesthetic treatments.

Consider where you will keep your

equipment and stock of materials. Ensure the area is comfortable for both you and the patient, with easy access to all necessary tools.

Streamlining workflow

Facial aesthetics workflow is very similar to dental procedures and requires a regular maintenance schedule.

Optimise appointment scheduling, patient consultations and follow-up visits by creating specific treatment codes with correct appointment times. Digitise all paperwork and consent forms so they are easy to find and complete for all team members.

Efficient scheduling and digital record-keeping can significantly enhance the patient experience and operational efficiency.

CLINICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Chaperones

Some clinicians, when they work in beauty clinics, work without an assistant. In dental practice, if a nurse is available, I strongly recommend always having a chaperone.



The nurse can assist the clinician, complete all the decontamination processes and act as a witness.

The nursing team can be involved in giving aftercare and follow-up instructions to patients as well as handle any postop complications and understand how to escalate them when needed.

Clinical waste

Clinicians need to dispose of sharps and materials appropriately in the correct clinical waste containers.

Botox is a cytotoxic drug and must be stored and disposed of safely.

Consent and paperwork

The admin team should be aware of paperwork to be completed and consent forms to be signed before treatment. There will be bespoke consent forms for each procedure.

Treatment codes need to be created and uploaded onto dental software, so estimates and plans can be easily generated and treatment tracked and booked.

Emergency drugs

If providing fillers, it is important to keep a stock of hyaluronidase in the medicine fridge. This is a drug that dissolves hyaluronic acid dermal fillers when they are placed incorrectly, or a patient wants them removed. It is also used in emergencies and fortunately works very fast when dermal filler has accidentally been injected into an artery.

Photos and testimonials

Create a system to collect photos and testimonials as part of your clinical workflow so it doesn't get forgotten. The before-and-after images will provide evidence of results and credibility.

COLLECTING FEEDBACK

When starting a new service, it's important to reflect and monitor how things are going. The best way to do this is by going over case photographs and feedback from patients.

Encouraging feedback

Encourage patients to provide feedback on their experience with

your facial aesthetics treatments. Use various methods such as surveys, follow-up calls and online reviews to gather their input.

Patient feedback provides valuable insights into their satisfaction and areas where you can improve. Creating a structured feedback system helps you identify trends and make informed decisions about service improvements.

Consider implementing anonymous feedback options to ensure patients feel comfortable sharing honest opinions.

Utilising feedback for improvement

Actively respond to patient feedback, addressing any concerns or suggestions for improvement. This demonstrates your commitment to patient care and helps build trust and loyalty.

By responding promptly, you show that you value their opinions and are dedicated to providing the best possible care. Use feedback to refine your treatment techniques, enhance patient communication and improve overall service quality. Regularly reviewing feedback with your team can foster a culture of continuous improvement and excellence.

Review clinical processes

At the end of each clinical day, debrief to see what went well and what could go better. This will help highlight areas where more training is needed, protocols that need to be clarified and in turn prevent any issues in the future.

PROVIDING HIGH-END CARE

Integrating facial aesthetics into your dental practice is a straightforward process that can significantly enhance the range of services you offer. By ensuring you have the right equipment, comprehensive staff training and an efficient workflow, you can seamlessly introduce these services and provide high-quality care to your patients.

If I can be of any help to anyone thinking of setting up a squat, buying a dental practice or setting up new services, feel free to contact me. Stay tuned for the next article, which will explore marketing strategies to promote your new facial aesthetics services and attract new patients.

Klinik DeMedici

Zirkonzahn offers educational training on real patient cases, focusing on the interdisciplinary collaboration between dentists and dental technicians

Founded in 2019, the Klinik DeMedici is one of Zirkonzahn's nine training centres located in the Aurina Valley (South Tyrol, Italy). This education facility has been designed to host events focusing on interdisciplinary collaboration between clinics and laboratories, offering educational training for dentists and dental technicians to optimise patients' care.

A dental restoration can be well done and highly aesthetic from a dental technical perspective. However, whether it does justice to its true function and develops the desired aesthetics is solely defined in the one place it's used – the patient's mouth. For this reason, most training is performed on real patient cases, allowing participants to learn in a real-life situation and verify the results in situ.

All courses are provided by experienced and qualified dentists as well as dental technology experts. Surrounded by the beautiful

landscapes of the Italian Alps, participants can learn innovative dental treatments and technologies depending on their aims:

- **Computer-based dental diagnostics course:** the course, organised in collaboration with the inventor of the PlaneSystem®, MDT Udo Plaster, is focused on Plaster's innovative working method for digital patient information acquisition. The course aims to teach how to record and transfer patient data 1:1 into the digital world without losing information, including insights into physiotherapeutic approaches
- **Digital workflow course:** with theoretical and practical sessions, participants explore all the possibilities that Zirkonzahn's software, equipment and materials offer. Trainers explain how each workflow component perfectly combines with the others forming a seamless and well-coordinated workflow, and how communication between the clinic and dental laboratory is considerably optimised
- **Prettau® Skin® course:** this new course is meant to provide dentists and dental technicians with the necessary skills for producing ultra-thin Prettau® zirconia veneers (0.2 mm). Through targeted contents, participants can learn how to produce, prepare and cement the ultra-thin veneers based on a proven protocol developed by Zirkonzahn, including technical and

clinical working steps. Next available dates: 6 – 7 February 2025!

- **Preparation course:** another new course focusing 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. Next available dates: 13 – 14 February 2025!

All events are organised over two or three days, including moments of conviviality and joint meals immersed in the traditional South Tyrolean atmosphere. The Klinik DeMedici is located a few kilometres away from Zirkonzahn's headquarters, allowing participants to arrange a visit to the company's headquarters and production sites. Guided by an employee, participants can walk 'behind the scenes', watching Zirkonzahn at work and getting a better understanding of the work philosophy that drives the South Tyrolean company day by day.



Zirkonzahn's doors are always open: arrange a company tour and discover where it all began!

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For more information on upcoming events at the Klinik DeMedici, call +39 0474 06 6650, email education@zirkonzahn.com or visit www.zirkonzahn.com.

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 **Colosseum Dental Careers**



Creating an *oasis* of calm

Smita Mehra charts her journey from associate to running a successful group of practices

Q Tell us about your journey from being an associate to a principal dentist

A I first qualified as a dentist from the University of Birmingham back in 1997 and started my career at the university as an associate, working predominantly as an NHS dentist as well as in mixed practices. I then moved to London and carried on my associate work before taking the plunge to venture out and start up my first squat, The Neem Tree Dental Practice, in 2004.

At the time, I decided that I wanted to work within and own a practice that was predominantly focused on patient care. I wanted one that had a spa-like quality to it, offered holistic treatments and which allowed patients to see dentists at times such as evenings and weekends – something that wasn't offered by other dentists at the time we founded the Neem Tree.



Smita Mehra

Smita is principal dentist at The Neem Tree Dental Practice. She qualified as a dental surgeon in 1997. She opened her first Neem Tree in 2004 as a practice focusing on holistic dentistry and a patient care/customer service. She has since opened two further Neem Tree practices, in the Canary Wharf area of London and Esher in Surrey.

When we opened the first Neem Tree back in 2004, I was pregnant with my first child, meaning that I needed help running the practice as I'd be going off on maternity leave just weeks after starting up.

I immediately hired two associates to help me out while I was on maternity leave. Within the first month of having our baby, I was back in work one day a week to help run the practice as principal dentist.

However, over time, as we grew as a business, I took a step back, and the practice became, and still very much is, associate led, with me getting involved in wet-handed surgery as and when I'm needed.

Q How did you end up setting up The Neem Tree Dental Practices?

A At the time, holistic and spa dentistry weren't really common practices, and so that's what we wanted to do by opening up The Neem Tree – to give people a very pleasant and luxurious experience.

THE PAST 20 YEARS HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN A ROLLERCOASTER FOR US

As we expanded, I really invested in the practice to make it as patient centred as I could – working with designers to make the clinic feel more of a lifestyle-based surgery as opposed to having a white and blue

clinical feel. We even offered shiny green apples every day, so patients and staff had a healthy snack to take with them following their appointments.

This was essentially the inspiration behind it – to offer something unique and luxurious that a lot of people did not have access to.

