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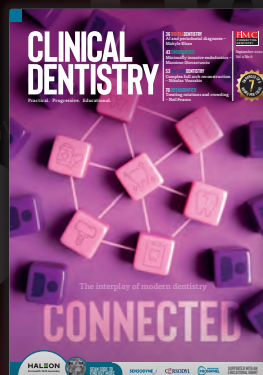
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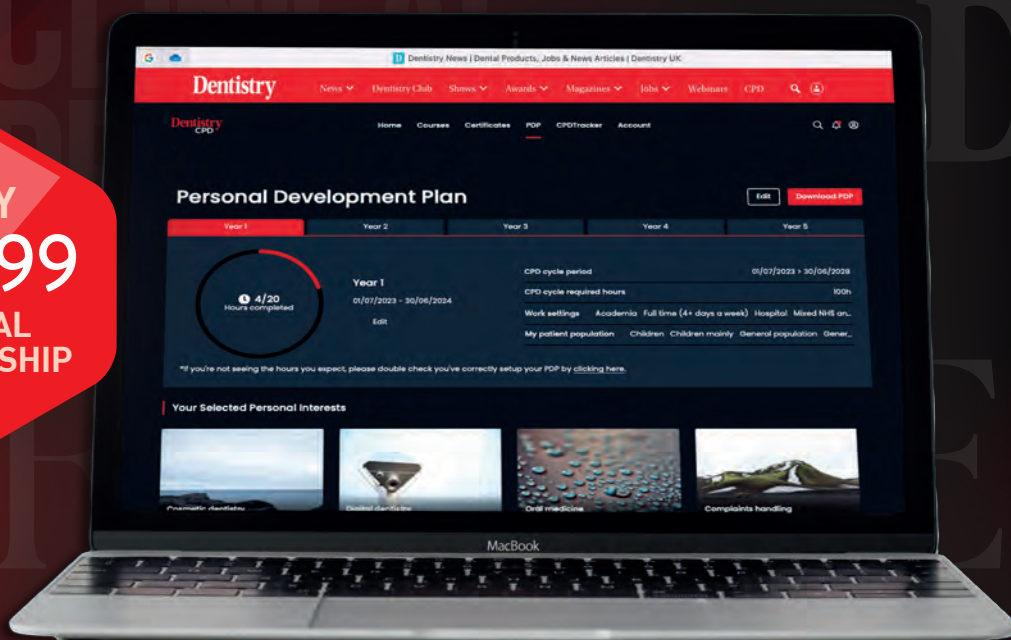
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Taking action all year round

Siobhan Hiscott
Group managing editor

November sees the return of Mouth Cancer Action Month, the UK campaign dedicated to promoting awareness of mouth cancer.

This fight has many heroes – but one of its foremost champions was Dr Philip Lewis MBE, who fought tirelessly to educate the profession and the public alike.

I was deeply saddened to hear that Philip passed away in October. Philip, who was an editorial board member of this very magazine, was a true legend of our profession, who devoted his career to highlighting the importance of checking for oral cancers. We pay tribute to Philip on page 11.

Early detection and diagnosis of mouth cancer significantly increase five-year survival rates – yet more than half (53%) of all mouth cancers are diagnosed at stage IV, where the cancer is at its most advanced.

Around 50% of head and neck cancers are first identified by dentists, which goes to show why these awareness campaigns are so vital in dentistry.

However, in the same breath, it feels like we're continuously bombarded with national campaigns or awareness days, some of which are just downright bizarre (International Talk Like a Pirate Day springs to mind!).

I'm sure we'd all agree that dental awareness days are a bit more valuable than most, but between National Toothache Day (9 February),

National Tooth Fairy Day (28 February), World Oral Health Day (20 March), and National Smile Month (12 May to 12 June), dentistry plays no small part in filling up the calendar itself.

Don't get me wrong: I'm all for awareness campaigns. They can have incredible reach, they can be fun and they can have a massively positive impact. Most importantly, initiatives like Mouth Cancer Action Month can literally save lives.

My feeling is simply that driving awareness should be on the agenda every day. We have a collective duty to improve understanding of these issues – and not just for patients.

National days can, and should, be about celebration too – see the events for dental nurses (22 November), dentists (6 March), and dental hygienists and dental therapists (1 May) as a valuable way to show appreciation.

But the very best dental practices create a culture of appreciation of each member of the team every day. Taking the time to celebrate each other creates an environment where the team shines. After all, as Barry Oulton points out in his article on page 46, it's the team around us that provides the support and motivation that drive us to achieve the seemingly impossible.

This is our belief at FMC, too.

We're here to promote awareness of all these issues when they hit the collective consciousness via a national campaign – but our real mission is to do the work that keeps them top of mind throughout the year.



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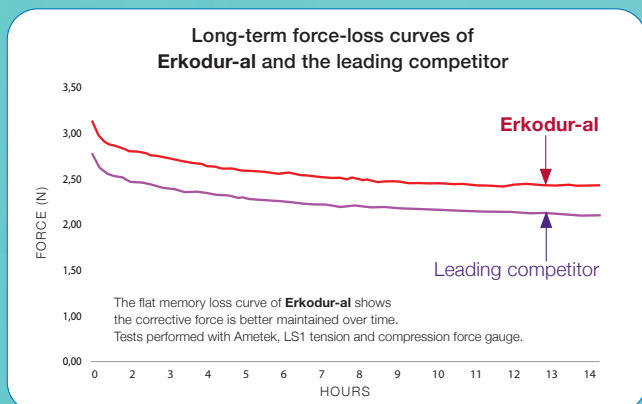
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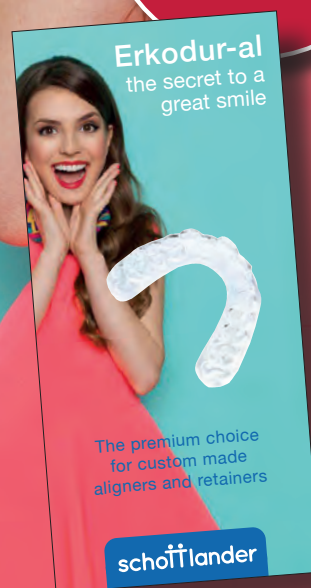
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BDS, runs a multidisciplinary practice at Neel Dentistry. He founded PDI-Professional Dental Indemnity Ltd. He is a judge on the Private Dentistry Awards. He founded the British Academy of Microscope Dentistry and is a founder of the BAPD.



SAM JETHWA

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



ANGELA LY

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



HANNA MIRAFTAB

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



ASHISH B PARMAR

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



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



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Philip Lewis MBE: 1953–2024

We pay tribute to **Philip Lewis MBE**, editorial board member of *Private Dentistry*

Dr Philip Lewis MBE, the tireless campaigner who ‘changed the narrative’ around awareness of mouth cancer in the UK, has died.

An esteemed clinician and highly-regarded educator, he was the definition of a successful dentist – but it is his work around head and neck cancers for which he will perhaps be best remembered.

It was a mission born almost by chance. A lecture attended on oral medicine during the 1990s provided a ‘lightbulb moment’ about how dental teams could improve oral cancer outcomes. He went on to spend almost 30 years writing and speaking on the importance of early diagnosis and detection of oral cancers.

‘NO ACTIVITY MORE IMPORTANT’

This was work that saved lives. In educating dental professionals on their responsibilities, Philip helped transform the dental profession’s attitude towards detecting oral cancers.

He was a critical part of the Mouth Cancer Foundation (MCF) practically from its inception, becoming an ambassador of the charity in 2013 after helping develop the Mouth Cancer Screening Accreditation Scheme.

By 2020, he went one step further, taking on the role of president of the MCF. Philip – who once declared ‘I can think of no activity more important for dental professionals than the early detection of mouth cancer’ – continued playing an integral role in the organisation even after his term ended. He was actively lecturing until a few weeks before his passing.

When Philip was presented with an MBE in September 2024 for services to oral cancer and the Mouth Cancer Foundation, it was a fitting recognition for a life spent in service to a cause he saw as greater than himself.



UNHURRIED PREVENTION

For all his fierce dedication to fighting oral cancer, Philip had personality, drive and talent to spare for the wider world of dentistry, too.

From first qualification from King’s College London in 1977, he rarely stood still. He worked as a clinical assistant in the hospital service before stepping into general dentistry.

He opened a practice on the Isle of Wight in 2006 that would deliver, in his words, ‘unhurried’ dental care.

But in the wake of the then-new 2006 NHS contract, Avenue Road was no ordinary practice. Wholly private, focused on prevention, and with oral health at its heart, it was a reflection of its principal – and in its adoption of hygiene-led care, set out an approach that many practices struggle to follow nearly two decades on.

He became an expert on practice management as much as clinical excellence, with an easy grasp of both that saw him welcomed on to the editorial boards of the journals *Private Dentistry* and *Aesthetic Dentistry Today*. Serving as a director of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry for several years was followed by time as general secretary of the European Society of Cosmetic Dentistry,

picking up numerous accolades for his commitment to postgraduate education.

Fittingly, he spent many years as a media spokesperson for the British Dental Association – treating wider audiences on TV and radio to the same accessible, knowledgeable speaking style that graced his lectures.

ESSENTIAL CONTRIBUTION

Philip’s passing has seen an outpouring of respect from the profession.

‘Philip was a terrific champion of highlighting the importance of checking for mouth cancer,’ said MCF founder Dr Vinod Joshi OBE. ‘He was also a Mouth Cancer Foundation stalwart being involved from very early on supporting our charity goals and dreams.’

A statement from the Mouth Cancer Foundation (MCF) read: ‘Philip leaves behind a legacy of excellence, integrity, and dedication. He will be remembered as an ambassador and past president of the MCF, an excellent dentist, a visionary leader, and a cherished member of the dental and head and neck cancer community.’

‘His life was defined by his love for helping others and his relentless pursuit of educating everyone about mouth cancer.’

Krishan Joshi, founder of Dental Focus and a trustee of the MCF, said: ‘Philip’s personal mission was to change the narrative. His mission would lead to him being the most active clinical ambassador for the Foundation and leading many life-saving initiatives.’

‘This remarkable man was the catalyst to the strong continuity of the Foundation and in making an enduring leading charity that means so much to so many. I am truly grateful and thankful for his essential contribution. The charity wouldn’t be what it is today without him.’

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November is *Mouth Cancer Action Month*

Dental professionals are being urged to get involved in this year's Mouth Cancer Action Month, which takes place throughout November.

The campaign aims to raise awareness about mouth cancer, in which dental professionals play a crucial role.

Approximately 50% of head and neck cancers are first identified by dentists, with organisations such as Cancer Research UK, the British Dental Association (BDA) and Public Health England highlighting the essential role dental professionals play in the early detection of oral cancers, which form part of the broader category of head and neck cancers.

According to Oracle Head & Neck Cancer UK, 34 people are diagnosed with head and neck cancers in the UK every day, with patient numbers increasing by 30% per decade.

Early detection is key for improved survival rates, however, only a third of head and neck cancer cases are detected at stage one or two.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

There are various ways to drive awareness of mouth cancer.

Suggestions from the Oral Health Foundation include:

- Blue Ribbon badges: wear and sell Blue Ribbon badges at your practice to spark conversations about mouth cancer and raise funds for Mouth Cancer Action Month
- Blue Wednesday: on 13 November 2024, wear blue to work, take a selfie with your Blue Ribbon, and share it online along with some information about spotting mouth cancer. Don't forget to use #MouthCancerAction
- Fundraising and displays: organise fundraising events or create informative displays in the waiting room.

More details about this year's Mouth Cancer Action Month can be found at www.mouthcancer.org along with resources and information about mouth cancer.

In addition to its annual Mouth Cancer 10km Awareness Walk, the Mouth Cancer Foundation offers a variety of leaflets, posters and social media tiles, many of which are free to download, and provides plenty of inspiration for fundraising activities on its website (www.mouthcancerfoundation.org).

Oracle Head & Neck Cancer UK provides a range of resources, such as videos and printouts, for use in the dental practice.


The charity's main resource is a leaflet that provides a step-by-step self-check. The A4, double-sided, full-colour leaflet includes information about risks, symptoms, and where to seek further support.

Dental practices are encouraged to use the leaflets to promote self-checks among their patients. The leaflet is available to dental practices for free at present and can be printed in a variety of different shapes and sized.

Also available free of charge is a self-check video that can be shown on display screens in dental practice waiting rooms. To request resources, email info@oraclehnc.org.uk.

Support Mouth Cancer Action Month this November. For further information and resources, visit mouthcancer.org, mouthcancerfoundation.org and oraclehnc.org.uk.





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New chief executive for CQC

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has announced that Sir Julian Hartley will be appointed as its new chief executive.

Sir Julian has been the chief executive of NHS Providers since February 2023. Prior to this, he had been chief executive of several organisations, most recently 10 years as chief executive of Leeds Teaching Hospitals. His start date as the CQC chief executive is yet to be confirmed.

Ian Dilks, chair of CQC, said: 'I am very happy that CQC will make such a strong appointment to the role of chief executive. Sir Julian was chosen from an outstanding field for his significant leadership experience and his experience of contributing to developments in the wider health and social care landscapes.

'CQC has much work to do to rebuild trust with the public, providers and with our own staff. We also await the findings and recommendations of the final review from Dr Penny Dash and of the review that we have commissioned from Professor Sir Mike Richards.

'However, I am confident that Sir Julian has the qualities and experience to lead the organisation through the challenges ahead and help to ensure that we make the right changes to become the strong effective regulator that people who use and work in health and social care services need and deserve.'

Sir Julian Hartley said: 'I am delighted to be joining CQC at a time when effective regulation which supports improvement across the health and care sector and good, safe care for people who use services has never been more important.'

Smoking rates of young adults in steep decline

New data has shown a steep decline in the smoking rates of young adults in the UK over the past decade, while vaping continues to rise.

According to the data, fewer than one in 10 (9.8%) young adults in the UK currently smoke cigarettes. This is a steep decline from records 12 years ago, which found that a quarter of 18- to 24-year-olds were smokers.

In addition, only 11.9% of UK adults smoked cigarettes in 2023 – down from 20% in 2011, and the lowest level since the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) records began in 2011.

The ONS figures found the percentage of adults who smoked across the UK in 2023 was:

- England – 11.6%
- Wales – 12.6%
- Scotland – 13.5%
- Northern Ireland – 13.3%

The data also found that vaping continues to rise, with a 9.8% of adults aged 16 and over (5.1 million) vaping in 2023. Vaping rates were highest amongst 16- to 24-year-olds, with 15.8% using vapes either daily or occasionally according to the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).



Conference for dental groups heading to Manchester

The Association of Dental Groups (ADG) will be holding its first conference on the 15 November at Old Trafford in Manchester.



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This event – designed exclusively for leadership teams of dental groups – is focused on patient-centred sustainable growth. It is a perfect opportunity for groups to learn from each other and tap into a wide network of experience.

The conference is open by invitation to dental groups of all sizes. It will delve into the many areas that growing groups wish to learn more about, including leadership, finance and investment and improving the patient and staff experience.

A series of panel discussions will also be on offer, one of which will see Jason Wong MBE, chief dental officer (CDO) for England, and Rachel Derby, president of the British Association of Private Dentistry, dive into the considerations of NHS and private commitments.

After the sessions, the ADG will be hosting an early evening reception, offering a relaxed setting in which to continue the conversations from the day.

Interested in joining the event? Contact events@fmc.co.uk.

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Focused forecast

Chris Barrow shares 20 steps to implement to reduce the dreaded white space in the practice diary



After what seems like a long time, 'white space' has reappeared in dental diaries this year. Since lockdown and the return to work, dental practices have reported unprecedented levels of busy-ness, with waiting lists for treatment in our modern world of 'dental deserts'. Four years of busy. Until now.

SUMMER DAZE

The change really began as the summer started and, during the slightly less wet months of June, July and August, we explained away creeping 'white space' by suggesting that patients' were distracted by the Euros, the Olympics, the Tour de France, the rugby, the cricket, Taylor Swift and a host of other ways to invest time and money.

In amongst all that summer madness, we enjoyed the pre-election gaffs of politicians, then election night and the result, and now we have had just over 100 days of post-election gaffs.

We all thought the patients would return as soon as all the distraction had ended. However, unfortunately, it doesn't seem to have happened. As I write this, consumer confidence seems to have dipped as we approach the forthcoming Budget on 31 October.

A successful business friend told me that she had recently visited Bicester Village – and there was no queue at the Gucci store. In her opinion, this was a sure sign that money is tight.

So, what must we do? Wait for the chancellor to sit down?

I suspect that the distractions will continue, perhaps most notably the US elections. Which, while it doesn't directly influence us, is the biggest circus in town, and we'll all wait, with bated breath, to see who wins and how scarier the world might become as a result.

There's no doubt that the purveyors of news will magic up plenty of other stories to take our minds off spending money at the dental practice.

PLAN OF ACTION

If you're looking to do something about your own 'white space', here are my 20 steps:

1. Promote or recruit a full-time marketing manager, irrespective of the size of your business
2. Use your recall system to remind people of the benefits of regular attendance, as well as reminding them that you are accepting new patients
3. Post patient and team stories to social media every day
4. Aim for 100 Google reviews (then aim for 250, 500, 1,000)
5. Review your website with an expert
6. Write a patient story blog every week
7. Publish an email patient newsletter every month
8. Make sure your morning huddle includes time to review the day list to identify opportunities for ethical sales, word of mouth and testimonials
9. Create a robust end of treatment review system
10. Review your search engine optimisation with an expert
11. Build free downloads for your website with opt-ins to your newsletter
12. Create the same downloads as print media to handout to patients
13. Sponsor and attend local B2B and B2C meetings
14. Engage with a local PR company
15. Create and populate your own branded Youtube channel with patient/team testimonial videos and patient education
16. Create easy to read infographics to explain treatment to patients
17. Build your own practice smartphone app
18. Look for public speaking opportunities in your local postcode
19. Engage with an expert digital marketing agency
20. Teach your clinicians to communicate effectively.

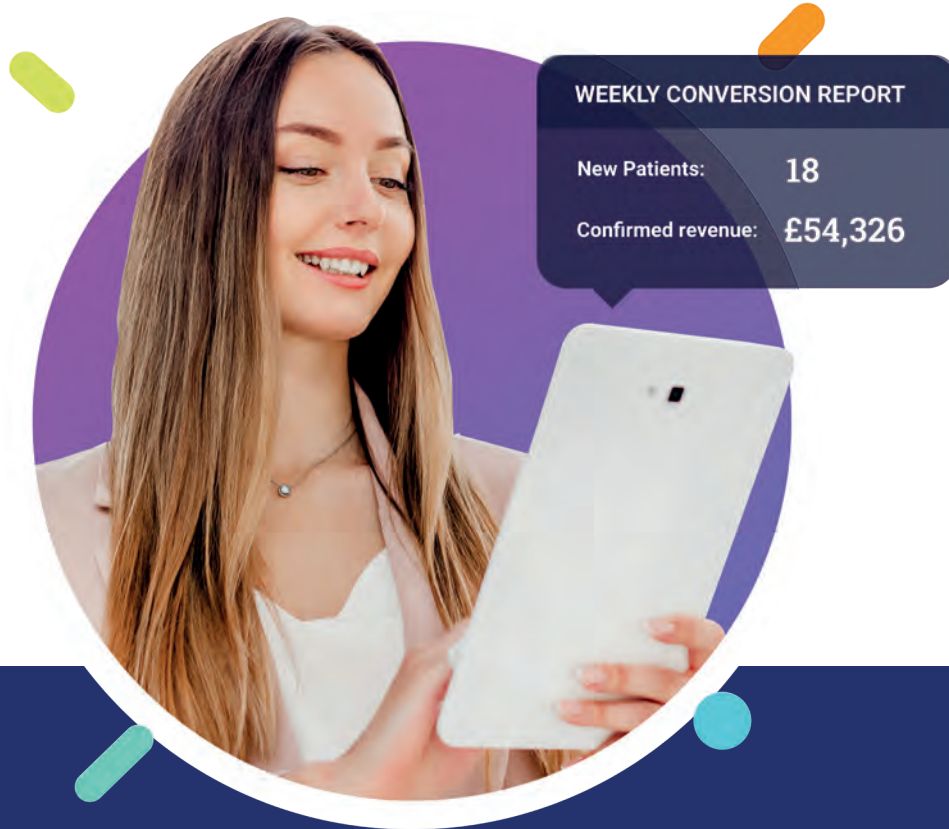
One final point – weighting the priorities of these 20 steps? Put 20% of your effort into the first 19 points – and 80% of your effort into the last one.

This isn't a cleverly disguised push for my own services – I don't teach communication skills, but there are experts out there who do; we know who they are, and you need them now.

Don't wait for the distractions to stop – they won't. Act now to make sure that you are louder.

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Nejati Clinic

Brandon Nejati – founder of Nejati Clinic and pioneer of anti-ageing holistic dentistry – shares the journey of creating the new Belgravia clinic

I graduated from the University of Gothenburg in 2003 and moved from Sweden to establish my dental career in the UK. From the early days, I adopted a preventive and proactive approach to dentistry.

I am an artist and a perfectionist at heart, so striving to enhance and improve the smile of every one of our patients comes naturally to me.

As my career progressed, my dentistry techniques became increasingly refined and, for the most part, they are self-taught. My signature micro-layering treatment has been developed over many years as an alternative to traditional porcelain veneers. Inspired by the 'sfumato' technique of Renaissance artists, this specialist method involves layering with nano-composites infused with porcelain, combining science and artistry to gradually build a natural and elegant look.

THE CLINIC

I had been looking for a premises in this area of Belgravia for a considerable time – it's the perfect location for us and easily accessible, particularly for our overseas clients. This was important to us, as 40% of our patients come from overseas (mainly from the US and Europe, but some travel from as far as Australia).

OUR SURGERIES HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO FEEL REASSURING, BRIGHT AND MODERN

Many of our patients either live, stay or shop locally (the clinic is just around the corner from Harrods), and although extremely central, we're located in a quiet area, which is key to help create a sense of sanctuary and relaxation for our patients.

Step inside...

THE PRACTICE
Nejati Clinic
25a Lowndes St
London
SW1X 9JS

TELEPHONE
020 3906 1715

EMAIL
info@nejaticlinic.com

WEBSITE
www.nejaticlinic.com

AN AMBITIOUS VISION

As with everything, I adopted a meticulous approach when it came to designing and creating the clinic. As a keen artist, I took a key role in the design of Nejati Clinic to ensure it embodied our ambitious vision.

We designed the practice to feel like a sanctuary for our patients.

Each client enters the clinic into a floor dedicated to our products (we have developed our own range of holistic dental products – Mahsa), before transitioning to the next floor, which has been created to feel like a luxury spa.

In the patient lounge we serve freshly prepared herbal teas, which, accompanied by soothing music and bespoke fragrance, creates a calming environment.

In contrast, our surgeries have been designed to feel reassuring, bright and modern, with a different ambience created by layered lighting and new scents.

A visit to Nejati Clinic provides a journey for the senses and a luxurious and holistic patient experience, which we believe to be unique from every other clinic.

When it came to the build, we contracted Apollo Interiors as our fit-out company, as it has an expert team that specialises in dental clinic design and construction.



The ethos

Nejati Clinic aims to provide one-of-a-kind, anti-ageing dental care. Its focus is very different to many dental practices – it adopts a holistic approach to maintaining dental health rather than focus mainly on treating damage and disease. The belief is that the mouth is the gateway for the rest of the body and that oral health affects systemic health.

The wider team has been set up to include some of the finest practitioners – from periodontists to cosmetic dermatologists and even a celebrity acupuncturist – to ensure every aspect of our patients' oro-facial care is taken care of.

From the spa-like surroundings of the practice to the exquisite fragrances that transition as patients travel through it, a visit to Nejati Clinic is an experience that aims to leave every patient feeling like a VIP.

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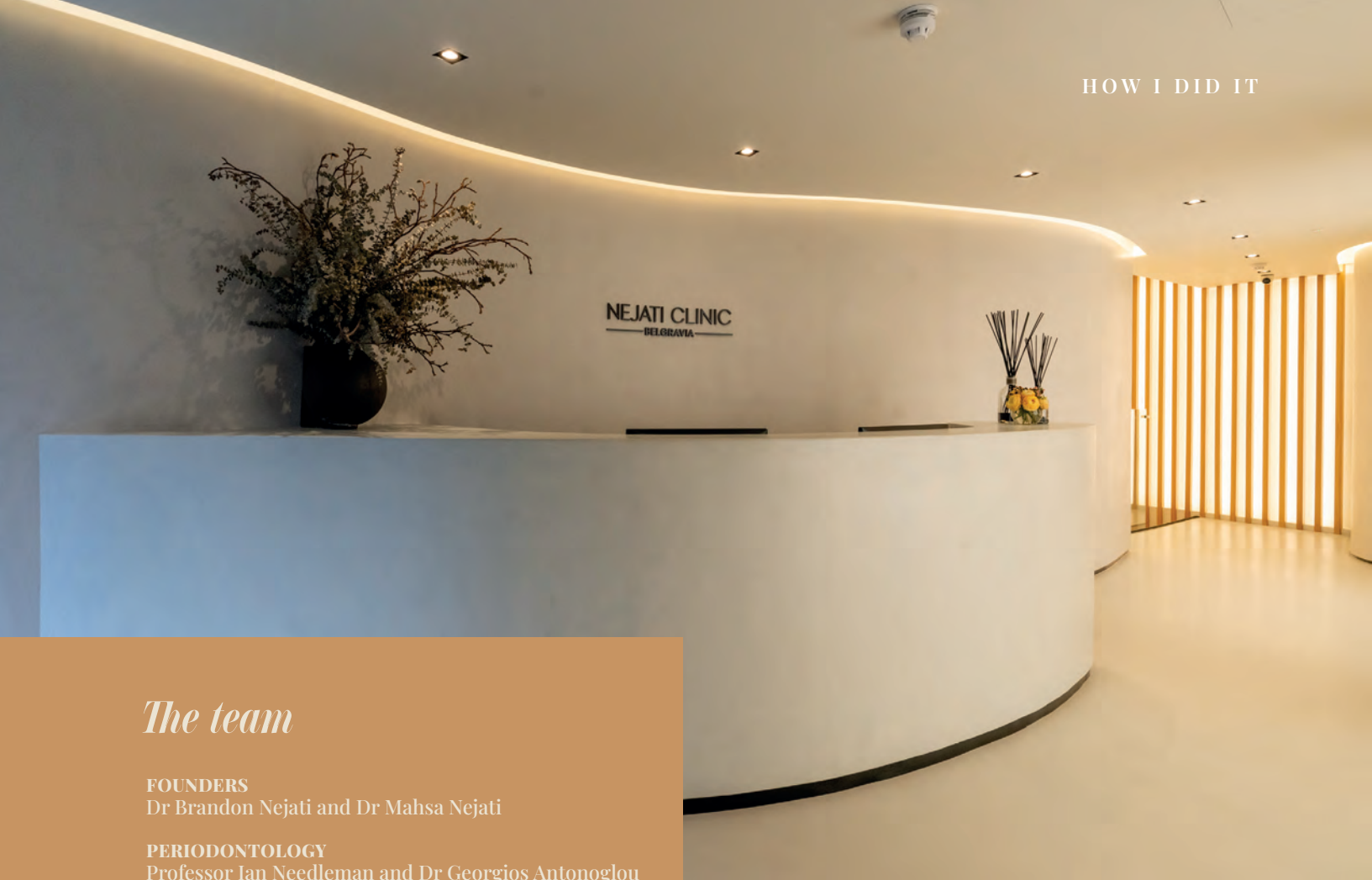
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The team

FOUNDERS

Dr Brandon Nejadi and Dr Mahsa Nejadi

PERIODONTOLOGY

Professor Ian Needleman and Dr Georgios Antonoglou

ENDODONTICS

Dr Julian Webber and Dr Trevor Lamb

PROSTHODONTICS

Dr Wassim Chawich

WELLBEING AND AESTHETICS

Sarah Bradden and Dr Timm Goluke

We established a good working relationship with the team over the course of the project.

The project did take longer to complete than anticipated, but this was mainly due to my perfectionist nature! Not a single corner was cut, and precision was achieved in every single aspect of our practice.

THE MARKETING

It may be unusual, but in keeping with our approach of exclusivity, we've taken a minimal approach to marketing activity – including social media and advertising.

Our promotion comes primarily via editorial PR (we have featured in magazines such as *Vogue* and *Tatler*) and personal introductions from clients.





THE RESULT

I feel we have successfully achieved what we set out to do – patients have told us they are ‘mesmerised’ when they enter the clinic.

The painstaking level of detail was definitely worth the effort. We’re already planning the next phase of Nejati Clinic and looking to expand our premises and treatment offering. Watch this space!

Who was involved?

Clinic build
Apollo Interiors

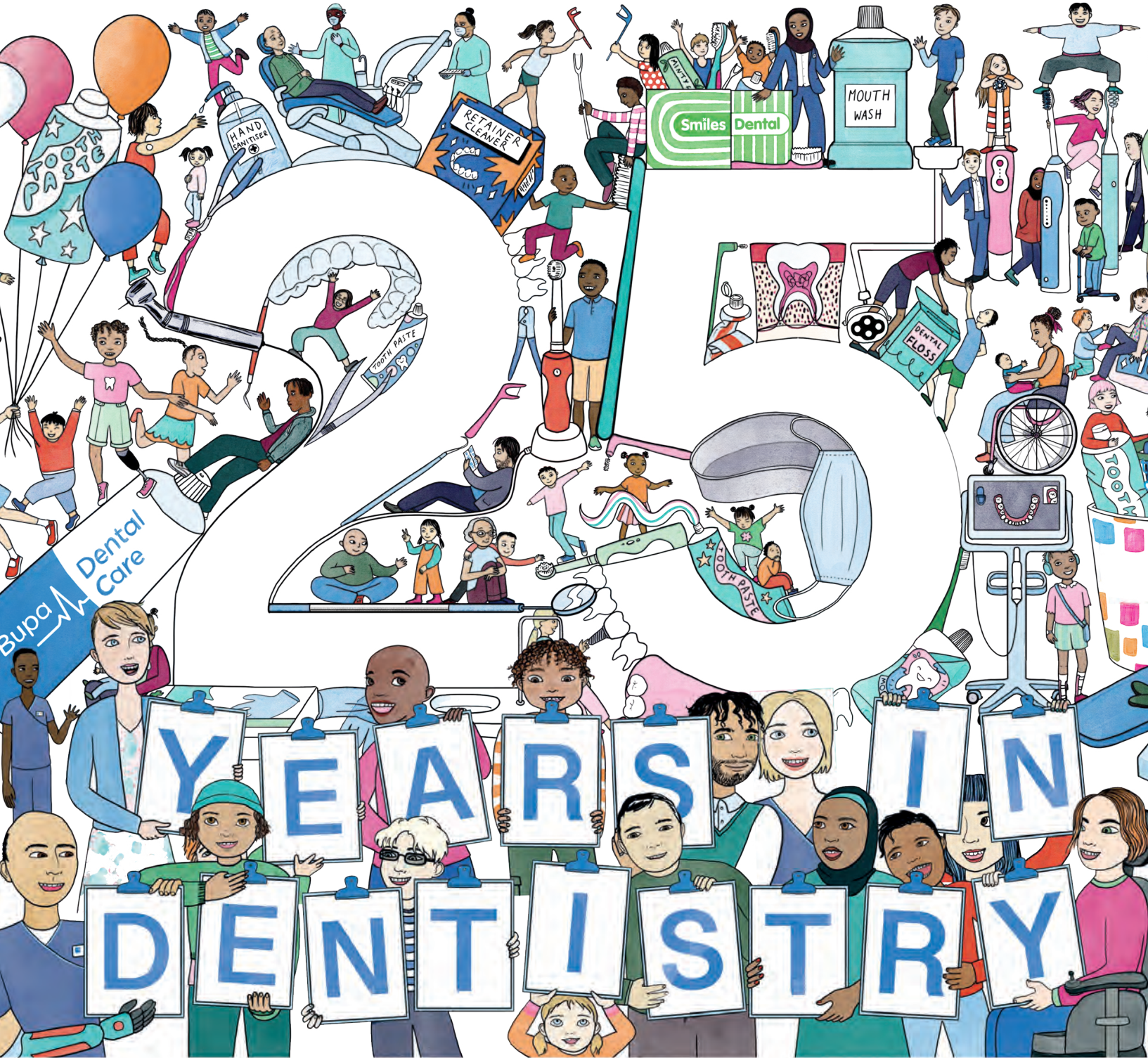
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‘A labour of love’

Dentist **Aisha Shabir** shares her journey of building a practice from the ground up, transforming an empty field into a nature-inspired clinic

Aisha Shabir isn't the first dentist to juggle pregnancy and launching a squat practice, and she won't be the last. Managing the overlap of these two milestones is not without some extra stress. Starting a business and managing its growth always demands formidable resilience – even more significant when balancing the demands of pregnancy and entrepreneurship, making the journey uniquely challenging.