Many of our patients living in Wandsworth, London, worked in the City and Canary Wharf, and they started to say that they could really do with something like our clinic closer to work. So, we opened a second practice in Canary Wharf, in the basement of the world HQ tower of Barclays Bank, and a third one in Esher, Surrey.

Following on from that, we also had a partnership arrangement in two other locations: Fleet Street and Notting Hill. All squat practices, all The Neem Tree.

The Neem Tree

With practices in Wandsworth, London, and Esher, Surrey, The Neem Tree Dental Practices combine expert dentists and cutting-edge technology with personalised, holistic dental care tailored to individual needs.

WEBSITE
theneemtree.co.uk



Along the way, we decided we wanted to grow our two main sites, Esher and Wandsworth, and dissolved this partnership and sold our Canary Wharf site. This ended up being the best decision we made, and Esher and Wandsworth have gone from strength to strength in the past 20 years, with a total of eight chairs between the two.

In the future, we hope to grow these sites even more and eventually open up new locations.

Q How have you dealt with the ups and downs of the past 20 years?

A The past 20 years have certainly been a rollercoaster for us, and there have been certain ways we've had to adapt to keep the business the best it can be. Dealing with that has been tricky at times but also extremely rewarding.

For example, in 2010, during our growth, personal circumstances meant that I had to take a step back from wet-handed surgery myself and take my eye off the ball slightly.

As The Neem Tree was an associated model, I was extremely grateful that the business wasn't affected too much, despite me not being around much.

It meant that I was able to take time off from the practice and leave it in the capable hands of my fantastic team and dentists to look after and offer the same luxury patient-focused care we had been offering since we started.

Now, 20 years later, we can really take advantage of this success and treat the team to say thank you for all its hard work. From time to time, we have taken the team away for trips abroad as a thank you.

Most recently, a few months ago, we took the Wandsworth team to Palma, Majorca, to celebrate our 20th anniversary. Being able to do that and look back on all that we've achieved as a business is so lovely to see, and I am very grateful to have the team I do.

I'm really excited to see how the next 20 years will look for us as a team.

Q How did the bootcamps for other dentists looking to set up their own practice arise?

A The dental bootcamps are something that we've always offered since we began 20 years ago, because we have a sister business run by my husband, Arun, called Samera.

Samera is made up of chartered accountants and dental business growth experts who are professionals at offering advice and will help you to grow your business while you focus on the important clinical aspects.

So when The Neem Tree first started, we also wanted to help others with starting their clinics and sharing our mistakes. Twenty years ago, it wasn't that common for people to open squat clinics. Instead, they preferred the security of a going concern by buying an existing clinic. The bootcamps allowed us to solidify our unique offering that lots of other dentists didn't have at the time but many wanted.



As a result, each year we have offered one to three day boot camps for dentists looking to start out on their own, where we talk about the step-by-step approach to creating their own dream dental clinics. We introduced them to lawyers, builders, dental engineers and more. We essentially run through everything that they need to know: how you get planning permission, how you create a vision, putting together a thorough business plan, how to get the finance in place, how to recruit staff, how to market a business and more.

Since we've offered this, we've had lots of clients and dentists who have worked with Samera go ahead and set up successful practices, and we're very happy to experience and celebrate that success with them.

Overall, the past 20 years have been the most rewarding journey, and I'm proud to see how far we've come since 2004 and what the next 20 years will bring.

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SWALLOW

An overview of the orthodontic market

Paul Graham speaks to Guy Deeming about the UK orthodontic market

Paul Graham: How have you seen the demand for orthodontic treatments evolve in the UK over the past few years, particularly with the rise of clear aligners like Invisalign?

Guy Deeming: There's no question that orthodontic treatments across all age groups and genders have been increasing over the past decade or two. There are no signs of that abating, and the recent flurry of market activity around direct-to-consumer aligners, and indeed the new market entrants in the aligner space, have done nothing other than accelerate interest and public awareness in the sectors.

So, people are looking more and more towards a conservative alignment of the teeth, followed by more conservative cosmetic treatments, such as cosmetic bonding and whitening, as opposed to invasive restorative-type treatments.

The commercial forces at play are now far greater than they ever were, and that's a very sure sign that the market is going to continue to develop and mature.

Paul: How has the integration of new technologies, such as 3D imaging and digital treatment planning, impacted

the efficiency and outcomes of orthodontic treatments?

Guy: Alongside the general changes in the orthodontic space, particularly around clear aligners and some of the digital planning tools, there's now a whole inventory of patient-facing tools, such as the digital 3D scanners, apps, artificial intelligence (AI) monitoring, virtual care and dental monitoring of treatment, as well as the AI-underpinned triaging of scans and photographs.

I think, for me, the most exciting thing is that treatments are less demanding of patients in terms of the impact on their personal time, but it is also much more interactive and allows patients to engage and be involved with their treatment much more so than they ever were, without the need for direct dental chair access.

Orthodontic treatments are fitting into that technology space in a much more convincing way than they ever did before. The big battle that we now face is to truly integrate all the tools that we have into a much more cohesive digital stack so that we can enjoy the synergies and the efficiencies that will come as a consequence of those end-to-end solutions and ecosystems.

Paul: What are the primary concerns or expectations of patients when they seek orthodontic treatment, and how do you address these?

Guy: Some of these are fairly obvious aspects in terms of crowded or spaced teeth, but we do see a number

of patients who look beyond the pure cosmetic, towards rehabilitation prior to restorative treatment on the recommendation of a restorative or general dentist. We also see patients with ongoing concerns about tooth wear as well as some functional concerns.

I don't really think these are set to change, although I would say that the general drive towards a more cosmetic dental appearance is something in the UK that we have seen grow incrementally over the past two or three decades, and there is no sign of that changing.

However, I think there are some challenges here. This is where orthodontists and dentists have a really important part to play in terms of managing those expectations because there is very much a cohort of patients who come into a treatment with an expectation that isn't always possible. Identifying those patients and managing those expectations before, during and beyond treatment is a critical part of ensuring a good outcome for the patient and an easy life for clinicians across the board.

Paul: Could you discuss the differences in orthodontic care provided under the NHS versus private practice and the challenges associated with each?

Guy: NHS care is the mainstay of the majority of orthodontic practices across the UK and I think it will remain so. The NHS remains committed for the time being, although there is



Guy Deeming

Guy is a partner at Queensway Orthodontics, where he focuses on delivering high-quality orthodontic care using the latest technologies, and he is actively involved in teaching and mentoring trainee orthodontists.



Paul Graham

Paul is managing director – medical at Christie & Co.

increasing downward pressure on price points.

The diversification of the workforce and utilisation of technologies has meant that orthodontics has been able to maintain some competitive element in that NHS market, where general dental colleagues have maybe found that more challenging.

For those patients that qualify under the age of 18, NHS orthodontic care remains a viable business proposition but also an incredibly important part of dental healthcare for those younger patients.

I think there may be some refinements and changes, especially with the new government, as the real pinch point comes in terms of NHS spending. I think there will remain some elements of government commitment to NHS funding for orthodontic treatment, although I equally know that it will become increasingly challenging to deliver that to a high-quality point.

Orthodontic treatment across NHS and private is always done to a high standard regardless and is always done ethically and appropriately. The choice for NHS versus private for those that might qualify is based on qualifying criteria, choice around clear aligners or ceramic aesthetic appliances and, of course, there's an increasing volume of adult patients who are above the age of NHS treatment seeking orthodontic treatments and so are funding that.

Paul: What are the main challenges orthodontists face today in the UK, both clinically and administratively?

Guy: There are challenges around an increasingly competitive market, medicolegal challenges and managing patient expectations. There are also ones around disruptive market entrants, particularly around direct-to-consumer space. The other big challenge is that the software and the integration of software need to catch up with the ambition in the sector, but I'm reassured that the technology companies are finally catching up and are keen to solve that problem.

Paul: How do current UK dental regulations impact your practice, and are there any changes you would like

ORTHODONTIC TREATMENTS ARE FITTING INTO THAT TECHNOLOGY SPACE IN A MUCH MORE CONVINCING WAY THAN THEY EVER DID BEFORE

to see in the future?