As reported by [dentistry.co.uk](https://www.dentistry.co.uk), research from Instant Offices shows that only 11% of dental practices launched in 2022 were started by women. Sadly, this marked a decline from the previous year, when women established 287 out of 1,365 new practices, accounting for 21%.

As a business entrepreneur who launched her squat practice earlier this year, Aisha is one of the few women for whom this is a lived experience. She navigated the challenges with steely determination, all while expecting her third child.

Now the proud owner of Everysmile Dental Clinic in Ratby, Leicester, it has been an incredible journey. It began in May 2018 when her father-in-law, a GP with a vision for a multi-health centre comprising a GP surgery, pharmacy and dental practice, purchased a plot of land for his project. Back then, it was just an empty field.

PURE PASSION

Reflecting on the transformation from those early construction days to the clinic's opening, Aisha fondly recalls: 'Everysmile is a real labour of love built

with pure passion from the foundations up. My father-in-law, a GP, purchased the land for the practice in 2018, and it was just minutes away from the old GP practice.

'Planning permission for the super surgery took time, but by May 2022, the builder was on site, and by October 2023, the GP practice was opened. I received the keys to start my dental fit-out in October 2023, which was completed in February 2024. After an eventual and long-awaited CQC inspection, we officially opened in March.'

Two of the practice's surgeries are operational, and as the practice grows, plans are in place to expand and fit out the remaining two. But this could be sooner than first anticipated.

Aisha explains: 'This is the first dental practice in the village, so we leveraged the GP practice's footfall and used a banner with a QR code to attract patients, resulting in 250–300 people who registered their interest. We operate five days a week, with extended hours on Mondays and Wednesdays until 8pm to accommodate different schedules.'





SOLID SUPPORT

Balancing the business's demands with family life is challenging, especially with three children under five. However, she is determined to make it work and is thankful for the support from her GP husband, Asim, and her in-law family.

'Ultimately, responsibility for EverySmile lies with me, which can be challenging. I became pregnant with my third child mid-build, which added to this. Thankfully, I had a project manager, so I avoided the typical building problems. However, I did face a difficult time due to a prolonged wait for a CQC inspection, which delayed opening.

'I had bills to pay without the prospect of seeing patients, and it was hard. I also had an associate position to complete, seeing patients through to the end of their treatment, so it's been hectic.

'There are times when you wonder if being a business owner is worth it, and a nine-to-five alternative has its appeal. Finding your purpose in life and getting your mojo back can be challenging, especially when dealing with the unique struggles of being a woman practice owner – struggles that often differ from those of practice-owning couples, for example.

'I've never been through this experience before, but you find a way to make it work because you don't know any different.'

DESIGNED FOR DENTISTRY

EverySmile provides a full range of dental services, from Invisalign and veneers to implants, with a special focus on sedation-led treatments. The practice accepts referrals for these services,

which are managed by Aisha, a skilled sedationist dedicated to alleviating dental anxiety and creating a more comfortable experience for patients.

'EverySmile is built on the mission of creating a comfortable and welcoming environment, breaking down the barriers of dental phobia and ensuring every patient feels cared for. We emphasise a relaxed atmosphere, akin to a spa, which is reflected in our patient reviews. Unlike typical dental visits or surgeries, we prioritise comfort through sensory engagement – using sight, sound and smell to ease our patients.

'We provide specialised referrals for children who need gas and air sedation and offer sedation for various procedures, including extractions and fillings, even for children as young as four.

'One of our core services is managing patients with dental anxiety – around 60–70% of our clientele fall into this category. We use behaviour management therapy and slow dentistry, breaking down treatments into manageable segments to ensure a stress-free experience.

'For those needing multiple extractions or implants, we offer comprehensive care that minimises discomfort and often results in amnesia of the procedure, ensuring a positive experience. Referrals are easy; practitioners can upload X-rays directly. This convenience is a key part of our unique service offering.'

And EverySmile's interior has been thoughtfully designed to support the practice's focus on nervous patients.

Aisha explains: 'Our design concept embraces the five senses, with a special emphasis on colour schemes inspired by nature. This theme is reflected in the names of our four surgeries – oak, maple, willow and aspen. I was particularly eager to include a curved wall, as its gentle, inviting curve evokes a calming atmosphere similar to that of a hotel lobby. We chose a distressed concrete-effect wallpaper to enhance this sense of a hospitality setting.

'I eventually brought in Gloss Interiors, and its designers worked closely with Elliot, our builder. I initially leaned towards neutral tones and gold accents. However, adding green velvet and other natural elements created a refreshing and grounded space. This theme is echoed in the green-coloured equipment and carefully selected furniture.'

This is also reflected in the surgeries where she has installed Belmont chairs.

'I have used Belmont chairs in other practices and liked their simplicity. It's a well-known brand, and I have worked on the Compass and Voyager models. I have two Voyagers in the luxury pearlised upholstery and get compliments from patients for their aesthetics and comfort. The Eurus was launched just after I bought them, so I will be looking to upgrade when we open the next two surgeries.'

SPEAK UP

So, what advice would she offer colleagues looking to launch their own practice?

'You're pretty clueless until you go through the process yourself. But I'm never afraid to speak up if something doesn't sit right with me, and this approach has consistently served me well.

'Opening a new private clinic in a new area can sometimes carry a stigma, so it's important to actively engage with new patients to build rapport and establish trust. We scan every new patient; this is an invaluable tool to educate them about issues they may not previously have been aware of. When patients see the results themselves, it enhances their understanding.

'Lastly, professional and personal support is essential throughout the entire journey. I've been fortunate to receive help from many people along the way, for which I am deeply grateful.'

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Dental property *investments*

Simon Harbour delves into converting available retail and office units as an economically prudent entry pathway into practice ownership

Dentists were one of 17 niche assets examined as part of Rapleys' *An Alternatives View* report, as investors continue to search for value outside of traditional property classes.

The report found that the UK dental industry presents an appealing and strategically prudent investment prospect, with particular upside potential in the rapidly expanding cosmetic dentistry segment.

While the total number of dental practices increased moderately over the past decade, reaching 6,240 by the end of 2022, a closer analysis of underlying trends points to steady ongoing expansion and patient growth.

Recent fluctuations in net practice numbers partly reflect isolated events. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated widespread temporary practice closures and constraints on non-urgent procedures. Additionally, Bupa's 2017 acquisition of Oasis Dental Care, which operated more than 200 practices nationwide, impacted totals with some consolidations. However, looking beyond these one-off factors reveals an industry fundamentally driven by strong underlying demand dynamics.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The talent pipeline continues to widen, strengthening the workforce foundation supporting growth. The number of registered dental care professionals (DCPs) jumped by over 2,000 in

2022 alone, hitting 71,769 registered practitioners nationwide.

This deepening pool of skilled dentists, hygienists, therapists, dental nurses, technicians and assistants reduces hiring and training costs for emerging practices.

Rising prevalence of dental diseases also signals growth ahead. Poor diets, unhealthy lifestyles and urbanisation are increasing rates of common dental disorders, like tooth decay and gum disease, across the UK. As more patients develop these issues, demand

for general dentistry services to provide corrective treatment expands correspondingly.

Once patients complete initial restorative work, interest frequently develops in improving smile aesthetics through cosmetic procedures. However, while patient needs rise, NHS dental care funding stagnates.

With thousands unable to access affordable general dentistry services, immense unmet demand exists – presenting a major opportunity for private general and cosmetic practices.

Top opportunities

- **Cosmetic dentistry.** The practice of Invisalign and other more affordable cosmetic practices has seen demand soaring
- **Flexible use.** Flexible class E in planning has smoothed the way for easy repurposing of empty commercial space for dentistry
- **Retail units.** Bargains are to be had with lower rents and longer incentive periods for dental operators who want to be on the high street
- **Few national operators.** With few national operators and investors there's a real opportunity for new entrants to the market
- **Capex.** The capital expenditure to convert an empty retail unit or office to a dental practice is much lower than for other uses.

Top challenges

- **NHS funding.** Funding into UK dentistry remains low meaning there is a large supply/demand imbalance
- **NHS dentists.** Dentists continue to leave the public sector, tempted by more lucrative private work
- **Overseas cost.** Like other cosmetic procedures, dental work is affordable overseas and Brits are taking the opportunity to have a simultaneous holiday
- **Global supply chains.** The impact of Brexit and COVID-19 affected supply chains and dental practices are still facing higher costs for essential supplies to date
- **Affordability.** The ongoing affordability crisis means that many people who cannot access free dental care are avoiding going to the dentist completely resulting in DIY dentistry and poor dental health.



Simon Harbour

Simon is partner and head of building surveying at Rapleys.

AESTHETIC DEMANDS

Cosmetic dentistry, in particular, displays robust growth prospects. As popular treatments like tooth whitening and clear aligners become more affordable and available, demand climbs steeply.

Recent surveys reveal cosmetic dental work ranks highly among desired aesthetic treatments nationwide, with 43% citing improved self-confidence as their motivation.

Dental tourism does pose some competition, as patients capitalise on more economical overseas options. Despite this, more than a third still view their teeth as their top appearance concern, reflecting steady domestic demand.

Adding to the industry's attractiveness is the lack of dominant national players in the cosmetic segment. With minimal large-scale incumbents, ample space exists for new market entrants to capture significant share and nurture a brand.

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS

Dental operators themselves recognise the favourable conditions, proactively seeking long-term leases to convert vacant retail or office units into practices. Transforming available commercial spaces into dental surgeries also offers notable capital expenditure advantages.

Compared to many other business uses, dental practices require relatively minimalist fit-outs. Key requirements are lighting, flooring, basic furnishings like chairs and counters, and installation of equipment like dental chairs, X-ray machines, and sterilisation tools.

This controlled and streamlined fit-out scope translates into substantially lower upfront capital costs for investors seeking to convert retail or office units into dental practices.

On average, fit-out costs for a new dental practice are significantly lower than retail spaces. For a typical sized unit, this could mean major capital expenditure savings by opting for a dental practice use rather than retail or other more intensive uses. The relatively contained costs to retrofit vacant spaces gives dental practices high financial viability and contributes to faster payback on investment compared to other uses with more intensive build-out and equipment needs.

With only around 30% of dentists being corporately owned, but a huge amount of interest shown by venture capitalists, we expect to see significant M&A activity over the next 12 months and beyond as venture capitalists-owned corporates in the industry seek to expand their market share significantly.

UPSIDE POTENTIAL




In summary, supportive demographic expansion, strong underlying patient demand, and limited competition make the UK dental industry – especially high-growth cosmetic dentistry – a strategically compelling and financially attractive investment prospect. Converting available retail and office units offers an economically prudent entry pathway into this industry with immense upside potential.

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Understanding compound growth

Harmy Bains explains the power of compound growth, Einstein's eighth wonder of the world

A robust financial plan is crucial to help ensure a comfortable retirement and financial security. One of the most potent tools for achieving these goals is compound growth.

According to Albert Einstein: 'Compound interest is the eighth wonder of the world. He who understands it, earns it. He who doesn't, pays it.'

As this concept can help amplify your investment returns over time, it could prove beneficial to understand it.

Compound interest occurs when the interest earned on an investment is reinvested, generating additional interest on the original investment and the accumulated interest.

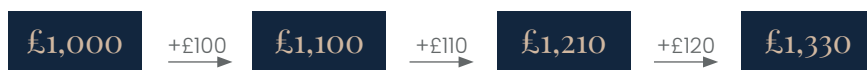
This creates a snowball effect that can dramatically increase your wealth. The diagram above illustrates this using a 10% compound return.

KEY FACTORS AFFECTING COMPOUND INTEREST

Several factors influence the rate at which compound interest grows, such as the initial amount invested, the percentage return on the investment, the length of time the investment is held and how often the interest is added.

INVESTMENT OPTIONS

Dentists have a variety of investment options depending on whether



they are self-employed or a limited company, each with its own risk-return profile:

- Pension schemes, including NHS Pension and private pension plans, offer tax advantages and can be a great way to save for retirement
- Individual savings accounts (ISAs) provide tax-free investment opportunities
- UK government bonds, also known as Index Long Term Strategy (ILTS), benefit taxpayers at a higher or additional rate as they offer no capital gains tax to pay on profits coming directly from the increase in the bond price
- Investing in property can provide both income and capital appreciation.

When considering your investment options, it is important to understand how the different options work together to create your long-term financial plan, considering wealth flow over time.

DIVERSIFICATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

To manage risk and help maximise returns, it's important to diversify your investments across different asset classes and industries to help protect your investment portfolio from market fluctuations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAXIMISING GROWTH RATES

Let's assume you invest £1,000 per month in a portfolio historically averaging a return of approximately 9% per year compared to one that

returns 5% per year, according to thecalculatorsite.com:

- At 9%, it would grow to circa £613,000 over 20 years
- The same investment, at 5%, would grow to circa £396,000 over 20 years.

This highlights the power of compound growth and how important it is to maximise the return on your investments to take full advantage of it.

Delaying investment inevitably has an impact. To illustrate the influence of early investment, if you delay starting the previous example investment by five years, it would be worth approximately £352,000 after 15 years – costing you £261,000 in potential growth. These are hypothetical examples; actual returns may vary.

It's essential to consult with a financial planner to help create a personalised, comprehensive investment plan that aligns with your goals and risk tolerance. While you can learn a lot about compound interest and investing on your own, consulting with a qualified financial planner can provide valuable guidance and personalised advice.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The power of compound growth can have a major impact on your ability to meet your financial goals. Time is your friend when it comes to investing. The longer you invest, the more significant the benefits of compound growth become.

Regularly contributing to your investments, as early as possible, can boost your savings, helping you build a comfortable nest egg for the future.



Harmy Bains

Harmy is a financial planning director at Brooks Macdonald. With more than a decade of experience, he specialises in providing financial planning to principal and associate dentists. Email Harmy on harmy.bains@brooksmacdonald.com.

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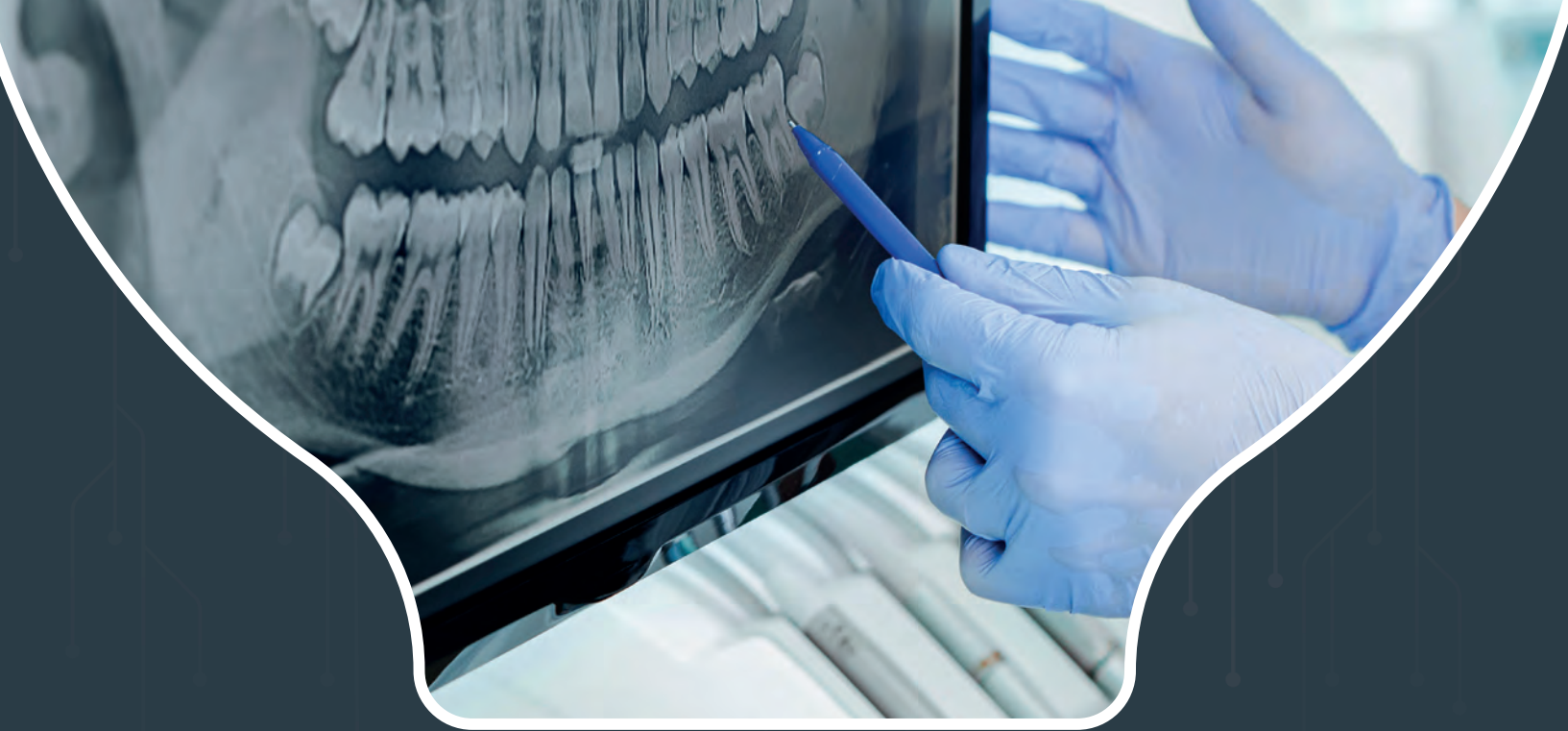
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Six accounting strategies for dental groups

Arun Mehra provides a how-to guide to optimising financial operations for maximum effect

Achieving clinical excellence is only one part of a successful dental practice; mastering the business side is another. Both ensure sustainable growth.

My wife founded the Neem Tree Dental Group in London and the south east. Together, we've built the business from the ground up, embedding best practices into everything we do.

Although our approach is profoundly personal, we implement the same strategies in our business that we advise our clients.

STRUCTURE AND SUCCESS

Dental groups have evolved rapidly in the past five to 10 years. Many have begun with an ad hoc approach, with some owners acquiring practices without structure or strategy.

Dentists have acquired practices, secured loans, and bought diverse practices – from limited companies to sole traders and partnerships.

There has also been a notable trend toward growth through start-ups, with some dental professionals building a group by opening multiple new practices. The combination of strategies is also used, blending start-ups and acquisitions to create a robust portfolio.



Arun Mehra

Arun has a wealth of experience in setting up, managing and marketing dental practices, and helping dentists with accounting and tax solutions. He is the founder and CEO of Samera, a global provider of accountancy, tax, outsourcing and financing solutions for healthcare businesses and other accountancy firms. For more information, visit samera.co.uk.

However, this piecemeal approach can lead to complications. The lack of a cohesive financial structure can create significant hurdles, particularly regarding valuation and eventual exit strategies.

From a financial perspective, the primary objective of forming a dental group is to increase EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation). As the number of practices increases, so should the collective EBITDA of the group, enhancing value for potential investors. The key lies in planning from a solid financial and accounting framework.

Here are six tips to ensure your business is structured for long-term success and smooth transitions.

1 EMBRACE A SYSTEMS-BASED MINDSET

Different practices using different systems create a mishmash of data that is difficult to consolidate and analyse. A lack of cohesion causes operational headaches and can significantly impact the ROI.

With a unified system, tracking and comparing the financial health of different practices becomes smooth and efficient. Implementing a universal accounting system across all practices is vital. This allows you to assess critical performance metrics, such as:

- The financial contributions of associates
- Hourly rates generated
- The EBITDA for each site is a particularly vital metric because it directly influences business valuations. It is crucial to consider whether you want to sell or acquire practices.

2 CREATE A STREAMLINED FRAMEWORK

As practices expand, ownership structures grow more complex. Over the years, I've observed numerous groups whose financial structure is a patchwork of different entities – from limited companies to sole traders to partnerships.

This scattered approach often leads to confusion regarding tax benefits. For instance, without a unified corporate group structure, profitable entities cannot offset losses from other entities, leading to higher tax liabilities.

My preferred structure involves establishing a holding company at the top, where individual limited companies are set up for each practice. This setup offers several key advantages. Clear reporting lines and financial clarity are maintained when each practice is housed within its own company. And if you decide to sell one of your practices in the future, having each practice within its own company simplifies the transaction. A well-organised financial framework is not just about avoiding current headaches; it's about future-proofing your business.

3 INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY AND SOFTWARE SUPPORT

Technology plays an essential role in managing the financial aspects of a business, and using the right technology can help streamline processes. However, choosing and implementing the appropriate systems requires careful planning and consideration.

Before exploring specific software options, consider several crucial questions:

- How is financial data, particularly invoices, managed at the clinic level?
- Are invoices manually entered into a system, or is there an automated solution that can scan and input this data?
- Once the data is captured, how does it flow into the bookkeeping system? Which bookkeeping system is best suited for your dental group?
- Does the system support standardised accounts charts across all clinics to ensure uniformity in financial statements such as 'profit and loss' and balance sheets?
- Is there consistency in financial reporting across all entities within the group?
- Is the financial data processed at individual clinics or centralised at a head office?
- How do you track purchases, payments and approvals to maintain control and oversight if they are centralised?

What controls are in place to manage spending across the group? Implementing a hierarchical approval system for purchases over a certain threshold ensures financial control and prevents unauthorised expenditures. And remember, the processes that work for one practice may not be sufficient when dealing with the intricacies of a larger organisation.

Technology should not only be seen as a tool for managing daily operations but as an integral part of strategic planning and growth. It allows for better data collection, improved financial oversight and informed decisions based on real-time data.

4 CHOOSE THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY FOR YOU

There's a sea of technology out there in the accounting space. The bookkeeping toolkits were limited when I started – primarily Excel and Sage. Today, the options have expanded exponentially, with platforms like Xero and Quickbooks becoming the standard, offering enhanced capabilities and integrations unheard of a decade ago.

Beyond these foundational tools, an ecosystem of apps is designed to augment and streamline accounting processes. For instance, apps like Approvalmax, Dext, Hubdoc, and Lightyear can be integrated directly with Quickbooks or Xero. These tools can automate tasks such as scanning invoices, managing approvals, and downloading invoice data into accounting software – each offering a level of sophistication that can significantly enhance efficiency.

When it comes to payments, new systems such as Telleroo, Crezco or Payhawk offer innovative solutions that save time and reduce manual effort. Instead of manually processing payments one by one through a bank account, these platforms allow bulk payments with just a few clicks. This saves time and minimises errors, freeing up valuable resources that can be better spent elsewhere.

Reporting is another critical area where technology plays a crucial role. While it's essential to have up-to-date bookkeeping and payment systems, leveraging software that can provide insightful analytics is equally important. Tools like Spotlight, Sift and Fathom offer advanced reporting features that help dental group owners and managers understand their business's financial health at a glance.

Yet, successful implementation is vital with all these powerful tools at your disposal. It's one thing to have access to these technologies, but if

they're not implemented correctly, their full potential may not be realised. This is where many businesses falter – subscribing to multiple services but only utilising a fraction of their capabilities.

Proper implementation ensures you get accurate data and actionable insights that can drive your business forward.

5 WORKFLOW AND TEAM STRUCTURE

Establishing an effective workflow tailored to your business needs is crucial. Identify the workflow that best supports your operations and select the technology that complements it.

It's not uncommon to see practice managers or dental nurses handling bookkeeping tasks, which is often inefficient. Instead, hiring a dedicated bookkeeper can lead to better outcomes and free up valuable time for your practice manager to focus on strategic growth.

As your team expands, you might need a more structured financial infrastructure. Depending on the size and complexity of your business, this could include bookkeepers, an accountant, a financial controller, and even a finance director.

Or you may wish to opt for a finance manager, with other financial tasks – such as bookkeeping, reporting, management accounts and payroll – outsourced.

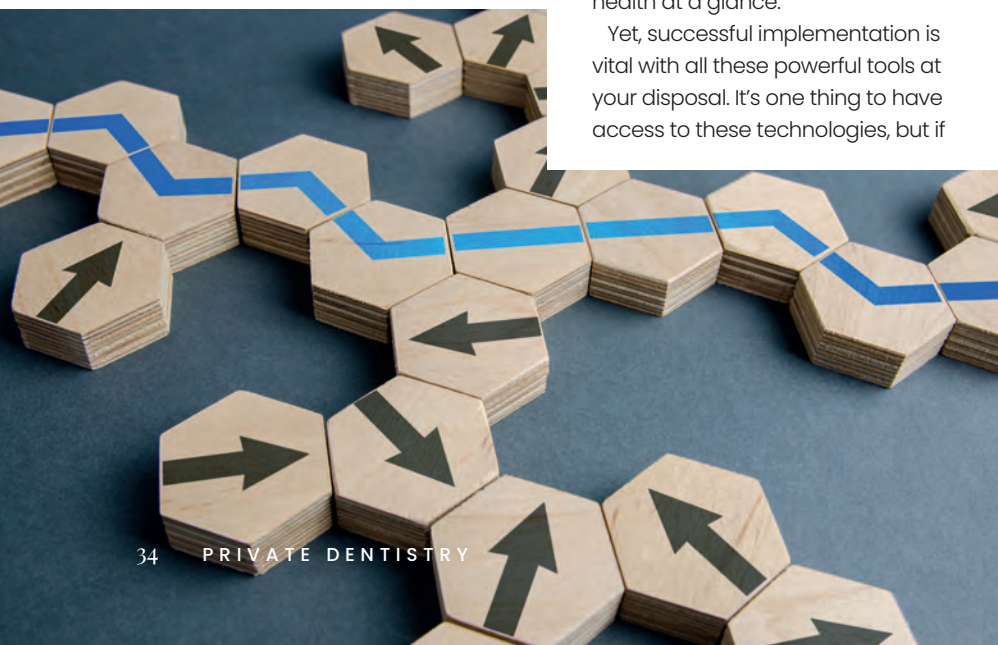
6 LET THE NUMBERS TELL THE STORY

Bookkeeping must be done daily, and bank accounts should be reconciled regularly. The ultimate goal is to produce management accounts by each month's end.

Having access to these management accounts is crucial. They provide insights into how to interpret your numbers and take appropriate actions. It's a continuous process of review and adjustment.

Once you establish a reliable system, you'll start to recognise patterns, understand what's working, and identify areas for improvement.

So, spend some time focusing on this crucial aspect of your business. You won't have the visibility needed to grow and develop your business effectively without a solid grasp of your numbers and a structured system.



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Facial aesthetics: going for growth

In their fifth and final article, **Shabnam Zai** and **Gizem Seymenoglu** give advice on how to market your facial aesthetics services

Marketing is essential for any dental practice looking to integrate facial aesthetics services successfully.

Effective marketing strategies attract new patients, enhance brand visibility and expand the practice.

This article delves into various marketing techniques, patient education methods and strategies for managing patient expectations to ensure satisfaction and foster loyalty.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

Social media campaigns

Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram offer valuable opportunities to showcase facial aesthetics services.

Engaging content – such as before and after photos, patient testimonials and educational videos – can capture the attention of potential clients and encourage them to explore your services further. The best part is that it can be used for free and reach many people quickly.

To execute this strategy effectively consider:

- Developing a content calendar with a mix of promotional posts, educational content and behind the scenes glimpses of your practice

- Utilising eye-catching images or videos showcasing before and after results
- Crafting compelling ad copy with persuasive headlines and descriptions
- Creating dedicated landing pages on your website with clear calls to action (CTAs) for scheduling consultations or learning more about specific treatments
- Engaging with your audience by responding to comments and messages promptly
- Paid marketing and targeting ads to desired demographics to increase the quality of enquiries and conversions.

Website optimisation

A well-optimised website serves as a virtual storefront for your practice and can significantly impact your online visibility. Ensure that your website is search engine optimised (SEO) to improve its ranking in search engine results pages. Include a dedicated section for facial aesthetics services, complete with detailed descriptions, before and after galleries, patient testimonials and a user-friendly contact form to facilitate enquiries and appointment bookings.

Regularly update your website with fresh content, such as blog posts addressing common questions or concerns about facial aesthetics treatments. This not only demonstrates your expertise but also improves your website's visibility and credibility. A dynamic website with regular updates usually performs better on Google than a static one,



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.

so consider this when discussing your website setup with your developer.

Email marketing

Email marketing remains a powerful tool for nurturing existing patient relationships and keeping them informed about your facial aesthetics services.

Develop a segmented email list and send targeted newsletters featuring special offers, treatment information, success stories and invitations to exclusive events or workshops.

Personalise your email campaigns based on recipients' interests,

preferences and past interactions with your practice. Track email engagement metrics such as open rates and click-through rates to assess the effectiveness of your campaigns and refine your approach over time.

Introductory offers

While undervaluing services isn't ideal, you need to work within your market. Many clinics offer free consultations and introductory offers to entice new patients to try facial aesthetics services until the value of their services is established. Promote these offers

through your website, social media channels, email newsletters and in-practice signage to maximise visibility and encourage conversions.

Consider bundling complementary treatments or add-on services to create value-packed introductory packages that appeal to prospective clients. Monitor the performance of your introductory offers closely and adjust them as needed to attract a steady stream of new patients.

Patient referral programmes

Harness the power of word-of-mouth marketing by implementing a patient referral programme that rewards existing patients for referring friends and family to your practice. Offer incentives such as discounts on future treatments, complimentary services or exclusive perks to motivate patients to advocate for your practice.

Promote your referral programme through various channels, including your website, social media platforms, email newsletters and in-practice signage. Encourage patients to share their positive experiences with others and provide them with easy-to-use referral tools to facilitate the process.

Open house events

Host open house events to showcase your facial aesthetics services and engage with existing dental patients in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

Create digital or printed event invitations promoting the open house and highlighting the benefits of attending. Design event signage such as banners, posters or directional signs to guide attendees and create a cohesive brand experience.

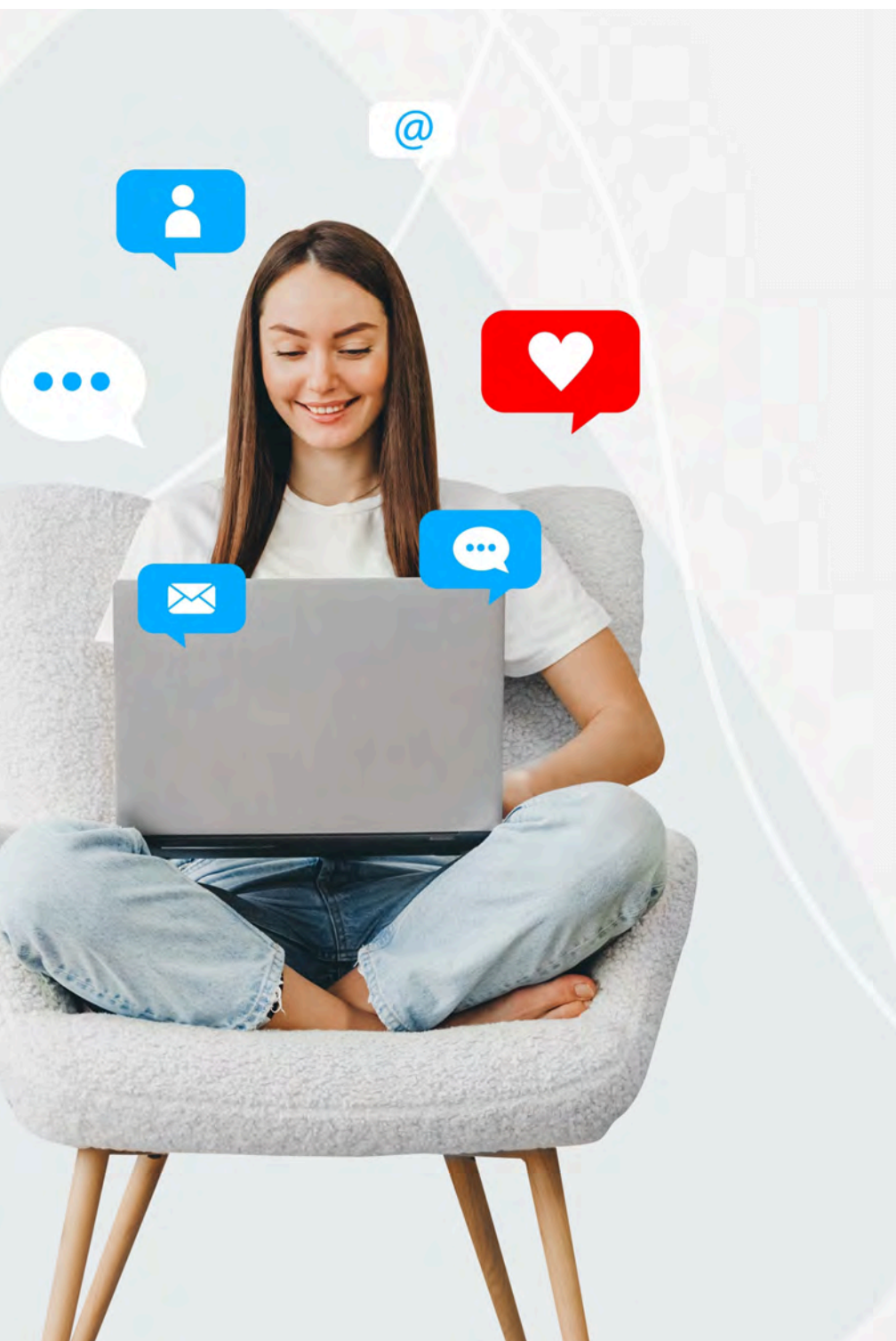
Prepare informational pamphlets, product samples or exclusive offers for attendees to take home as souvenirs.