Guy: The General Dental Council (GDC) being the main regulatory body presents something of a challenge in that, as new technologies, in particular, emerge, understanding the regulatory implications of those are incredibly difficult as the GDC is often very reluctant to speak clearly on such points. As regulated professional individuals, we would only find out once in a tribunal or a fitness to practise hearing whether our decision to use and implement that technology was appropriate.

That's a very challenging way to operate, and it's also a disappointment that those technologies and the benefits are often denied to the clinical workforce and, ultimately, to patients.

Paul: As someone involved in teaching trainee orthodontists, how do you see the future of orthodontic education evolving in the UK?

Guy: Education and training of orthodontic trainees I think is done extremely well by lots of my colleagues in secondary care. I think we will, once again, over the next five to 10 years, see increasing interest in training across primary care, mainly because the exposure to primary care where most individuals end up working is very limited within that secondary care training environment. There continues to be huge enthusiasm and a hugely talented group of younger dental colleagues seeking to enter orthodontic training, and that is always a source of satisfaction.

Paul: How do you maintain a competitive edge in a market with increasing competition from direct-to-consumer orthodontic products?

Guy: Firstly, a rising tide raises all ships. Once you see a more diverse and a bigger market, that tends to bring the whole market up with it to some degree. It also creates a more discerning consumer base, and

consumers, as they would if they were booking a holiday, will tend to do their own market research.

That means that your public-facing presence, in terms of your online review status, social media, newsletters and your team, needs to be strong, consistent and authentic to your brand.

It's also important to remember that those direct-to-consumer products are not offering a service; they're offering simply a material product.

Paul: What strategies do you find most effective in maintaining patient engagement and ensuring adherence to treatment plans?

Guy: Simply watch people behave and respond differently, and that's very simple, in that when we use things like virtual care or dental monitoring to support our aligner patients, they know that they are being watched, therefore they adhere and comply more. That's well established across all areas of healthcare and, indeed, life.

The other thing that's critical in team training is to make sure that every single member of your team is consistent and confident in reinforcing core messages around continuing to see your dentist, maintaining appointments, wearing your retainers and having the assets and resources available to support and reinforce that.

Paul: What advancements or trends do you foresee shaping the future of orthodontics in the UK over the next decade?

Guy: I think we're going to see further integration across technology and much more interaction with applications that patients are already using, whether that's social media platforms or the things that have yet to be invented. I think we're going to see a much more digitally-orientated team, therefore there will be much less need for physical infrastructure, chair time and chair space.

I also think we're going to see continued challenges over recruitment and retention. Therefore, the jobs in the orthodontic space that will need to be done will effectively look and feel like new jobs that simply did not exist when we look at the old roles of dental nurse, orthodontist, therapist.

That's a very exciting thing in terms of career progression, but it's also a challenge to look beyond the current model and work out how we can make the best of the opportunities that are coming around the corner. That very much is around digital transformation rather than digitisation of our current practice. It's about using digital tools to change what we do, rather than to replace or replicate analogue into a digital space.

Paul: Given the limited contract reform undertaken in orthodontics over the past few years, how do you see the impact on the value of practices that are yet to receive the seven-plus-three contract extension and the impact on the value of those that have limited time remaining on the seven-plus-three-year contract cycle?

Guy: Ultimately, the market will decide, won't it? The problem with the NHS orthodontic contract is that, really, it just represents one customer, and it's well known by anybody who's ever owned a dental business as close to the NHS that it is very much at the whim of the NHS, depending on how their commissioning models look at the point in time that your contract ends.

That said, this is a fear that's been with us for nearly 20 years now, and here we are. Goodwill values continue to be attached to NHS contracts, albeit subject to the ebb and flow of market forces, and I don't see that changing.

I also see, particularly with the new government, a move towards a less free market approach to healthcare tendering, and I suspect that will probably be from the point of view of a provider with an incumbent contract, which is a good thing.

Now, whether that will ultimately limit the opportunity for new market entrants to bid for those contracts where there is demonstrable evidence that a contract has been delivered to a high standard that is competitive with market value, I don't know. My gut says that we will see some degree of attenuation around the rather aggressive procurement strategies that we've seen in the past. That will have a positive impact on the value of those contracts where there is less threat of those being lost.

My advice for those who are coming towards any stage of an NHS contract would be to look towards developing the private side of their business as enthusiastically as is possible, because that sustainable value and that brand that will be attached to your business is not subject to the same risks and threats and will only have a positive impact on the goodwill. The follow on from that, of course, is that it is also a very smart move, as a practice owner, to take yourself as far out of the clinical delivery model as possible to maximise the associate-led aspect of your business.

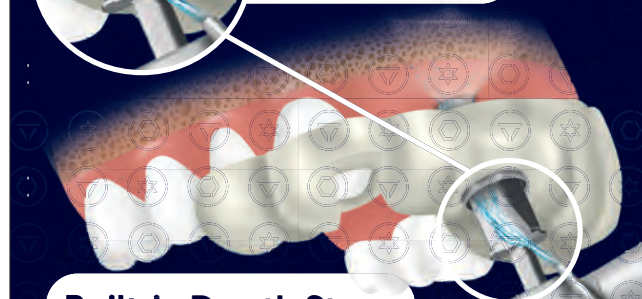
Christie & Co will be at the British Orthodontic Conference in Birmingham on 16 to 18 October 2024, with Paul Graham and Christopher Vowles discussing the UK market. For more information, visit www.bos.org.uk/boc2024.

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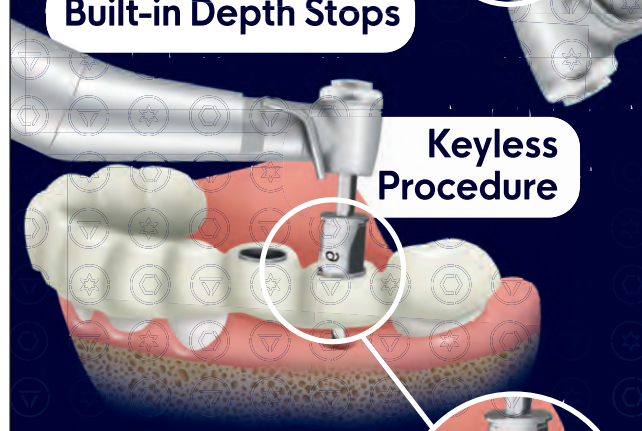
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Owning it

This year sees The Orthodontic Clinic celebrate its 10-year anniversary with **Lisa Currie** and **Ivin Tan** at the helm. *Private Dentistry* catches up with the owners to discover their biggest challenges, achievements and how they plan to celebrate this milestone

This year marks 10 years of ownership of The Orthodontic Clinic for directors Dr Lisa Currie and Ivin Tan, who took over the specialist practice in Aberdeen in 2014. Since then, the owners have been on quite the journey. We speak to Lisa and Ivin to hear their story.

THE DIRECTORS

Lisa: I was born in Australia, but grew up in Malaysia for most of my early childhood. I moved to sunny Scotland for my secondary education.

As a hybrid of my Chinese-Malaysian mother and my Scottish father, I like to think I have inherited the best bits of both of these wonderful cultures. I have lived in Scotland since I was 13 years old but regularly travel back to Malaysia to visit family.

After gaining my BDS at Dundee Dental School in 1996, I completed my vocational training, held various senior house officer (SHO) jobs, then carried out my specialist orthodontic training in Edinburgh. I was awarded my MOrth (RCSEd) in 2003.

I went on to complete my consultant training (FTTA) in Birmingham and Stoke-on-Trent and was accredited as a consultant orthodontist in 2006. I soon took up the position of consultant orthodontist at Borders General Hospital/Edinburgh Dental Institute, a post I held for four years.

I moved out of the hospital service and came to Aberdeen in 2010 when

I became clinical director of The Orthodontic Clinic. Four years later, in 2014, Ivin and I bought the clinic and in the autumn of 2018, we moved our practice to the new premises where we are based today.

Ivin: I am Chinese-Malaysian and was born and grew up in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I have always been very creative. After school, I studied fashion, working in a fashion house for three years. After that, I wanted to explore my interest of art and graphics so I did a graphic design course while working as a sales and marketing executive. At the age of 27, I decided to start my own printing and design company, which I ran successfully for 10 years. After I met Lisa in 2006, I sold this company and moved to the UK the following year.

When the opportunity arose to purchase The Orthodontic Clinic, Lisa and I decided to fully run the business – she as the clinical director and myself as the managing director.