PATIENT EDUCATION AND MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Detailed consultations

Conduct thorough consultations with patients interested in facial aesthetics treatments. Use this opportunity to educate them about the benefits, risks and limitations of different procedures and to address any questions or concerns they may have.

Use the content created for marketing such as diagrams, charts,



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and before and after photos to illustrate the potential results of treatments and manage patient expectations effectively. Encourage open communication and ensure that patients feel comfortable expressing their preferences and goals.

Patients may sometimes come to consultations with an image in mind of the result they want, which can be useful to gauge expectations.

Patient education materials

Develop educational materials such as brochures, handouts and online resources that provide comprehensive information about the facial aesthetics treatments offered at your practice.

Make these materials readily accessible in your waiting area, treatment rooms and on your practice website to empower patients to make informed decisions about their care.

Consider creating educational videos that explain the treatment process, discuss common concerns or misconceptions and showcase real-life patient experiences.

Providing valuable educational resources builds trust with patients and positions you as a reliable source of information in facial aesthetics.

Consent and images

When displaying photos of your treatments, ensure you have written consent in place.

Also, when using stock images, ensure you obtain the correct copyright to gain the right to use, publish or print it a certain number of times. Images can be purchased through companies such as Shutterstock and Canva if you do not have your own images to use.

Recently, it has become possible to create your own with copyright-free images using online artificial intelligence products.

Setting realistic expectations

Be transparent with patients about what they can realistically expect from different facial aesthetics treatments.

Avoid making exaggerated claims or promises and emphasise the importance of individualised treatment plans tailored to each patient’s needs and goals.

Discuss potential risks, side effects and recovery periods associated with treatments upfront to ensure patients have realistic expectations and are fully informed before deciding.

Encourage patients to ask questions and seek clarification on any aspects of their treatment plan that may be unclear or concerning.

Be aware that some patients may have body dysmorphic issues. Aesthetics is very subjective, and it

can be more about how the patient feels than how they look. Emotional views can be difficult to quantify or improve, and if you feel a patient will be tricky it may be better to stop and get

advice from a more experienced colleague or mentor before committing to treatment.

If you have never treated them before, it can be nice to start with something small and then review. You can then build on the plan with the patient to gain their confidence and trust. With experience you can treat patients more confidently.

REGULARLY UPDATE YOUR WEBSITE WITH FRESH CONTENT, SUCH AS BLOG POSTS ADDRESSING COMMON QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

BUILDING YOUR BRAND

Professionalism and expertise

Highlight your qualifications, credentials and expertise in facial aesthetics prominently in your marketing materials to establish credibility and trust with potential patients. Emphasise any specialised training, certifications or affiliations with reputable professional organisations to differentiate yourself from competitors and position yourself as a trusted authority in the field.

Remember the Advertising Standards Authority guidelines and the General Dental Council requires marketing material should be accurate, honest and not misleading.

Use your website, social media profiles and printed marketing materials to showcase your

commitment to excellence and patient-centred care. Incorporate professional photos, videos and testimonials that highlight the quality of your work and the positive experiences of satisfied patients.

Patient testimonials and case studies

Feature authentic patient testimonials and case studies on your website, social media channels and marketing materials to provide social proof of your practice’s success and the efficacy of your treatments.

Encourage satisfied patients to share their experiences and results openly and obtain their consent to use their testimonials or before and after photos for promotional purposes.

Create compelling narratives that illustrate the impact of facial aesthetics treatments on patients’ lives and wellbeing. Highlight specific concerns or goals that patients had before treatment, the solutions you provided and the outcomes achieved to resonate with prospective clients and inspire confidence in your abilities.

Patient reviews

Collect and showcase patient testimonials and reviews to build credibility and trust with prospective clients. Develop testimonial release forms allowing patients to share their experiences and photos for promotional purposes. Implement strategies to collect positive reviews on platforms like Google, Facebook and Trustpilot to enhance your practice’s online reputation.

Monitor and respond to online reviews promptly to address any concerns and demonstrate your commitment to patient satisfaction.

Community engagement

Participate actively in community events, health fairs and local outreach initiatives to raise awareness about your facial aesthetics services and engage with potential patients.

Contributing positively to your local community can enhance your practice’s reputation, build goodwill and attract new patients who value social responsibility and community involvement.

- Demonstrate your commitment to community health and wellbeing

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- by offering free educational workshops, screenings or demonstrations on topics related to facial aesthetics
- Measure the time you spend at these events and the return on the events. In the beginning, it is great for exposure, brand awareness and meeting people face-to-face
- Involve your team so that in the long term they can host these events for you.

Local networking and referral programmes

Harness the power of local networking and referral programmes to expand your client base and increase referrals. Create referral cards or vouchers for existing patients to share with potential clients. Establish partnership agreements with other local businesses or healthcare providers to exchange referrals and expand your network.

- Develop promotional materials such as brochures, flyers, or branded merchandise to distribute to potential referral partners and their clients
- Develop networking scripts or elevator pitches to introduce yourself and your services effectively
- Create professional, branded business cards to exchange contact information with potential referral partners
- Follow up with networking contacts via email or thank you notes to maintain relationships and nurture potential referrals over time.

CONSIDER CREATING EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS THAT WALK PATIENTS THROUGH THE TREATMENT PROCESS

CONCLUSION

Marketing can seem never-ending, but it is essential to establish a new business or service.

My advice would be, if you haven't done it before, to start somewhere and not worry too much about making it perfect. Start with the free options first, and if you don't enjoy it or it is taking too much time, then ask colleagues for recommendations and outsource it.

As a busy mum of two, practice owner, podcast host and educator, my time is very valuable, so I must prioritise it and manage it well. Outsourcing will require a budget, but the time it frees up for you will allow you to feel more in control, create new strategies to grow the business, reflect on what is working and create new content. You could even use the time to work and see more patients!

Continuously monitor the performance of your marketing efforts, get feedback from patients and adapt your strategies to evolving trends and patient preferences. Over time, you will refine your marketing and invest your time and money more wisely into what works for you.

By remaining responsive to the needs of your target audience and delivering exceptional patient experiences, you can position your practice for sustained growth and success in the competitive field of facial aesthetics.

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.

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The art of *delegation*

Mark Topley discusses how to maximise efficiency and team potential

For many practice owners and managers, the daily demands of leadership can quickly become overwhelming.

You find yourself constantly firefighting, feeling like every task must pass through your hands for it to be done right. Despite your best efforts, this can lead to burnout, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities for growth.

In the midst of trying to do everything yourself, you overlook one of the most powerful tools in a leader's arsenal: delegation.

STANDING IN THE WAY OF CONTROL

Effective delegation is more than just lightening your own load; it's about empowering your team, encouraging growth and maximising the collective potential of your practice.

Too often, though, owners and managers hesitate to delegate. They hold tightly to control, believing that by doing so, they ensure quality. But in reality, this mindset stifles team development and prevents the business from reaching its full potential. As Craig Groeschel says: 'You can have control or growth, but not both.'

ARE YOU MICROMANAGING?

One of the signs that you may not be delegating effectively is micromanagement.

Here are a few indicators that you might be holding the reins too tightly:

- Constantly overseeing every detail: if you feel the need to check every decision or review every piece of work, this is a classic sign of micromanagement
- Doing tasks that others are capable of doing: if your to-do list is filled with tasks that should be handled by your

team, you're likely not delegating enough

- Inconsistent delegation: if you only delegate when you're swamped or don't trust others to complete tasks to your standard, your team may lack clear roles and responsibility.

Micromanagement not only increases your own stress, but also sends a message to your team members that you don't trust their abilities. This undermines morale, stifles creativity, and ultimately limits growth.

Become a master *delegator*

Practical steps to help you become a master delegator include:

- Use delegation as a development tool. When you delegate, don't just give away the things you don't like doing. Use it as a way to grow your team's skills. Assign tasks that challenge your employees and give them opportunities to develop leadership qualities. By doing so, you foster independence and a greater sense of ownership within your team
- Become a coaching leader. Delegation isn't about simply assigning tasks; it's about coaching your team through the process. Offer support, guidance, and feedback as needed, but allow them the space to make decisions. This creates a learning environment where employees feel empowered to take on more responsibility
- Utilise Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model. This model encourages leaders to adjust their style of leadership based on the development level of the person they are delegating to. For someone new to a task, provide more direction and supervision. As their confidence grows, you can gradually shift to a more hands-off approach. This flexibility ensures your team has the support needed without being micromanaged
- Use a project template for clarity. For larger projects, use a delegation template that outlines key details such as the objectives, timelines and resources needed. This ensures everyone is clear on what success looks like from the start, reducing the chances of miscommunication or incomplete work
- Create a 'task machine' for regular duties. For routine jobs, develop a system or checklist that makes the delegation process seamless. This could include guidelines, resources, or templates that allow the task to be completed consistently, regardless of who is doing it. Typically, these are organised by daily, weekly and monthly tasks. A well-structured system reduces dependency on any single individual and ensures that tasks are completed efficiently
- Define the parameters clearly. Delegation works best when there are clear boundaries. Let the employee know not just what needs to be done, but what they have the authority to decide. This clarity prevents confusion and ensures that tasks are carried out in line with the overall strategy
- Communicate, be clear, and invest in the process. Effective delegation hinges on communication. Be clear about what you expect and check in regularly to provide feedback and support. Invest in the process, not just the result. Encourage your team to ask questions and give feedback, fostering a culture of open dialogue.



Mark Topley

Mark is the founder of responsibleDentistry.com and the Great Boss Academy – businesses that provide coaching, consultancy and training for leaders, owners and managers who want a more successful, positive and sustainable business.

WHY PEOPLE FAIL TO DELEGATE

Many managers understand, at least intellectually, the importance of delegation. Yet, they hesitate to act on it. Some of the reasons why this is include:

1. Fear of losing control: leaders often believe that if they don't handle tasks personally, things will go wrong. This need for control makes it hard to trust others with responsibility
2. Belief that it's quicker to do it yourself: many leaders think it takes too much time to teach someone else how to do a task, preferring the 'quick fix' of doing it themselves
3. Lack of confidence in others: you may feel that your team members aren't ready or lack the skills necessary to complete the tasks you assign
4. Perfectionism: some managers have impossibly high standards and worry that their team won't be able to meet them
5. Unclear roles and responsibilities: without a clear system in place for who does what, delegation can seem chaotic, leading to confusion and frustration.

However, by not taking the time to learn how to delegate effectively, you are not only perpetuating your own

overwhelm but also missing out on key opportunities for growth.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Failing to delegate effectively results in a number of missed opportunities.

When you delegate effectively, you give your team members the chance to learn, grow and develop new skills. This strengthens your team's capabilities and helps individuals realise their potential.

Delegation allows tasks to be handled by the person best suited to do them, freeing you up to focus on more strategic decisions and high-impact areas.

Delegating tasks and responsibilities shows team members that you trust them, which boosts engagement, morale and loyalty. When team members are given responsibility, they are more likely to take ownership, offer creative solutions, and approach problems from fresh perspectives.

By investing time upfront to learn how to delegate, creating a system that everyone understands, and then managing that system consistently, you can unlock both your own potential as a leader and the potential of your team.

LEARNING HOW TO DELEGATE EFFECTIVELY

Successful delegation isn't just about offloading tasks you don't want to do. It's a leadership skill that requires intention, communication and trust. The idea is to delegate authority, not tasks. By delegating tasks, you create followers, but to create leaders you need to delegate authority.

This principle is key to developing a capable, autonomous team that can manage responsibilities without constant oversight.

Delegation is an essential leadership skill that can transform both you and your team. It enables you to focus on your priorities while empowering your team to grow and contribute at a higher level.

By learning to delegate effectively, creating systems that support delegation, and fostering clear communication, you will not only relieve your own workload but also unlock new levels of productivity and innovation in your team. Remember, you can have control or growth, but not both.

Choose growth, and watch your team – and your practice – thrive.



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Creating a brilliant front desk team

You only get one chance to make a good first impression, which is why, as **Deborah Bell** explains, it's essential to have a great front of house team

As NHS appointments become harder to come by, patients are opting to pay privately for their treatment in greater numbers. This means a great standard of customer service is more important than ever.

Having a front of house team that greets patients in a friendly and courteous manner, whether face to face or on the phone, is essential. It's this first interaction that will set the tone of the relationship between practice and patient, so being attended to quickly and efficiently is a must. However, not all practices grasp this.

There have been occasions when I have come across practices that haven't recognised the importance of the reception team and have chosen to devote the absolute minimum of resources to it. In some cases, they haven't even had a dedicated team but have relied on dental nurses stepping in when they're not working in surgery. This is a big mistake and can give completely the wrong impression.

Working the front desk is a specific role and should have the right resources devoted to it. Underestimate the value of the front desk team at your peril!

A PERSONAL TOUCH

Having spent 15 years working in practice, I know how beneficial it is to have a dedicated front desk team.

The best team members make sure they know who is coming in that day so they can greet them by name without having to look things up on the computer. This personal touch

can really make a patient feel valued and special, helping to create great relationships with patients.

Some practices even send birthday cards, which is a small gesture that can really make a big difference to how the practice is viewed. After all, ideally, we would like patients to be coming back to us for many years to come. Showing an interest in them and getting to know more about them as a person can help to create a sense of loyalty.

INCLUDE EVERYONE

Front desk team members will often be the first people a patient will have the opportunity to ask a question, so it's important they are well trained and kept up to date on what's happening in the practice. That's why it's important they are included in all team meetings.

They are often the people best placed to assess customer mood and attitudes towards the service they've received. Making sure they're given an opportunity to feedback what they see will ensure any issues can be highlighted and addressed before they become a real problem. In the practice, front desk team members are the ones who see all the patients coming through the door so they will have a broader insight than most other practice team members, making their input invaluable.

KEEP THEM IN THE LOOP

As with everything in life, good communication is key. For a dental team to work well together, each member needs to have the same aims and objectives and to communicate clearly with each other and the patients.

To have 'everyone singing from the same hymn sheet' can only happen if people are kept up to date through regular meetings and training. It's a

good idea to set aside time in practice meetings to refresh the team's memories about certain subjects.

This is especially true for the front desk team members, as they are the ones most likely to be asked questions, so they need to be able to deal with a wide range of topics.

I am often called to help train practice teams on various subjects. On one occasion I was asked to help a practice that was struggling to sign patients onto their membership plans. During conversations with the staff, I found that some of them were unsure what plans the practice offered and why. The subject of plans had not been something discussed at practice meetings, which meant some staff were unsure of the main benefits to patients and so didn't have the confidence to promote them.

Giving everyone in the team a refresher on plans meant they were all equipped with the information they needed to be able to speak confidently to patients about their plans and how they could be of benefit to them. Plan numbers soon began increasing.

Getting everyone together, including the front desk team, to discuss these sorts of things regularly keeps everyone involved and helps ensure they are all aligned. Not only does it help show a broader picture of the practice, but it also helps focus the efforts of the team, so everyone works together to achieve the practice's objectives. As well as that, it allows everyone, regardless of their role, to make a contribution and feel valued. That's a great way to build a fantastic team.



Deborah Bell

Deborah has been a regional support manager at Practice Plan for 15 years and has more than 30 years' experience in the dental industry, including 15 in practice.

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Walking the walk

Barry Oulton shares the lessons that can be learnt from a gruelling experience

I recently had the honour of supporting three teams, totalling 12 men, who undertook the challenge of Trailwalker, a 100-kilometer walk with a legacy stretching back over 40 years.

Originally started in Hong Kong, this event moved to its current location when the political landscape changed, but it still holds its core mission: to support the Gurkhas. The event sees participation from both military and civilian teams, each driven by a shared sense of purpose and camaraderie.

Witnessing the journey of these teams was nothing short of extraordinary.

The course is dotted with checkpoints approximately every 10 kilometres, with one stretch extending to 15 kilometres.

My involvement was with a group of school dads and ex-military. Myself and Vanessa's role was to keep morale high, ensuring the participants were well-fed, hydrated and motivated.

As we progressed, I felt immense gratitude for being part of this support team, especially since a double inguinal hernia had sidelined me from walking.

A PROFOUND LESSON

At about the 70-kilometre mark, I saw two of our team members reach breaking point. They were physically exhausted, barely able to stand, and on the verge of withdrawal due to medical reasons. Yet, astonishingly, they found the strength to not just continue but to run the last 10 kilometres. This was a profound lesson in the power of the human spirit and the mind's role in overcoming physical limits.

The key takeaway from this experience is the unparalleled importance of a

supportive team. It's easy to quit when you're alone, but the presence of a dedicated team can push you beyond your perceived limits.

Each team member had a personal reason for undertaking this arduous journey, but their collective spirit and mutual support carried them through the toughest moments. Those who seemed most likely to drop out at checkpoint seven ended up leading the charge to the finish line.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Reflecting on this event, I'm reminded of the various 'teams' in my own life – my personal team led by my wife Chloe, my long-time work partner Sally, and my extended family and friends. These teams provide the support and motivation that drive us to achieve the seemingly impossible.

Choosing the right team is vital, as its influence can lead to accomplishments far beyond our own expectations.

Congratulations to everyone who completed Trailwalker. Special recognition goes to Dr Matt Golightly from the Camberley area, whom

I spotted during the event. This experience underscored the immense power of team spirit and community, leaving an indelible mark on all involved.

VALUABLE LESSONS

Running a successful dental practice is akin to completing an arduous 100-kilometer walk. Both require dedication, resilience, teamwork, and strategic planning. Here are some insights from Trailwalker that can be applied to managing a dental practice.

Teamwork is essential

Just as the Trailwalker participants relied on their team for support, dental practice owners should cultivate a strong team dynamic. A cohesive team can provide mutual support, cover each other's weaknesses, and celebrate successes together. Ensure your team feels valued and understands its integral role in the practice's success.

Clear goals and roles

Every member of the Trailwalker teams had a clear role and goal. Similarly, in a dental practice, it's important to have clear job descriptions and individual goals that contribute to the overall success of the practice. When everyone knows their responsibilities and the practice's objectives, they can work more efficiently and effectively.

Resilience and adaptability

Trailwalker participants had to adapt to various challenges along the route. Practice owners must also be resilient and ready to handle staffing changes, economic shifts, and technological advancements. Being flexible and open to change can help the practice thrive in the face of adversity.

Continuous support and motivation

Just as we supported the walkers with encouragement and supplies, dental

Lessons for dental practice owners

1. Teamwork is essential
2. Set clear goals and roles
3. Be resilient and adaptable
4. Continuously support and motivate the team
5. Recognise and appreciate the team's work
6. Consider work-life balance
7. Network with the professional community and practitioners
8. Encourage ongoing education and training
9. Lead by example
10. Empower your team
11. Celebrate successes.



Barry Oulton

Barry is a practising dentist and the founder of The Confident Dentist. He is a qualified coach and experienced trainer, certified in hypnotherapy and a master practitioner in neuro-linguistic programming (NLP).

practice leaders should continuously support and motivate their team. Regular feedback, professional development opportunities, and team-building activities can keep morale high and foster a positive work environment.

Gratitude and recognition

Recognising and appreciating your team’s hard work is crucial. During Trailwalker, acknowledging each small victory kept spirits high. In your practice, regularly acknowledging your staff’s efforts and celebrating milestones can boost morale and foster loyalty.

Health and wellbeing

The walkers needed to be in good physical condition to complete the challenge, just as dental professionals need to maintain their health and wellbeing to perform at their best. Encourage a healthy work-life balance, provide ergonomic workstations, and promote mental health awareness in your practice.

Community and networking

Trailwalker highlighted the power of

community. For dental practices, being part of a professional community and networking with other practitioners can provide valuable insights, support and opportunities for growth. Attend industry conferences, join dental associations, and participate in local community events.

Continuous improvement

The experience underscored the importance of continuous improvement and striving for excellence. In a dental practice, staying updated with the latest advancements in dental technology and techniques is crucial. Encourage ongoing education and training for yourself and your team to stay at the forefront of the industry.

Leadership by example

As a practice owner, your leadership style sets the tone for the entire team. Just as the Trailwalker participants looked up to their team leaders, your staff will look to you for guidance and inspiration. Lead by example, demonstrating dedication, integrity, and a positive attitude.

Empower your team

Empowering your team members to take ownership of their roles can lead to greater job satisfaction and productivity. Trust in their abilities and provide opportunities for them to lead projects or initiatives within the practice.

Celebrate successes

Just as the Trailwalker participants celebrated crossing the finish line, take time to celebrate the successes within your practice. Whether it’s reaching a milestone, completing a tricky treatment, or receiving positive patient feedback, acknowledging these achievements reinforces a culture of appreciation.

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

The Trailwalker experience shows what can be achieved through teamwork, resilience and a supportive community. By applying these principles to your practice, you can create a thriving, dynamic environment where your team and patients feel valued and supported.

The journey may be challenging, but with the right mindset and support, the possibilities for success are limitless.

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A friendly ear in dentistry

Aman Rihal explores the concept of mental health and personality psychology, and explains how sincere listening in dentistry has the potential to transform lives



Mental health is integral to human functioning. The World Health Organization defines it as 'a state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It has intrinsic and instrumental value and is integral to our wellbeing.'

In the UK, around one in six have a common mental disorder (CMD), such as anxiety or depression. In addition, in England, 39% of people aged between 16 and 74 are accessing mental health treatment (Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey, 2014).

There are various issues that can impact dental professionals. They must maintain high levels of professionalism, manage actual or potential threat of regulatory intervention, a demanding patient population, maintain functional working relationships, maintain clinical knowledge, maintain their own health, interpersonal relationships, and other incessant demands.

It's unclear to me whether mental health issues are exacerbated by a career in dentistry, or if a career in dentistry ruthlessly exposes inherent self-doubt, and other self-perceived character deficits. It is likely that it's a combination of both.



Aman Rihal

Aman is a dentist and performance coach for dentists, doctors, and lawyers. He is training as a psychotherapist.

In addition, contemporary culture, as shown by the proliferation of social media such as Instagram, often values what is 'seen', which can impact mental health.

PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY OF HUMAN PERSONALITY

Sigmund Freud developed the topographical model of the mind. It consisted of the conscious mind (our immediate awareness), the preconscious mind (information you can easily recall) and the vast yet influential unconscious mind.

Freud believed the unconscious mind was a collection of primitive fears, repressed thoughts that are better off outside of conscious awareness, and things that we know but prefer not to deal with.

We all know how it feels when you suppress something; it can lead to feelings of anxiety, which can influence how we behave around others, and how we manage this ourselves.

The unconscious mind has been fertile ground for literature. Both Dostoevsky and Shakespeare understood how much occurs outside of conscious awareness yet impacts our actions.

The unconscious mind also manifests in various other ways, like our dreams, or the 'Freudian slip' (also known as a 'slip of the tongue' in speech).

Psychodynamic theory is also interested in how 'we experience,

regulate and express our emotions in an interpersonal context (marriage, parent-child etc), including the therapeutic relationship' (Abrahams and Rohleder, 2021).

FREUD'S MODEL OF THE MIND

By 1923, Freud had formulated his structural model of the mind. He proposed the mind is composed of three components: the id, ego, and superego.

Firstly, the 'id' – our primitive drives and our impulses, which demand instant gratification. This operates through what is known as the 'pleasure principle'. In modern neuroscience, this would be located in the amygdala.

The second component is the 'ego'. This is how we manage the demands of the id, based upon embedded familial and cultural norms, through what is known as 'defences'. The defence of rationalisation is applying rationality to make a situation you find concerning easier to deal with.

Or sublimation – here you transform an aggressive impulse into a more societally acceptable manner, playing sport for example. We may make a joke to make light of something that troubles us – here, humour can be a 'defence' against psychological distress.

Another good example of a defence is displacement, in which we may worry about our health, yet we are angry to everyone around us. Or

projection where we ‘project’ a negative element of our behaviour, perhaps anger, and say another person is always angry as a defence against dealing with our own anger issue.

There are also primitive defences such as denial, which are often used during childhood to manage overwhelming experiences. Defences are useful but, long term, they can be maladaptive.

From a neuroscience point of view, the ego would be located in the prefrontal cortex.

Here is where we exert control over the instinctual drives of the id.

The final component of the mind, according to Freud, is the ‘superego’, which is morality, or our concept of good and bad, and is influenced by our parents/caregivers. A harsh superego can manifest as unhealthy levels of perfectionism in an individual.

UNDERSTANDING REACTIONS AND FEELINGS

Alongside his colleague Josef Breuer, Freud developed the concept that talking about an issue helps relieve psychological distress, now known as modern ‘talking therapy’ or psychotherapy.

Through meaningful psychotherapy or by observing how you react in situations, you can begin to understand why you do things. This is also known as metacognition or ‘thinking about thinking’.

Later psychoanalysts like Karen Horney introduced the ‘tyranny of the shoulds’ concept, which means when we feel we are not good enough or can’t fulfil these ‘shoulds’ (imposed by society/parents etc), this can lead to feelings of low self-esteem and anxiety, and it can impact our self-concept.

In addition, we develop ‘internal working models’ about relationships based upon our interactions with early life caregivers. This is the basis of ‘attachment theory’ (Bowlby, 1969). Through these internal working models, we develop mental representations of ourselves, and

others. We carry these into adult life, and this influences future relationships, and concept of self.

LISTENING AND SOCIAL COGNITION

Carl Rogers was a humanistic psychologist who believed that we all have an actualising tendency, and can choose a path towards growth if provided with the correct social environment. This approach is primarily phenomenological (our own subjective experience).

While Rogers’ principles are used in ‘person centred counselling’, his approach can be used in our interactions with colleagues, family, friends etc.

Rogers believed we need to cultivate

three core conditions (Yao and Kabir, 2023) to enable a person to have a conducive environment for genuine psychological growth:

1. Empathy: we can all relate to this. When we feel someone understands what we are saying, we are likely to feel better. We already know this when we see an anxious patient, or a relative who has struggled with an issue
2. Congruence: this is also known as genuineness. Many times when we interact with others, we are preoccupied with ourselves; we give the illusion to another that we are listening, but our body language suggests otherwise. When listening, it is essential to make an individual feel that the time you have with them is entirely about them. The use of ‘mirroring’ as used in therapy is useful here, so if someone is standing, you stand too. Also, try to pick up on facial affect (emotion shown on the face frowns, gestures etc). Mentalisation or the ability to imagine what another person experiences is a component of social cognition
3. Unconditional positive regard (UPR): try and understand things from their point of view. It is crucial that you do not give your opinion or thoughts on what they should be doing. In order for the genuine self to emerge,

it’s important you just listen and paraphrase back what you have heard just to confirm to them that they are being listened to.

SINCERE LISTENING

Rogers also proposed three further conditions. Although more relevant to the therapeutic situation, they are nevertheless useful to know:

1. Therapist–client relationship: most psychological work in therapy relies on a ‘therapeutic alliance’ meaning that both parties get on with each other. I would add that being of the disposition that people feel comfortable with you and can be themselves around you is the hallmark of a successful career clinically and personally. It is also important to develop self-awareness of your facial affect and body language
2. Client incongruence: at its core incongruence is the gap between what an individual wants to be, or their ‘ideal self’ and their ‘perceived self’ which is what they show to the world
3. Client perception of empathy and unconditional positive regard: this means that when you are listening to someone, you are completely present and transmit a genuine desire to listen.

I would emphasise this is not about becoming a therapist for someone, since many psychological issues are complicated and have roots in early childhood trauma, dysfunctional households, later life trauma etc.

In addition, we all have personalities organised in different ways and operate on various levels of defence. Overall, our personality is the interplay of complex biological, social, psychological factors, and early life experience.

Meaningful psychotherapy is about listening. A good therapist listens and doesn’t tell you what to do, but they can increase your capacity to understand more about yourself and to not live life in an automated way.

By listening sincerely to another person, we can potentially transform their life.

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Supporting associates in private dentistry

Ahmad Nounu explains how principals can navigate potential dilemmas when bringing new associates into the practice, and how to create an environment for them to excel

The dental profession is transforming, with private practices facing numerous challenges in maintaining high standards of care while onboarding new associates. Practice principals are at a crossroads, balancing patient demand, associate development, and the evolving landscape of private dentistry.

ONBOARDING NEW ASSOCIATES

One of the dilemmas facing principals is whether to bring new associates into their practices. While there is a growing demand for private dental services due to the decline of NHS dentistry, many principals need to be more cautious about bringing in inexperienced dentists. The concern lies in ensuring that new associates can uphold the practice's reputation by delivering a high standard of patient care.

Adding a new dentist to the team brings additional responsibilities for the principal, including mentoring and supervising the associate's work. This often involves significant time and effort. Without this investment in their associates, the risk of patient dissatisfaction and complaints rises, which can harm the practice's reputation in the long run.

THE GAP IN TRAINING

Newly qualified dentists often enter the private sector needing more experience and confidence. This gap in training, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, means many young dentists still need to gain sufficient clinical experience during their studies. Additionally, dental school curriculums traditionally focus on clinical safety and technical skills rather than patient communication, customer service, or the complexities of private

practice. This gap creates challenges for both new associates and practice principals. Young dentists frequently feel like 'frauds', doubting their abilities and struggling to discuss treatment costs with patients. Meanwhile, principals are hesitant to take on the task of extensive mentoring without the guarantee of quality outcomes from the outset.

SUPPORT AND MENTORSHIP

Principals committed to supporting their associates can enhance their practice's success by providing comprehensive training and mentorship opportunities. This includes nurturing an environment where associates can discuss cases, seek advice, and build confidence.

Regular case reviews and constructive feedback are essential in developing a new dentist's skills, particularly in private practice, where patient expectations are often higher.

A crucial part of this support is ensuring associates understand the importance of patient communication and customer service. Building trust and managing patient expectations are as vital as clinical skills in private dentistry. Principals should encourage associates to adopt a patient-centric approach, confidently discussing treatment plans and costs and helping patients see the value in private care.

FINDING BALANCE

The decision to mentor associates has its challenges. Principals must weigh the benefits of practice growth against the potential risks of onboarding new, inexperienced dentists. Concerns include the potential for increased patient complaints and the added time commitment required to guide associates in their early years. Some principals also worry about maintaining

a work-life balance, as mentoring often occurs outside of regular practice hours.

Yet, principals who take the time to mentor their associates can create a practice culture centred on quality care. By investing in their associates, they can foster a team that delivers high standards of clinical care and embodies the practice's values, ensuring patient satisfaction and long-term success.

STRUCTURED EDUCATION

While structured education and mentorship within the practice are fundamental, they can be complemented by external training. Courses that provide young dentists with a solid foundation in the essentials of private dentistry can be invaluable.

The team at Private Dental Mentor (PDM) understands that with the clinical experience and patient care you've acquired over the years, you want the confidence that your associates have both the clinical and interpersonal skills to ensure the high standards of dental care your patients have come to expect.

That's why we offer both a two-day and extensive year-long course to equip associates, FDs and DCTs with the knowledge and confidence they need to succeed in private practice. These courses can benefit an associate's induction, providing a common reference point for principals to build upon in their mentorship efforts.

Through a supportive, structured education programme, practice principals can inspire their associates to transition smoothly into private practice, enhancing patient care and protecting private dentistry's reputation.