THE CLINIC

Lisa: The Orthodontic Clinic was

originally established in 2006 under different management. By 2013, the clinic was going through some struggles and was on the verge of closing. We saw the opportunity for turning the business into a success, so when the previous owners decided to sell in 2014, we purchased it.

With my clinical experience and Ivin's business acumen, we had faith in our abilities to transform the practice and had a clear vision of what the company could be. We had a dream of creating an amazing clinic where our staff and patients could have an experience like no other, providing the best patient care in the most comfortable surroundings.

Buying the clinic was a very challenging time due to the inheritance of some problems. It was particularly tough taking over treatments that had been previously planned by a different clinician who had since left the clinic, remedying mistakes and restoring balance both in the clinic diary as well as managing finances, stock control and staff.

We had to restore the clinic's



The Orthodontic Clinic: the vision

TO CREATE A PRACTICE:

- Where patient care is the priority
- That provides clinical care in the most comfortable and relaxing environment possible
- Where the staff are proud to belong and where patients feel a pleasure visiting
- Where team members feel that they are more an extended family rather than staff members
- Where there is a close relationship with local businesses and the community and the clinic can give back and support charities.

reputation, raise standards and build back the trust in the community and with our dental colleagues. We were grateful for their support and believing in us.

Despite all of this, we knew we could grow the business into something great. We persevered, knuckled down and stuck it out.

Ivin: It was important to us that the staff could count on us to hold the ship steady. We promised there would be no job cuts, no salary reductions and for the business to carry on as usual.

At the beginning, times were tough, but we worked hard and kept our promise. I looked hard at the reasons why the company had been in difficulty and made immediate changes with filling the diaries, investigated where we could save money and manage our spending, collected bad debts and looked to see how we could attract more patients.

We also had to gain back the confidence of our suppliers, and they really trusted us to deliver on our word, for which I am grateful. We just needed that chance, that opportunity, and to this day, I am proud to say that we have great relationships with our suppliers and we consider some of them our good friends.

Within two years, not only did we turn things around, but we were also able to give pay rises and bonuses to our staff. The clinic was not just surviving, we were thriving.



MOVING ON UP

The business was growing, and it soon became clear that it was outgrowing the existing four-chair clinic. Needing bigger premises, Lisa and Ivin were on the lookout for a property to move to.

As destiny would have it, the perfect opportunity arose when a building right across the road from the existing clinic site came up for sale. Lisa and Ivin completed the purchase in 2017.

It was a beautiful four-storey Victorian granite building – the bones of it were good, but internally, there was an old-fashioned office layout that needed total refurbishment. It gave the owners the opportunity to customise the design of the clinic. They spent just over a year transforming the building into an impressive six-chair clinic with outstanding facilities and spectacular interior design.

The clinic moved into its new premises in 2018. Its features include both private and open-plan surgery spaces, a large LDU room, X-ray room, on-site laboratory, two large meeting rooms, a six-desk management office, a separate directors' office and generous staff facilities with locker room, breakout area and shower.

The décor is bright and breezy with a beach theme. Ivin's art background has been key in creating the décor and ambience of the interior with some unique design features. The modern, airy feel of the clinic gives a relaxed vibe for patients and staff.

Planning and designing every detail of the new clinic was a particular highlight for Lisa and Ivin – their dreams turned into a physical reality, and they saw their hard work and determination come to fruition.

Ten years on and The Orthodontic Clinic has established itself as a multi-award-winning practice, with accolades won every year from 2016 to date. The only year that an award was not won by the clinic was in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the clinic did not put forward any entries for awards.

SUCCESS SECRETS

Ivin: I feel that being in healthcare, the knowledge base behind the care we provide has to be there. Giving quality care and the right advice to our patients is extremely important. For me, that is really the number one priority for our clinic.

I trust Lisa as our clinical director to maintain very high standards, with the many years of experience she has in dentistry and her expertise in orthodontics. As far as the day-to-day running of the business is concerned, I am very detail oriented and meticulous. I enjoy problem solving and am always looking for innovative ways to do things. I am not afraid to ask questions and to learn new things – that is just part of my character. Lisa has a passion for orthodontics and loves straightening teeth. I enjoy the business side of running the clinic and I think I am bold and a good decision-maker. We are different but a great combo.

What Lisa and I both have in common is that when we carry out a task, no matter how big or small, we will want to carry it out to the best of our abilities. I will not do things in a half-hearted way. I will always give it my all. In everything I do, I do it with pride. This I think is what makes us successful.

Lisa: Yes, for sure! Ivin and I are both very driven. We are determined and essentially very hard workers. Personally, I have always had confidence in the quality of care and excellent orthodontic results that we could deliver, so this was never in doubt in my mind.

My specialist and consultant training, as well as years of treating patients, has equipped me well to deal with all kinds of orthodontic problems; I also just really enjoy what I do! I knew I wanted to be an orthodontist from age 12, so there's no question of my commitment to this specialty.

I think that the level of customer service that we provide is fantastic. Patients are made to feel very welcome and genuinely cared for – it really matters to us that they have a great experience when they come to our clinic. To then see our patients support us, share their experiences with others, and be our brand ambassadors wherever they go is incredible. Having curated and invested in an amazing team that help us make this all happen is key. We filter down to them our passion, enthusiasm and joie de vivre and they are our superstars. Our success is shared with them and is for them too.

THE TEAM

Ivin: We are so grateful for our team. Each and every one of the team had faith in us through the tough times.

We were honest with them and we talked them through what we saw for the future, our future. They knew the struggles ahead but they knew what the rewards could be. We shared our dreams with them and some of them have now been with us for many years.

Our lab technician, Charmaine, for example, has been with the clinic for

18 years now, from the very beginning and has stayed loyal to us through the good and bad times. She is a great example of the loyalty our staff has shown us.

Lisa: We truly see the team as our greatest asset, and we have always believed that they are the secret sauce to our recipe. We really do try to recognise everyone's individual strengths and try to bring out the best in each team member. We give opportunities where they can flourish and push them to reach their full potential, through courses and conferences that the company funds or just with words of simple encouragement.

We now have a team of 23: two specialist orthodontists, one clinical assistant (a GDP with a special interest in orthodontics), one clinic supervisor, two receptionists, an accounts supervisor and a laboratory technician. We have 10 fully qualified dental nurses (and one trainee dental nurse), and almost all have undergone training to take X-rays and impressions. We have four orthodontic therapists, three of whom started their careers as dental nurses in the clinic and have carried out further training to qualify as orthodontic therapists.

I am also an honorary senior lecturer. In this role, I teach both postgraduates and dental care professionals – I love it. I was very involved in the training of our current therapists, which was so rewarding. It really is such a joy to see our dental nurses develop and for me to be able to play such an integral role in helping them achieve their career dreams!

We believe in our whole team delivering patient care – a more holistic approach. Our dental nurses have their own dedicated clinic diary where they advise on brace and toothbrushing instructions and provide appliance care advice. We know that patients enjoy this and it makes our staff feel trusted and valued.

I am proud of our DCPs and their achievements. I am also very lucky to work alongside a superb orthodontist, Dr Daria Rodolfo, who has been with our clinic for 11 years. Her support as a clinical colleague and close friend has been invaluable.

Ivin: We care about our team and are proud to have created a safe place

for them to work. It matters to us both how they grow as a person as well as professionally and we want them to see themselves as having a career rather than 'just a job'. They know they have opportunities to advance and that builds their confidence.

We try to create a culture of mutual respect – everybody has their role to play and we encourage them to be themselves. We like the fact that we all come from different backgrounds, with different cultures and ideas.

CELEBRATIONS

The clinic will be throwing a big party to commemorate this special anniversary and to celebrate these past 10 years.

The event will be attended by Lisa and Ivin's team, friends, family and colleagues who have helped and supported the company throughout its journey to the success it is today.

Guests will include those who have been instrumental from the very beginning in helping Lisa and Ivin buy the business, growing it to the success it is today.

As part of the entertainment, one of the clinic's young patients (who happens to be the son of one of their dental colleagues, an Aberdeen dentist) has volunteered to sing on the stage at the party. He has recently completed his fixed appliance treatment and will be able to show off his lovely orthodontic result at the same time!