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When 21st century technology cannot cope

Dr Mike Gregory explains how techniques and materials from the 19th century could help general dentists in the 21st century

The advent of digital scanning is transforming the practice of clinical dentistry in the 21st century. There's no doubting the precision and accuracy achieved by scanning hard tissue and attached mucosa when providing fixed restorations and some removable prosthesis, but it is not without issues.

Problems arise when we are trying to record movable, displaceable soft tissues when providing removable dentures. The goal in these situations is to record the true functional sulcal depths and how the surrounding musculature determines the borders of a prosthesis.

In such situations, the aim is to manipulate the tissues and request the patient to make functional movements. Classically, in trying to record the lingual sulcus, we request the patient to lick the upper lip and swallow in order we can ensure tongue movements will be possible with the completed dentures.

Figure 1 shows the difficulty in achieving a good representation of the retromylohyoid space let alone the true functional depth in this area. The tongue and lingual tissues are not easily identifiable by scanners and the software cannot easily determine what is needed to create a representation of the eventual denture bearing area.

Asking a patient to replicate movements with a camera in

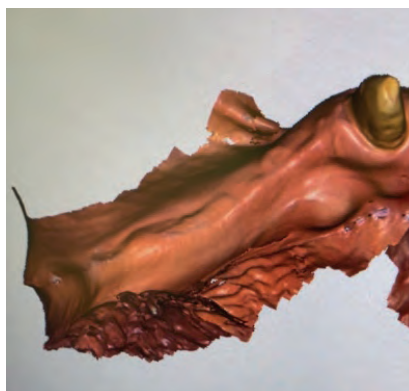


Figure 1: The limitations of scanning the retromylohyoid space

the lingual sulcus is pretty much impossible.

Old school techniques and materials can quite easily be utilised in these situations.

GAME CHANGER

Charles Stent (1807-1885) was a 19th-century English dentist notable for his advances in the field of denture making who made a major stride in the area of removable prosthodontics.

His work on making gutta percha, a material used for dental impressions in the mid-1800s transforming the quality and stability of materials at the time. He used waxes, resins and talc mixed with gutta percha to produce a 'game changing' thermoplastic impression material.

This radically changed the way impressions of soft tissues were taken – and still are over 150 years later.

These materials are readily available today in most countries around the world and require very little in the way of technology to be used in a clinical environment.



Figure 2: Capture of the retromylohyoid space with Kemdent thermoplastic Impression Compound and Kemdent Greenstick (www.kemdent.co.uk)

Water maintained to approximately 60° and a heat source, either electric or gas burner, will allow a clinician to record the oral soft tissues with relative ease. With the addition of dental alginates, an accurate representation of the mouth is entirely possible with minimal financial outlay.

Whilst there is no denying that digital dentistry is transforming treatments and outcomes, many believe there is still a place for analogue methods when it comes to capturing impressions of soft tissues in the field of removable prosthodontics.

The recognition of the limitations when using dental scanners and the utilisation of techniques and materials from the 19th century can greatly enhance the outcomes of dental treatments in the field of removable prosthodontics for general dentists in the 21st century.

*Materials used: Kemdent White Impression compound, Kemdent Green tracing sticks: www.kemdent.co.uk
Video tutorials: @kemdentUK*

Dr Mike Gregory

Mike is a clinical lecturer at Bristol University Dental School.

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The course will be held on 10–11 April and 22–23 May 2025 by a qualified dentist and a master dental technician, and allows a maximum of six participants.

MINIMALLY INVASIVE TOOTH PREPARATION COURSE

Two-day course on the importance of a minimally invasive 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. In this course, participants cover the five preparation phases, apply theory to working models, and use Zirkonzahn's Detection Eye intraoral scanner. Special attention will also be given to the cementation technique.

The course will be held on 13–14 February 2025 by a qualified

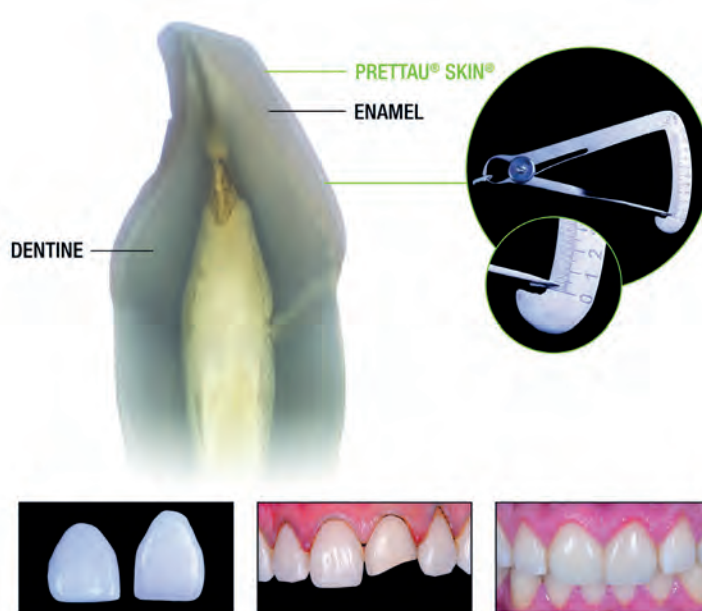


Figure 1: No prep veneers, the newest minimally invasive treatment that will change the way we think about dentistry



Figure 2: Based on practical exercises on models, participants can master the art of preparation, for the wellbeing of the patient

dentist and allows a maximum of six participants.

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Protecting your greatest asset

John Dargue explains how making ergonomics the top priority could help stem the tide of employee turnover



What do you think is the most valuable asset in your business? The dental chair? The delivery system?

Perhaps the CBCT? Or the building itself?

While all of these are, of course, fundamentally important, your greatest asset is actually your team.

These days, staff retention, as well as recruitment, can be extremely challenging within the dental profession.

A few years ago, James Wigglesworth wrote: 'The most valuable assets in any business are its employees. Employee retention leads to customer satisfaction, increased productivity, a happy working environment, and long-term success for any business, including your dental practice.'

The coronavirus pandemic has drastically shifted the dental labour

market. In this uncertain time of job insecurity and difficulty in recruitment for dentists, it's critical for the continued survival of your business that you keep the team that you have.

'You should take this challenge as an opportunity to take a closer look at how you manage your employees and build strategies to keep your dental team intact. Although no one expected what happened in 2020, that doesn't mean you can't grow and improve from it!' (Wigglesworth, 2021).

There is no doubt that it is a challenging job market. In fact, data suggests that three-quarters of dental practice owners across the UK are struggling to fill vacancies (Gallagher, Colonio-Salazar and White, 2021).

In addition, it's thought employee turnover can cost 1.5 to two times the amount of the exiting employee's salary. What's more, this doesn't factor in extra costs, such as training and induction.

Clearly, you need to attract and then keep the very best people working in your practice. So, how can this be achieved?

DETERMINING DISSATISFACTION

Gallagher, Colonio-Salazar and White (2021) tell us: 'Multiple determinants influence dentists' health and wellbeing... These ranged from personal and professional issues, moving through job and workplace characteristics to the National Health Service (NHS) dental system and its regulation.'

One important aspect of retaining staff that is often overlooked – to your practice's peril – is that of having the right equipment to meet your team's needs.

Without it, both physical and psychological health can suffer, and research indicates that the quality of the working environment is fundamental to professional satisfaction (Gallagher, Colonio-Salazar and White, 2021).

In addition, Hallett, Witton and Mills (2022) found that nearly two-thirds of dental hygienists and therapists (DHTs) found equipment malfunction to be stressful, putting it among their top four stressors.



John Dargue

John is A-dec territory manager.

THE ROLE OF ERGONOMICS

One fundamental aspect of this rests in ergonomics, which the FDI World Dental Federation defines in Ergonomics and posture guidelines for oral health professionals as: 'The scientific discipline concerned with the understanding of the interactions among humans and other elements of a system, and the profession that applies theoretical principles, data and methods to design, in order to optimise human wellbeing and overall system performance.'

The physical health issues to which a lack of poor ergonomics can contribute are well known within the dental profession. The problem is stated succinctly by the FDI as: 'The dark and narrow space in the oral cavity can cause oral health professionals (OHPs) to adopt an unnatural posture during dental treatment, which can lead to serious physical impact and repetitive strain injuries.'

'The potential to develop musculoskeletal disorders is higher when one disregards good ergonomic principles. In doing so, OHPs are at risk of compromising their technical expertise during procedures. This can lead to a limitation of certain procedures, potential career shortening, and, in the worst case, possible career-ending injuries.'

But what about the psychological aspects of a less-than-ideal work environment? Although there appears to be a lack of evidence concerning dental care professionals to date, there is increased interest in the issue. In 2022, Hallett and colleagues were able to infer from their research that the high stress experienced by DHTs predominantly related to their working environment.

This has also been recognised by Public Health England. Its 2015 document, *The impact of physical environments on employee wellbeing – topic overview*, states: 'The surroundings in which employees spend their working lives are an important source of job satisfaction and impact on work motivation and patterns of interaction.'

In addition, the document reports: 'Employees who were troubled [by their physical working environment] were more likely to have a negative perception of their own levels of

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positive psychological wellbeing, physical and psychological health, and engagement, compared to those who were not' (Public Health England, 2015).

Offering clarity on this point in relation to the dental practice, Colicchio (2018) wrote: 'Are your assistants constantly struggling with a touchy X-ray processing machine, or are your hygienists wrestling with a leaky Cavitron and worn-out scalers? Instead of asking them to work with what they have, give them what they need to work with.'

'Not only will this make it easier for everyone to do their jobs and run on time, they'll be happier while they're at it. Even the most content team members will become discouraged when they have to deal with outdated equipment day after day.'

SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT

It is therefore clear that choosing high-quality, ergonomic equipment is one of the most effective ways to show staff your appreciation and help to safeguard their health, and A-dec is ideally placed to help practice owners do exactly that.

For instance, the A-dec 300 range is built with a thin backrest, allowing clinicians to access patients at a low-level position that does not betray ergonomics. With your knees tucked under the ultra-thin and flexible backrest of the A-dec 300 chair, you can work more closely and comfortably to the oral cavity. The

dual-articulating gliding headrest ensures optimal view and access, while the A-dec stool aligns your hips in a proper ergonomic stance.

Together, they help you maintain good form, supporting your posture, health and productivity.

In addition, A-dec's ongoing post-sale support includes ergonomic training sessions. For these, A-dec territory managers come to the practice to provide in-person training, covering essential topics such as proper workstation setup and strategies for maintaining optimal posture.

SIGNALLING COMMITMENT

As stated by Collin and colleagues (2019): 'It is well established that dentistry is a stressful profession, primarily due to the nature and working conditions in the dental surgery.'

Part of the solution may well lie in improving working conditions, with the aim of reducing stress and burnout among dental professionals.

In essence, buying high-quality, ergonomic equipment signals to your team your commitment to their safety and comfort, which will contribute in no small part to quality hires and staff retention.

For article references, email siobhan.hiscott@fmc.co.uk. To find out more about A-dec's equipment, visit unitedkingdom.a-dec.com, call 0800 233285 or email uk-info@a-dec.com.

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360-degree appraisals: benefits and pitfalls

In the third and final article in a series on 360-degree appraisals, **Pat Langley** discusses the benefits and pitfalls of implementing this system in practice

Not only does a 360-degree appraisal have positives for the individual, but there are also many benefits to the practice and the team.

A 360-degree appraisal offers the opportunity for self-reflection, as it identifies skills, attributes and behaviours that need to be developed and improved. Thereby improving how people interact in a team environment.

Similarly, 360-degree appraisals create an element of self-awareness, meaning individuals will have a greater understanding of how they are perceived by others, which in turn enables them to identify and self-check personality traits.

Team members will develop further holistic characteristics such as empathy, understanding, compassion and kindness as they learn more about each other.

By giving transparent, honest and rounded feedback, a culture of openness and trust within the team will be created, where potential criticism is delivered as positive feedback and individuals are encouraged to further develop their strengths.

A 360-degree appraisal actively encourages continuous improvement as you work with team members to implement personal development plans (PDP) and training plans.



Pat Langley

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

10 steps

360-degree appraisals

Implementing a 360-degree appraisal system takes time and commitment. Here are the 10 steps required to create a process that is robust and will provide great results:

1. Invest the time to plan. Planning and preparing are key, allow enough time to ensure your process is thorough, robust and fair
2. Involve your team. Explain and discuss the process with your team. Ensure each team member understands the benefits and is happy to engage
3. Research. Carefully research and prepare the survey questions. Ensure they are clear, concise and not ambiguous
4. Choose your 'raters'. Choose the team members that will complete the surveys. Explain the questions, the reasoning behind them and what you are looking to achieve. Allow the 'raters' enough time to complete the survey
5. Self-assessment form. Provide the appraisee with their self-assessment form. Questions here should mirror those on the survey but should also include a wide range of open-ended questions that provoke thought and consideration as to their own performance
6. Top-down. Ask a senior team member (ideally the practice owner) to be the first appraisee. This shows confidence and commitment to the process from the business leaders
7. Analyse results. Review the data, analyse and compare results. Is there an overriding problem? Any obvious strengths to be developed? Any behaviours to be addressed?
8. Prepare. Create a summary based on the results and your own observations for the previous year. Plan your discussion and your desired outcome based on potential development and learning needs
9. 360-degree appraisal. Carry out the appraisal – ensure you have allowed enough time and the environment allows for no interruptions
10. Follow-up. Schedule time to help the team member create their PDP or training programme. Book future review dates and document the entire process.

BEST PRACTICE

Constant review enables team members to stay on track with their development outcomes.

Furthermore, 360-degree appraisals measure additional skills such as teamwork, communication and leadership. New areas for development, challenge or progression can be identified.

BEWARE OF POTENTIAL PITFALLS

While the 360-degree appraisal has the potential to benefit the team dynamic, if not planned and implemented well, it could be quite damaging.

Consider the following:

- Anonymity – it is vital that the feedback remains anonymous. The 360-degree appraisal will undoubtedly contain both strengths and weaknesses, therefore it is crucial that the team member's identity is kept secret to avoid potential bad feeling
- People don't like change – especially change that is directed to their own behaviours and performance. How you introduce and implement the 360-degree appraisal system is key. Invest the time to explain in detail and give team members the opportunity to ask questions and offer their input
- Top-down – it is important that business owners or leaders take part in the 360-degree appraisal system and the process should start from the top down. This means that senior dentists and managers are seen to actively become involved and are willing to undergo the process before the rest of the team. It fosters confidence and assurance that it is a positive change
- Ensure 360-degree appraisals are not linked to rewards or bonuses –

especially if you are implementing the system for the first time

- Equality and diversity – when explaining the 360-degree appraisal process to the team, spend some time talking about equality and diversity. Team members must be mindful about supporting comments they may choose to make in terms of individual culture, ability and circumstances
- Clear survey questions – make sure team members understand the survey questions. Take time to ensure they are clear, concise to avoid ambiguity and, in turn, people giving inaccurate feedback
- Failure to follow-up – ensure that team members have a PDP, training programme or clear plan of action in place following the 360-degree appraisal
- Focus on the positive – although the aim of the 360-degree appraisal is to obtain a more rounded view of an employee's performance, it is important not to focus too heavily on weaknesses or negatives. While poor behaviour or inadequate performance clearly needs to be dealt with, there is more to be gained from developing positive behaviour and strengths.

PUTTING SYSTEMS IN PLACE

There are many benefits to the practice of carrying out regular performance reviews. Employees will feel recognised and appreciated, and performance reviews nurture good behaviours, lead to staff retention and help to correct underperformance.

Instead of thinking of a performance review as a one-off act, consider a range of activities that contribute to a performance management system, including:

- An annual performance meeting or 360-degree appraisal
- A six-monthly review
- Monthly one-to-ones
- A personal development plan
- A robust resource strategy
- A team 'skill set' matrix.

A 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.

A Likert scale allows questions to be measured in a quantitative manner. 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.

SUMMARY

A 360-degree appraisal offers the opportunity for self-reflection, create self-awareness, help teams develop holistic characteristics such as empathy, understanding, compassion and kindness, develop a culture of openness, encourage continuous improvement, and offer new areas for development.

Although there are many positives, there are also potential pitfalls to be avoided. It's vital that feedback is kept anonymous; that all staff should be involved, starting with a top-down approach; follow-ups are essential, and you should avoid focusing on negative aspects.

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Throw the shade guide away!