Aberdeen Inspired BID (Business Improvement District) will also be presenting The Orthodontic Clinic with a plaque to mark its 10 years in business with Lisa and Ivin as its owners.

THE FUTURE

Lisa and Ivin: We are incredibly proud of what the clinic has achieved so far and hope to build on its strong foundations.

Maintaining the high levels of clinical care we provide and enhancing the patient experience will be important.

Our team is the 'beating heart' of The Orthodontic Clinic and we look forward to investing in them and providing more opportunities to watch them develop and see them shine.

Bring on the next 10 years!



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Dental Practice Accelerator: the coach

The Dental Practice Accelerator programme has put the London Dental Centre on a dynamic journey of transformation. Here, **Justin Leigh** gives us an overview from the coach's perspective

Working closely with Hannan has felt like embarking on a shared adventure. From the moment we began, I knew this wasn't just about ticking off a list of tasks. It was about navigating real challenges and celebrating genuine victories. We've had countless conversations – sometimes diving deep into strategic planning, other times tackling the small but significant details of day-to-day operations. Together, we crafted a vision for the practice – one that's as ambitious as it is achievable. We set goals that weren't just about growth for the sake of it but about creating something truly special – a practice that excels in patient care and runs smoothly behind the scenes.

Of course, as with any journey, things don't always go as planned. The saying 'no plan survives contact with the enemy' rings true, and while patients and team members aren't adversaries, they can introduce unexpected challenges. This is where our coaching relationship became vital. Each month, we discuss what's working, what wasn't and how we could adapt. We started every session by reflecting on the progress made towards our goals. This wasn't just a routine check in; it was a moment to acknowledge how far we'd come and to recalibrate for the road ahead.



Justin Leigh

Justin is founder of Focus4growth.

Our discussions spanned a wide range of topics – everything from how to recruit and retain top talent to how to communicate better with patients to how to manage the financial health of the practice. Each conversation was a step forward, helping Hannan navigate the complexities of running a successful practice. But more than that, these talks helped us build a relationship of trust and mutual respect. It wasn't just about me giving advice; it was about us figuring things out together.

THE ROLE OF THE COACH

As a coach, my main job has been to create an environment where Hannan could thrive. This has involved focusing on several key areas:

Accountability: holding Hannan accountable for his goals has been crucial. We set clear expectations and tracked progress closely, ensuring that he stayed on course. Accountability isn't about pressure; it's about providing a framework for success and celebrating milestones.

Clarity: one of my most important roles has been helping Hannan define his objectives and priorities. Without clarity, it's easy to get lost in the day-to-day grind. By working together to establish clear goals, we've ensured that every action aligns with the bigger vision for the practice

Focus: it's all too easy to get bogged down by less important issues, so maintaining focus has been key. I've worked with Hannan to direct his

energy towards the most impactful areas, maximising productivity and ensuring that we're always moving in the right direction.

Engagement: keeping Hannan and his team engaged has been about more than just motivation – it's been about creating a compelling vision that everyone can rally behind. We've worked hard to ensure that every team member feels valued and knows how their contributions matter.

Motivation: inspiring Hannan to reach his full potential has been one of the most fulfilling aspects of this journey. Whether it's celebrating successes or constructively addressing setbacks, we've fostered a growth mindset that's kept the practice moving forward.

By focusing on these elements, I've aimed to empower Hannan to become the leader his practice needs – a leader who can guide his team through any challenge and steer the practice towards continued success.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

Throughout our coaching sessions, we've explored several critical areas that have been instrumental in the practice's growth and success:

Mindset and growth planning: from the outset, we focused on cultivating the right mindset for growth. This meant not only brainstorming big ideas but also laying out concrete plans to bring them to life. Challenging existing paradigms and thinking bigger has been crucial to pushing the boundaries of what's possible for the practice.

Recruitment and retention: building a great team is the backbone of any successful practice. We developed strategies for attracting and retaining top talent, ensuring that the team was aligned with the practice's values and goals. This has created a stable and motivated workforce, reducing turnover and enhancing continuity.

Onboarding and expectations: we created a clear onboarding process that not only integrated new hires smoothly but also set them up for long-term success. Clear expectations have helped new team members quickly acclimate and perform at a high level.

Leadership development: to create a positive and productive work environment, we've focused on developing Hannan's leadership skills, particularly in areas like communication, decision-making and team management. This has not only improved his confidence but also fostered a more collaborative culture within the practice.

Team coaching: we've worked on enhancing communication and collaboration among the team, addressing interpersonal dynamics and resolving conflicts. The result? A more cohesive and efficient team.

Patient communication: we've worked on improving patient communication, focusing on active listening, empathy and clear explanations of treatment options. These efforts have strengthened patient trust and satisfaction.

Workflow optimisation: we've analysed existing workflows, identified bottlenecks and implemented improvements to streamline operations. This has improved productivity and reduced stress for all.

Consultative selling: engaging patients in a meaningful way has been another area of focus. By adopting a consultative approach to selling, we've improved treatment acceptance rates. This approach involves truly understanding patients' needs and offering solutions that resonate with them.

Financial management: finally, we've worked on making informed financial



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decisions to ensure the practice's long-term sustainability. This has involved budgeting, forecasting, and regularly analysing financial performance to keep the practice on a solid financial footing.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Throughout this journey, we've faced our fair share of challenges. Early on, we identified a significant issue with patient retention that was impacting revenue. Instead of getting discouraged, we dug in, analysed feedback and made targeted changes that led to a turnaround.

Another challenge was helping Hannan become more comfortable with delegating tasks. He initially struggled with letting go, but through our leadership coaching, he began to trust his team more. This shift has not only alleviated pressure on him but also empowered his team, creating a more dynamic work environment.

When we started, the team often struggled with communication, leading to misunderstandings and inefficiencies. Through focused team coaching, we introduced new communication protocols that fostered a more collaborative environment. The result has been a significant improvement in team dynamics, with better coordination and a noticeable boost in overall productivity.

We also identified that patient communication and follow-up were areas needing improvement. By implementing a more patient-centric approach, including personalised follow-ups and clearer explanations, we saw an increase in patient

retention rates. This enhanced patient satisfaction and contributed to the practice's financial growth.

Initially, the practice was bogged down by inefficient workflows that were causing delays and frustration. By conducting a thorough workflow analysis and implementing targeted improvements, we were able to streamline processes. This resulted in faster service delivery and a more organised practice environment.

By addressing key areas, we've driven meaningful changes that have had a lasting impact on the practice's success.

CONCLUSION

Through a dedicated approach to accountability, clarity, focus, engagement and motivation, we have navigated the complexities of practice management and driven meaningful transformation. The journey has been one of growth, learning and achievement, highlighting the power of support and strategic guidance.

The transformation of Hannan's practice stands as a testament to the value of dedicated coaching.

Moving forward, the focus remains on sustaining the momentum. The journey is far from over, but with the solid foundation we've built, Hannan and his team are well-equipped to face whatever comes their way.

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, visit www.invisalign.co.uk/gp/become-a-provider.



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Private Dentistry Awards: meet the sponsors

This month we hear from the sponsors of this year's **Private Dentistry Awards**, which takes place next month at the Grosvenor House in London

This year's Private Dentistry Awards is fast approaching, and it is set to see hundreds of members of the dental profession gather at London's prestigious Grosvenor House Hotel on Friday 8 November. The event can only take place thanks to the generous support of our sponsors. Let's meet them...

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Over the past 27 years, Align has helped doctors treat more than 18.2 million patients with the Invisalign system and is driving the evolution in digital dentistry through the Align Digital Platform, its integrated suite of unique, proprietary technologies and services delivered as a seamless, end-to-end solution for patients and



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Key details

8 November: awards night at the Grosvenor House, London

dentistry.co.uk/awards/private-dentistry-awards
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consumers, orthodontists and GP dentists and lab/partners. For more details, visit www.aligntech.com.

Find out more about the Invisalign system at www.invisalign.com.

For more information about the Itero digital scanning system, visit www.itero.com. For additional information about Exocad dental CAD/CAM offerings and a list of reseller partners, visit www.exocad.com.

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For years, Apollo Interiors has specialised in clinic design and build. It offers a full project management and construction service and pride itself on providing an exceptional service to the dental sector.

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With longstanding experience in both sectors, Apollo Interiors is the perfect partner if you're considering entering this market.

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Avant Garde Dentistry is a full solution service for the modern-day practitioner.

From workflow education to business coaching to lab services, it has you covered. Its team of passionate professionals are led by owners Dr Robbie Hughes and Dr Milad Shadrooh, who are the driving force behind a revolution in dentistry.

More than just a training company, Avant Garde is a concept. It combines cutting-edge technology, innovative treatment workflows and obsessive focus on the patient journey to guarantee world class results every time. The support doesn't stop there: post-course, all of its delegates are invited to join a Whatsapp group and utilise its online portal for ongoing case support from expert clinicians and technicians.

Join the Avant Garde family and take your practice to extraordinary new heights. To find out more email info@avantgardedentistry.co.uk or visit avantgardedentistry.co.uk.

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Belmont is a leading manufacturer of dental treatment centres, operating lights and X-ray machines.

Established in 1921 in Osaka, Japan, it has 100 years of experience producing products that are functional to an exceptional level; designing products with unique features and diverse functionality that facilitate a better treatment experience for both the dentist and the patient. For more details, visit belmontdental.co.uk.

BLACK SWAN



Black Swan is made up of tax and accountancy specialists, supporting dentists throughout their careers. This means the team can help you prepare your annual accounts and tax returns, as well as take a proactive approach to saving you tax every year.

Its team has experience in advising dental professionals from newly qualified dentists and start-ups to largest corporates. Bespoke tax planning is a core part of Black Swan's service, including:

- Tax-efficient structures: to maximise tax reliefs to help grow your wealth
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Black Swan's offering is very simple: it helps you, your family and your business save tax by providing straight-talking, sound tax advice.

For more information, visit www.blackswantax.co.uk.

BREMADENT DENTAL LABORATORY



Bremadent Dental Laboratory is an established full-service dental laboratory in London that has serviced dentists across the UK since 1969.

'Together, we can make your patients smile,' says managing director Kash Qureshi.

It can assist you with all aspects of digital dentistry, implants, CAD/CAM

milling, crown and bridge, prosthetics, orthodontics and pressure-formed dental appliances. All of its products are manufactured in-house within a quality controlled environment, with dedicated department managers for a single point of contact.

It has invested in the latest digital equipment and CAD/CAM milling to accommodate digital dentistry with intraoral scans from dentists around the world using the leading intraoral scanners (Trios, Itero, 3m, Sirona, Planscan and Carestream).

Bremadent Dental Laboratory is familiar with key implant systems including Straumann, Nobel Biocare, Dentsply Sirona, Zimmer Biomet, Biohorizons, Ankylos, ETK, Bränemark, Megagen, DIO and CAM LOG with experience in many other implant systems.

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Denplan, part of Simplyhealth, is a UK leading dental payment plan specialist, with more than 6,600 member dentists nationwide, caring for more than 1.5 million patients.

Denplan offers a range of services, including the Denplan Quality Programme and Denplan Excel Certification Programme for ongoing professional development. It also provides regulatory advice, business and marketing consultancy services and networking opportunities.



Denplan is committed to advocating for dental practices and the profession through active political engagement and stakeholder activity.

For details of all Denplan products, visit www.denplan.co.uk.

DENTISTRY COMPLIANCE

Dentistry Compliance

Dentistry Compliance, powered by Apolline, is the ultimate solution for transforming how dental practices handle compliance.

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What truly sets Dentistry Compliance apart? Unlimited support, personalised policies, and expert training – all designed to empower you to focus on what really matters: your patients. Dentistry Compliance makes compliance simpler, smarter, and

stress-free. For more details, visit dentistry.co.uk/compliance.

DIGIMAX DENTAL



Digimax Dental, based in Marylebone, London, is a highly-rated dental marketing agency, helping practices stand out and grow since 2003.

Its team consists of dental web designers, search engine optimisation (SEO) experts, branding specialists and graphic designers.

From website design and branding through to SEO, at Digimax Dental, every marketing need for your practice is catered for – requiring minimal input from you.

Its deliverables are made using a personalised concierge-style approach, where the client and their business is front and centre. The evidence suggests that its 'success formula' works.

Shaz Memon, creative director, adds: 'We have a company vision that completely aligns with our customer service goals, which our entire team buys into.'

To find out more about Digimax Dental, visit digimax.dental.

KENT BRUSHES



Kent Brushes is an independent British brush manufacturer with a legacy spanning more than 245 years.

Founded in 1777, Kent Brushes specialises in producing luxury grooming products, including hairbrushes and combs, and is renowned for an exceptional commitment to quality and craftsmanship. Kent Brushes has held a royal warrant for nine consecutive sovereign reigns.

Kent's philosophy runs far deeper than creating a great brush. Its oral care range is an exciting addition to the growing oral health market in the UK. The full range includes sonic toothbrushes, toothpaste, toothpaste tablets, mouthwash concentrate and interdental brushes. The toothpaste and mouthwash products are manufactured in the UK and have been developed to care for sensitive teeth and gums.

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As one of the finest manufacturers of brushes, Kent Brushes likes to support the elite in dentistry, which is why it's sponsoring this year's Private Dentistry Awards to celebrate everything that is excellent within dentistry.

For more details, visit kentbrushes.com/pages/kent-oral-care.

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Kerr Dental is a leading provider of dental supplies with a comprehensive selection of dental products for dentists and dental technicians.

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Portmandentex provides dental care to more than a million patients every year. Today, it supports more than 370 practices across the UK and Ireland, partnering with more than 2,400 passionate clinicians and empowering

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For more details, visit www.portmandentex.com.

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Dentaid the Dental Charity provides dental care for people experiencing homelessness, abuse, poverty and harm. Its nine charity dental units visit hostels, community centres, soup kitchens and support services with volunteer dental professionals providing dental treatment and oral health programmes for the most vulnerable people in our communities.



Its charitable approach helps to break down barriers and gives hard-to-reach patients the best possible chance of accessing dental care. Dentaid the Dental Charity knows that dentistry can play a key part in helping someone move on to a new chapter in their lives. This year the charity will deliver almost 1,000 mobile dental clinics across the UK. Its patients include people experiencing homelessness, survivors of domestic abuse, cancer patients, fishing communities, families experiencing poverty and health inequalities, refugees and asylum seekers and those facing addiction, substance misuse and harm. By offering a regular, sustainable dental service, it helps its patients re-engage with dental services, resulting in a significant improvement in their oral health and self-esteem.

This work is supported by an oral programme including its Brightbites scheme, delivered at schools and family support services, particularly in areas facing social deprivation.

For more details, visit www.dentaid.org or call 01794 324249.

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Sprintray is not here to make a hundred different products. It's here to make a carefully curated selection of the best manufacturing tools the dental industry has ever seen.

Its catalogue isn't filled with loads of products in search of a problem. For Sprintray to stamp its name on something, it must be carefully considered, targeted and meticulously designed to meet an existing need.

All its products are born from the dental community. They are a collaboration between master designers, world-class dental professionals and amazing engineers who align with a single goal: to revolutionise dentistry by bringing affordable, easy, in-practice 3D printing to every practice in the world. For more details, visit sprintray.com/en-uk.

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How AI is transforming dental work

As artificial intelligence seeps its way into more aspects of our lives, **Nigel Jones** catches up with **Hannah Burrow** to learn about its potential benefits to the dental profession

Nigel Jones: Who do you think will benefit most in a dental practice from artificial intelligence (AI), Hannah?

Hannah Burrow: I think everyone within the dental practice can benefit from it.

Nigel: So, no matter your role in the dental practice, there is an application that will be able to help you?

Hannah: I genuinely believe that to be true. With our product, we've focused on the clinician first, so the dentist or dental hygienist. But there are so many other AI companies within dentistry that are focusing on other members of the dental team.

With lots of the clinically facing ones, like Kiroku, AI will affect the dentist mainly, but it's also then going to affect the dental nurses within the practice, as the work being automated is often done by both of those team members. And for front of house staff, AI can help with triaging and communication.

And then, if you look outside the practice, dental lab technicians are already being affected by AI, because there are intraoral scanners and other kinds of technological advances that have happened in the past 10 years. AI is a huge part of intraoral scanners. So,

there are applications for everyone within the team.

Nigel: It doesn't sound as if there's much in the patient journey that won't be touched by it.

Hannah: I believe so. A lot of AI is hidden. You don't know it's AI, as it is behind the scenes. An example that everyone's probably experienced is spam email filtering.

If you think back to 10 years ago, every other email could be a spam. Now your email is probably good at spam filtering, and AI is behind all of that, detecting anomalies. Every bank transaction you make uses AI to detect if it's fraudulent or not, and it's the same in the dental world.

In every part of your journey, there is some form of AI that's probably already embedded, but it happens behind the scenes. It makes life better without us knowing about it.

Nigel: That's an interesting point, because we're talking as if it's something brand new that's just about to happen when it's already been woven into our lives.

Hannah: That's true. Think about Invisalign and Itero scanners. They are powered by AI. They're things that a lot of clinicians are already using and feeling quite confident about.

There are so many examples of AI where it's under the hood. You don't need to be interfacing with something that sounds like a human for it to be AI. It might just be automation of a process.

Obviously, we know most about Kiroku, and with our system it helps with record keeping. We try to ensure that the interface within it doesn't feel like AI. It just feels like something that's simple and works as you expect it to. Everything happens in the background.

The same will be true with radiographic analysis, Pearl for example. Again, you just see the end result, but there's lots of processing happening in the background.

Nigel: How do you pinpoint the benefits that come from the note-taking technology you have?

Hannah: The easiest benefit to talk about is saving time. With Kiroku, for example, we have measured that we reduce the amount of time spent on notes by about two thirds. We're saving an hour of clinical time per day, which is hugely significant.

The same will be true if you are integrating something like Pearl or Dental Monitoring. It might be reduced chair time or better patient treatment acceptance, but they will all have



Nigel Jones

Nigel is sales and marketing director at Practice Plan, and has been working in the dental sector for more than 30 years. He has a special interest in the development and future of NHS dentistry.



Hannah Burrow

Hannah is the CEO and co-founder at Kiroku. Kiroku uses AI to automate the least rewarding parts of a dentist's workload. Prior to starting Kiroku, she worked as a dentist.



their own benefits. Something that will be true of so many of these different technologies is that they're improving the quality of what you do by taking a lot of things off your plate.

So, if you imagine you're trying to balance doing clinical work with trying to protect yourself medicolegally while also trying to provide information to patients. If we can remove part of that work from your day, it will be less stressful. Therefore, the quality of what you're doing will be better and, hopefully, your patients will have a better experience.

Nigel: A feature of dentistry at the moment is demand outstripping supply. Creating capacity seems to be an important thing for us to do. So, if you could improve patient throughput by cutting down those times it would seem beneficial.

Hannah: Yes. I know that note taking probably feels like a burden to nearly every clinician, and when you add it up, a quarter of your day is spent writing notes, which is mind boggling.

You've trained for this very vocational job and you're spending a quarter of your day writing information over and over again. So that's where we know that if we can free up that 25%, you can fill that time with whatever you want. That might mean seeing more patients, improving access or just getting home on time and having dinner with your family. It's your choice.

Nigel: One of the drivers we find for people wanting to leave the NHS and go private is that tension between trying to achieve activity targets and protecting themselves against a complaint. You know that if you don't have the time to build rapport, you won't have time to communicate adequately and get true informed consent, which puts you at greater risk of complaints. But here you are handing over control of something to AI. How do you respond to that?

Hannah: We've built the system in such a way that the clinician has complete control. We've done that intentionally, because we believe the clinician

should always have the autonomy to control what goes into their notes.

That's why there's exciting technology like voice technology being introduced in the field as well. And that should be encouraged. But I think maintaining that control over what's going into your notes every time is critically important.

What we've tried to do is create an automation that is individualised to the person, but still completely reproducible to try and address the concern you've just raised.

How can you know exactly what's going to come out? Because it's the same as it always comes out. And, if Kiroku is going to make an optimisation for you, you are made aware of it. So, you've chosen to accept that optimisation into your template, or not.

Nigel: In which case, I can flip it around and say then you potentially have more confidence in your note taking.

Hannah: Exactly. The most anecdotally reported thing by all our customers is having peace of mind.

'I know that I'm always explaining perio when I've got a patient who's got perio, am I always writing it in my notes? Am I always remembering to include my smoking cessation?'

Whereas with Kiroku, because it's more reproducible, it's more reliable at capturing that information when you're very busy.

Our number one sales pitch is that we save time, as we make your notes five times faster – we find that this is what encourages somebody to use our platform. But, after about three weeks when we ask them for feedback, the thing they always say is that it's giving them more energy throughout the day to focus on the things they care about. Or even at the end of the day, they're less tired because they don't have to think about their notes all the time.

If they suddenly don't have to spend their lunchtime and after work doing their notes, that's the time-saving aspect. But they also feel protected and confident in what they're doing. They just feel happier. And that's the second big benefit that's come out of it.

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Aura Infection Control is able to provide free dental decontamination reviews, especially for private practices. These 30-minute online consultations offer dental professionals a platform to seek advice and ask questions.

Bethany Powell, head nurse at Desford Dental Care, and her decon nurse Millie have just completed their decon review with one of Aura's specialist decon advisers. We caught up with Bethany to find out how her review had gone.

'I cannot express how impressed we both were with the quality of the call, the level of support and knowledge

provided, how lovely Chontelle was,' said Bethany. 'It was an incredible call. Chontelle provided us with a lot of information as we had many questions. The emails I have received since with follow-up information and evidence were amazing.

'It's hard to know if what you are doing is the absolute best it can be, so to have this service available is fantastic.'

High praise indeed. In the world of dental care, success often hinges on the depth of knowledge shared within the industry. Aura Infection Control stands as a shining example of how the transfer of expert knowledge can elevate practices and organisations to new heights.

Laura Edgar, the managing director of Aura, who has spearheaded a culture of free, impartial and expert advice, highlighted the importance of such consultations, especially considering the complexity and interpretive nature of regulatory guidance.

Through these reviews, practices can ensure the robustness of their compliance protocols, thereby enhancing both patient and staff confidence.

As the dental sector evolves, one thing remains constant: the invaluable role of expert knowledge in fostering success and safeguarding patient wellbeing.

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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.

Once the data has been captured, it can be quickly loaded into the Model Maker software module. The produced model is 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.

The generated 3D printing data is then transferred to Zirkonzahn's P4000 printer either via USB, LAN or wifi 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 PSI articulator or ZSI Mini-Arti to check jaw movements without using plaster thanks to the new Jawaligners PSI or ZSI (magnetic spacer plates).

www.zirkonzahn.com



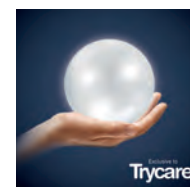
Zirkonzahn®
Human Zirconium Technology

Miracle shade matching Trycare

Trycare Ltd is 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 addition, Estelite Sigma Quick offers miracle shade matching! Because of its spherical filler particles, it offers inherent shade mimicking so that, in most cases, just one shade will blend perfectly with the natural teeth, leaving invisible margins and undetectable restorations. These spherical fillers also facilitate outstanding polishing and a lustre that lasts, allied to high wear resistance and very low abrasion of the opposing teeth.

www.trycare.co.uk/estelite | 01274 885544



Coming to a town near you Planmeca

Planmeca is excited to announce that its expansive mobile showroom will be in the UK this autumn!

Bringing cutting-edge technology directly to your doorstep this October, the moving showroom is the perfect way to learn the benefits of the whole Planmeca product portfolio: digital dental units, 2D and 3D imaging devices, CAD/CAM solutions and Romexis software.

Free to attend, come and interact with members of the local Planmeca team and engage in hands-on demonstrations.

If you're interested in new equipment, come and explore Planmeca's complete range of dental solutions, designed to enhance patient outcomes and streamline practice operations.

Visit the website for dates and locations

www.planmeca.com/roadshow



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In a sphere of its own! Trycare

Tokuyama uses patented spherical filler particles within its composite materials. Each variant utilising spherical particles of different diameters to maximise their optical and physical properties for the desired indication.

In addition to optimised optical properties, resulting in enhanced aesthetic restorations, Tokuyama's spherical filler particles offer other advantages compared with irregular shaped filler particles. They are quicker and easier to pack into undercuts, reducing the risk of voids; easier to sculpt and carve, producing enhanced morphology of the final restoration; and have a smoother surface finish that has a natural high sheen that requires minimal, if any, polishing.

Tokuyama's development of spherical filler particles has culminated in Omnichroma, a colourless universal composite that matches every tooth colour. With low polymerisation shrinkage, Omnichroma Flow Bulk is a low viscosity composite that can be placed in 3.5mm increments. It delivers great colour matching, high polishability and stain resistance.

www.trycare.co.uk | 01274 885544



Hassle-free, predictable placement Trycare

Guided surgery for implant placement is becoming increasingly popular.

Offering everything you need in a guided surgery system, the Adinguide guided surgery system delivers effortless procedures plus accurate and predictable implant placement. It is a keyless system, which helps save surgery time, while ensuring accurate and predictable implant placement. It features Activeflow Irrigation Technology, which delivers coolant directly to the surgical site. This helps prevent bone overheating, thereby maintaining healthy bone for optimum osseointegration and minimised risks of complications.

Built-in stoppers ensure precise and accurate drilling to the desired depth, while keyless, self-centring drills and tools enable implant dentists perform faster, easier and more intuitive surgeries.

www.trycare.co.uk/adin | 01274 885544



Free sample of Draganberry varnish! Trycare

Centrix has extended its range of award-winning Fluorodose varnishes by launching the new draganberry flavour!

Available from Trycare, Centrix's Fluorodose 5% sodium fluoride varnish is quick and easy to apply. To enhance handling, comfort and patient safety, Fluorodose's packaging has patented features. Containing a single dose of varnish, each Lollitray includes a Benda Brush applicator and is designed so that it 'pops up' with one hand. Freshly mixed prior to application and drying in seconds, Fluorodose offers a smooth consistency and remains in situ for up to six hours for optimum fluoride uptake. It's available in six flavours – caramel, bubble gum, mint, cherry, melon and new draganberry.

www.trycare.co.uk | 01274 885544



Natural mineral bone material Augma

Augma's Bond Apatite is a natural mineral bone regeneration material that does not wash away. Supplied in an all-in-one syringe that enables immediate dispensing directly into the bone defect, it is quick and easy to use. Simply depress the plunger to activate the ingredients, dispense it into the defect and apply pressure using a sterile gauze and it's set.

Bond Apatite sets hard, so it won't wash away even in the presence of blood and saliva, meaning there is no need for a membrane, saving additional time and unnecessary expense. There is no need to achieve tension-free closure or even complete primary closure for gaps less than 3mm. Small dehiscences can be left exposed without any risk of infection or breakdown. Larger dehiscences can be protected by suturing an Augma Shield protective layer over it. Formed from a patented mixture of biphasic calcium sulphate and hydroxyapatite in a two to one ratio, Bond Apatite sets like a cement in the oral cavity. After a few weeks it transforms into a radiolucent matrix, before calcifying and becoming radiopaque new bone. According to the manufacturer, it produces 90% new bone after three months and over 95% new bone after eight months.

www.augmabio.co.uk



Mix, place, dry and bond in seconds Trycare

Exclusively available from Trycare, Tokuyama Universal Bond II is the only self-curing bonding agent that can bond any direct or indirect restorative material using the same three quick and easy steps and without the need to light-cure, agitate surfaces, use additional primers or activators or wait in between steps. Simply mix, apply, air-dry and that's it!

With colour change verification that it's completely mixed, Tokuyama Universal Bond II eliminates the need for technique sensitive, error-prone steps and saves valuable surgery time.

It features borate self-cure technology (BoSE), which provides storage stability and the same bond strength as photopolymerisation systems.

BoSE technology is superior to conventional benzoyl peroxide/amine systems because it delivers high catalytic activity under acidic conditions.

www.trycare.co.uk | 01274 885544



Unmatched durability and performance! Parkell

Conventional ultrasonic scaler inserts are known to lose 25% of their scaling efficiency after only 1mm of tip wear and 50% of their scaling efficiency after 2mm of tip wear. Parkell's Duratip inserts achieve 100% efficiency through an unprecedented 3mm of tip wear, validated over a year of field testing.

Duratip's excellence is achieved through novel patented internal geometries at the tip and connecting body, and unsurpassed energy transfer and durability across an innovative W-stack design for optimised performance and effective deposit removal.

While traditional stacks are prone to bending, Duratip's stack design provides greater rigidity and stability over time. Their continuous, like-new scaling efficiency translates into less pinch pressure, superior performance over time, less chair time and considerable savings as instruments have a very long life.

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IN THE HOT SEAT

This month, chair of the Private Dentistry Awards, **David Houston**, answers our quick-fire questions

Q When and where was your last meal out?

A I had a wonderful lunch at the renowned, Michael Caines-run Lympstone Manor near Exeter to celebrate my birthday (age undisclosed for fear of ruining the illusion of youth) at the end of August.

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

A In my dreams, I envisage Tom Cruise. In my nightmares, Danny de Vito! However, given my perceived disruptor status during my career, the role would best suit Al Pacino at his combative and abrasive best.

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

A In the late 80s, the now mostly forgotten profitable practice guru Dr Ken James flew from North America to lecture in Manchester. His vision for expanding practices using hygienist-led prevention protocols was revolutionary and considered impractical at the time for the UK. After my interrogation

of him about his system, he told me that 'scepticism was not valid criticism and to persevere'. He was undoubtedly correct, and I was forever grateful.

Q What's your guilty pleasure?

A Chocolate or coffee, but even better chocolates with a coffee!

Q What was the last gift you gave/received?

A I recently gave a bottle of Barolo to my sister-in-law and her husband in recognition of their award-winning success in an agricultural show.

Q Describe your perfect holiday...

A A do-nothing 'fly and flop' stay at a luxurious Indian Ocean resort.

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

A As an avid reader of almost any exponent of Tartan Noir, it would be impossible to choose between works by Stuart MacBride, James Oswald, TF

Muir, Ian Rankin, Chris Brookmyre et al. The film of choice would be *Chariots of Fire* for its memorable soundtrack and uplifting (if historically inaccurate) message of underdog triumph.

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

A As inconceivable as it may seem, I supplemented my student grant by dancing as a staff member in a nightclub (primarily) to It's Raining Men by The Weather Girls. The muscle memory has never deserted me!

Q What keeps you up at night?

A Thankfully, absolutely nothing – not even the aforementioned coffee addiction.

Q How do you unwind?

A In retirement, out of necessity, I joined a gym to attempt to undo the damage of so many years sitting on my bottom. However, the initial reticence has given way to something of a damascene conversion, and I am now a devoted gym-rat.

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

A In case my long-suffering wife Ceri reads this, a shoe and handbag fund 'to die for' would be specifically created to compensate for all her years of hard work running our group of practices. If I had my own selfish way, a supercar garage for the ages would miraculously appear!

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

A This is a poignant image of our training group at The Fit Tank Gym in Bristol marking the departure of a well-respected and much-loved member to pastures new.





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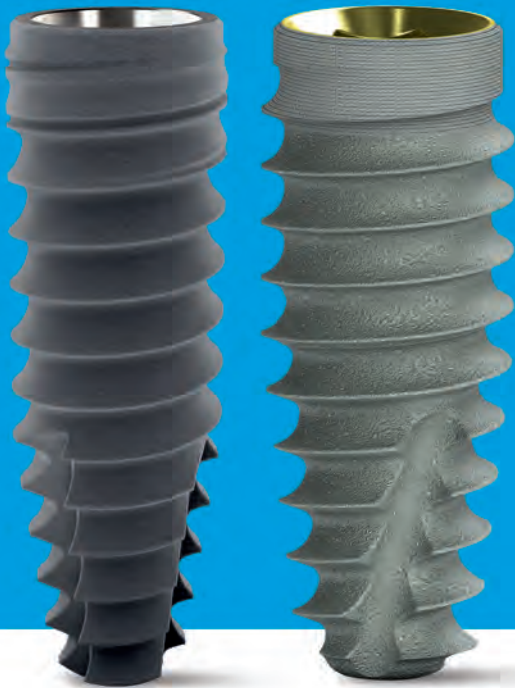
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With a combined market experience of over 55 years, we've used our knowledge to develop evidence-based, clinically proven solutions to support differing patient's needs, including the premium **Tapered Pro** and **CONELOG® Progressive-Line** implant systems.

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