Lloyd Pope describes the science behind Tokuyama's colourless Omnichroma composite range

Tokuyama's unique colourless Omnichroma composite means you don't need to use a shade guide to identify the shade of any teeth prior to restoration. One syringe or PLT of colourless Omnichroma replaces all the shades of every other range of composite.

LIGHTYEARS AHEAD!

When white light comprising all the spectrum of the rainbow hits most objects the object either absorbs none of the wavelengths, reflects them all back towards the observer and so appears white; absorbs some of the wavelengths, reflects the others back so that the object appears the colour of the wavelengths not absorbed; or absorbs all of the wavelengths, reflects none of them back and appears black.

The same occurs with traditional composite restorative materials, which are made up of resins and filler particles containing pigments to give them their desired Vita shade. Some of the wavelengths contained in the white light hitting the composite's surface are

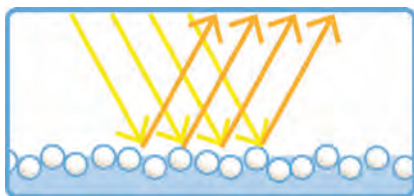


Figure 1: Tokuyama spherical particles reflect light uniformly for a perfect shine



Figure 2: Traditional irregular particles reflect light randomly resulting in a dull matt appearance

absorbed, so that only the wavelengths required to match the desired Vita shade are reflected back towards the observer.

NATURAL PHENOMENON OF STRUCTURAL LIGHT

Some objects behave in a completely different manner, peacock's feathers, soap bubbles etc. These objects exhibit the phenomenon of 'structural light'. When white light hits their surfaces it is reflected in different wavelengths depending upon the angle it hits the object and therefore altering the colour seen. Hence the wide array of colours seen on a soap bubble's surface when the light catches it in a certain way.

SURFACE TEXTURE

Another critical factor is the smoothness of the surface the light reflects off. If it is smooth the light is reflected back in a uniform manner and it appears shiny and smooth. If the surface is rough the light is reflected back in a haphazard manner and the surface appears dull.

When polishing composites, clinicians are trying to reduce the irregularity of the surface so that the light is reflected back in a uniform manner so that they look natural, smooth and shiny.

With composites containing irregular shaped filler particles it is extremely difficult to create such a smooth surface because some of the particles are plucked out leaving an irregular crater-like surface. This is not the case with Tokuyama restorations because of their patented spherical filler particles.

CHROMAESTHETICS

All Tokuyama composites comprise spherical filler particles, which are grown in a Sol-Gel method to precise dimensions depending upon the physical properties Tokuyama want

the composite to exhibit. This means Tokuyama composite materials are much easier and quicker to polish to a high lustre, saving time and delivering superior aesthetic results.

COLOURLESS OMNICHROMA

Omnichroma's spheres are grown to a very consistent and precise 260nm diameter. Not only does this provide Omnichroma with its unique physical and handling properties, but it also exhibits the natural phenomenon of 'structural light', generating light in the same red/yellow wavelengths as natural teeth.

Omnichroma is the only colourless composite comprising of unpigmented filler particles and a clear resin. When light hits an Omnichroma restoration and surrounding tooth it passes through the clear resin and bounces back from the cavity walls with the natural colour of the surrounding tooth. At the same time, red/yellow 'structural light' generated from the unpigmented spherical filler particles is reflected back too and combines with the light reflected from the surrounding tooth to perfectly match its colour.

This patented technology makes Tokuyama's colourless Omnichroma unique because it matches every tooth shade, eliminating the need for shade matching ever again!

If the patient subsequently has their teeth whitened, Omnichroma restorations adapt to the new situation. This means they do not stand out and so do not need replacing.

For more information, contact your local Trycare representative, call 01274 885544 or visit www.trycare.co.uk/omnichroma or tokuyama-dental.eu/en.

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Elleven's success story

Leanna Ellis meets Sameer and Shivani Patel to discuss the enduring success of Private Dentistry Awards 2023 winner, Elleven Dental

Elleven Dental, run by Sameer and Shivani Patel and Anthony Lam, offers its patients a zen-like experience. As soon as you

enter its doors on London's Wimpole Street, you find yourself in a calming space that instantly puts you at ease.

It's this relaxing, eco-friendly space, alongside its motivated team of staff working collaboratively, that has played a large part in Elleven's success story – one that has landed it multiple awards and a loyal patient following.

Its three founders go back a long way – Sameer and Shivani are married, while Anthony is a long-term friend – and Elleven is the product of their combined vision. And it's a vision that has proved to be a success.

Elleven has grown from its beginnings as a three-surgery project focusing on orthodontics in 2009 to a multidisciplinary practice with nine surgeries.

'Elleven was initially an orthodontic practice,' says Sameer. 'So, the patients, once they were having their orthodontics, actually wanted more. And that is what we're seeing in today's world, where people have some type of alignment orthodontics, and then they want more.'



Leanna Ellis

Leanna is events director at FMC.



Sameer Patel

Sameer is clinical director at Elleven Dental.



Shivani Patel

Shivani is partner and orthodontic specialist at Elleven Dental.



'So that is what we saw in 2009/2010 when we first acquired the business. Shivani first started out as the orthodontist, I was then doing all of the subsidiary stuff as a general dentist, and we got busier. We had three clinicians. Fast forward a number of years, and we're now 18 of us in the building, and really we have all the specialists under one roof.'

TEAMWORK

It's the patient-focused teamwork at Elleven that Sameer credits as a major factor in their success. 'Collaboration is really important,' he says. 'You know, this morning we had a patient come in, and the periodontist was in here, the orthodontist was in here, I was in here, and the patient feels like they're being looked after.'

Elleven started out at 11 Devonshire Place in London, but a change was forced upon the team in 2021, when the building was forced to close due

Private Dentistry
Awards 2023
Winner
Practice of the Year
Overall

to structural issues. After months of working out of other dentists' practices, by the beginning of 2023 they had settled into their current spot at 74 Wimpole Street ('seven plus four Wimpole Street; we're still 11 somehow,' says Sameer).

Not only was this move out of necessity, but it also allowed room for growth in the number of surgeries as well as a larger staff area.

'In today's world, people are struggling to grow because they can't retain and attract the best quality staff, auxiliary staff, to stay with them,' says Sameer. 'Always high on our list has been customer quality as well

SPOTLIGHT



as customer service, but now we've extended that to the people that really look after our patients, and that's our staff.'

This focus, says Sameer, meant that the whole team understood the vision of Elleven and worked towards it from the very beginning.

'I still look back on all the meetings we had,' says Sameer. 'They understood the vision very well. And now we've created something that is the sum of the parts of all the people working in it. But the thread was always to be relaxed, to be organic, to try and be as eco-centric as possible.'

'I really believe that the old days of micromanagement have gone, and I feel that they should know their role. We should, as leaders, outline what is expected from them and let them go and do it in their own way. That's really our style of leadership here. And that allows them to create an ownership of their own role. And really, I think that is a testament to the longevity we've had our staff.'

A SHARED VISION

This level of trust and cohesion between the team at Elleven was no doubt helped by the strong vision of its

principals. Shivani has known Anthony's now-wife Angela since their university days, and then Sameer joined them to work together as house officers. Anthony and Shivani would later take a postgraduate orthodontics course together, and then he and Angela married.

It was Sameer and Anthony who first found the original Elleven practice while Shivani was on maternity leave. 'I remember Sameer bought the practice without me seeing it, him and Anthony,' says Shivani. 'They were so excited: "Shivani, we found this place, it's amazing! We're going to buy with Anthony. It's called Elleven, it's an orthodontic practice." I said: "Who's going to work there?" He goes: "You are!"'

'So that was four months of maternity then that's how the story started, the boys bought it and pushed me into it!'

Since first opening their practice, the husband and wife team have really learned to play to their individual strengths. Shivani says: 'Over these 15 years, we've kind of evolved. It's almost like a dance that we have, because we've now grown together at the practice, with the practice, with the team. The patients love that we

complement each other, because Sameer is the foundation of the patient smile, and I'm the one that kind of constructs it as we go along, and then he finishes it. So, it works really well.'

Part of the cohesion among the principals has been acknowledging each other's personality types. Sameer tends to be the extrovert, coming up with big ideas, while the more introverted Shivani is more likely to be the one with the practical strengths to bring those plans to fruition.

'There's a great book called *Rocket Fuel*, and it talks about how the CEO and the COO of every business, from McDonald's through to Walt Disney through to Elleven, whoever that is, needs a visionary and a systems operator,' says Sameer. 'The brains don't overlap, actually, because they're just different paths. I'm a general dentist, Shivani's an orthodontist, so it's quite complementary.'

'There's a mutual respect between Anthony and Sameer professionally and as friends as well,' adds Sameer. 'And again, they're also different personalities, yin and yang. So, they match very well. And I think they lead very well as well. You have a bit of fire and then you have a bit of calm.'



ECO-CENTRIC DENTISTRY

An enduring legacy of the trio’s background and cohesion has been Elleven’s focus on eco-friendly dentistry, which they agreed was a shared principle from the beginning and is something they have kept at the heart of Elleven. Even the cups patients use to rinse are made of metal and put through the steriliser. ‘They’re not plastic, they’re not even paper, because that’s taken a whole heap of energy and water to create and recycle,’ says Sameer.

‘We’ve looked at every area of our business to try to be as eco-centric as we can be. All of our staff have signed up to the charter of coming in on public transport, electric car, electric vehicle, or whatever that is. So that is the way we behave.

‘And then we only order once a week. We’re reducing the number of deliveries to the business. So, everything is based on this eco centric nature. All businesses should have a responsibility in today’s world.’

The success of Elleven has led to a multitude of awards. At last year’s Private Dentistry Awards alone, the team picked up the coveted prize for Practice of the Year Overall, among three others.

‘I think the team feel that what we’ve

achieved and what we’re doing is being recognised,’ says Sameer. ‘You’ve got to go through a journey to write award submissions, and that journey has actually been the key to success for us, moving our practice forward.’

‘Awards are great in many ways,’ he continues. ‘Then, obviously, having a celebration with the team, that’s amazing, as is being able to share that with your patients and for your patients to know that you are above and beyond.’

‘The awards have given us a community,’ he adds. ‘I think FMC have done an amazing job to create a bigger fraternity within the dental industry that comes together, celebrates, congratulates, and really that hasn’t been done for many years in the past.’

‘It’s a way of reflecting back on what you’ve done,’ says Shivani. ‘Winning the award doesn’t mean you’ve done it all. It means, OK, how can we do the next thing better? It’s a way of then planning the future.’

REFLECTION AND IMPROVEMENT

However, such successes have not led to the team resting on their laurels. In fact, Elleven has not put forward any submissions for this year’s Private

Dentistry Awards, choosing instead to focus on their work and their ongoing journey towards improvement. This fits with what Sameer says is their ongoing reflection on the work they do and how they can continue to improve it.

‘That started very early, when I was playing a lot of sport,’ says Sameer. ‘I would analyse how could I have done that better?’

‘It’s the same if I’ve done a veneer case at work, I’d look at the X rays, look at the pictures, and is there any way I can improve? I’ve seen that as a trend within really high performing people.’

To have such a focus requires heaps of motivation, something the team feel they have plenty of. Shivani says: ‘A few weeks ago, our daughter asked us: “What don’t you like about your work?” And we’re all at the dining table, and we looked at each other and said: “Nothing.”’

‘It’s taken all these years to create somewhere that we don’t have to think about the night before or worry about. It’s become seamless over time. It’s taken a few bumps to get there, but because it’s so seamless, and the environment that we’ve been allowed to create is so pleasant to work with, I think that, in itself, is a motivation.’

PRIVATE

DENTISTRY AWARDS 2024

The finalists

Announcing the 2024 Private Dentistry Awards shortlist!

YOUNG DENTIST

Midlands

- Uzair Janjua
- Hamish Joshi
- Nida Kamal
- Hassan Kanani
- Zahra Khaja
- Anna Najran
- Devan Pankhanica
- Nitin Sharma
- Janine Sohota
- Keely Thorne

North East

- Rizwaan Chaudhry
- Gulsh Dhanoya
- Marco Gaias
- Sumia Hussain
- Paul Midha
- Ehsan Naghieh
- Shaf Patel
- Hisham Saqib
- Nikolas Stoy

North West

- Tom Charnock
- Anthony Davies
- Surbin Gong
- Jade Homfray-Jones
- Mohammad Jaberansari
- Roshanay Javed
- Matt Jones
- Nick Jones
- Alexanne Martin
- Stewart McLean
- Adam Patel
- Viraj Patel
- Zuhair Patel
- Philip Ratnasingham
- Lee Redpath
- Rhys Ward

London

- Zeena Adnan
- Toyin Aiyegbusi
- Simmi Daryani
- Parveen Dehal
- Razan H A Hussein
- Nikhil Kanani

- Keshav Kapoor
- Khalil Karwani
- Hartej Matharu
- Avan Mohammed
- Luca Nigrelli
- Wiktor Pietraszewski
- Vishal Raichura
- Fatima Rashid
- Krishen Shah
- Charlie Steere

Scotland & Northern Ireland

- Nadine Al-Farhan
- Olivia Arthur
- Matthieu Dash
- John Paul Delaney
- Jonathan Fitzpatrick
- Christopher Jordan
- Jamie Kerr
- Cameron Magee
- Daryl McLay
- Gary O'Neill
- Sofia Shajahan
- Jasmine Tolat

South East

- Petel Bell
- Ina Belova
- Roshwin Pereira Carvalho
- Raffaele Cedrola
- Shivam Divani
- Virang Kumar
- Zara Malik
- Haris Mazhar
- Tarun Singh Nagpal
- Bikram Narang
- Yewande Oduwole
- Asha Parmar
- Devaki Patel
- Sorabh Patel
- Krishan Patel
- Vikas Prinja
- Sonia Rajput
- Anni Seaborne
- Malavi Sivakanesan

South West & Wales

- May Bassett
- Marco Cascone
- Kristian Davies
- Chloe Harrington-Taylor
- Russell Hashemi
- Ali Al Hassan
- Janice Lim
- Giovanni Martino
- Riaz Sharif
- Laurie Stumper
- Aly Virani
- Yasmin Zeina

NEW PRACTICE

North

- Art of Dental Care by Divya Reddy
- Auckland Cosmetic Dental Clinic
- Aura Dental Clinic
- Circ Dental
- Clear Smiles
- Cloud Dental
- The Dental Barns
- EverySmile Dental Clinic
- Henley Dental
- Hollywood Dental Care
- Lume
- Orchard Road Dental Practice
- The Smile Designers

South

- Alban City Dental & Surgical Centre
- Angle House Specialist Dentistry Hatch End
- Complete Smiles Implant Centre
- Dentistry and More
- Diamond Dental MK
- Didcot Dental Studio
- Feel Good Dental
- Ikigai Smiles and Aesthetic Studio
- Love Teeth Dental New Malden
- Pine Dental & Aesthetics
- Reading Dental Spa
- Smile HQ
- Smile Sanctuary
- South Wales Specialist Oral Surgery and Dental Implant Centre

London

- Bespoke Dental Fulham
- Luceo Dental
- Miswak Dental and Facial Aesthetics
- The Modern Dentist
- NG Smiles
- One Dental
- Park Royal Dental Clinic
- Siha Dental Facial
- Yourdental Wellness

MOST IMPROVED PRACTICE

South East

- Ascot Dental Suite
- Beech House Smile Clinic
- Biggleswade Dental Centre
- Billericay Dental Care
- Causeway & Blackhorse Way Dental Practice
- Cobbins Brook Smile Clinic
- Dental Smile Clinic
- Earley Dental Practice
- Foxley Lane Dental
- Harrow Smile Clinic
- Kingsclere Dental Practice
- Kingston Dental Clinic
- Merrystead Dental
- Pearl Dental Care Centre
- Red Lodge Dental Surgery
- Staffa Lodge Smile Clinic
- Together Dental Watton
- Watford Smile Clinic

London

- Balham Smile Clinic
- Boston Orthodontics
- Kai Dental
- [Le] Dental
- London Dental Centre
- Smile Tailor
- Twoth Dental & Facial Aesthetics

North

- Ash Villa Dental Practice
- Clarendon Dental Spa
- Hermitage Dental Practice
- Lady Bay Dental Care
- Nook Street Dental Practice
- Russell Street Dental
- Sharrow Vale Dental Practice
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Springmount Dental & Aesthetics
- St Raphael's Dental Practice
- Tovey Little Dental
- Whitefield Dental

South West & Wales

- Contemporary Dental
- Eden Dental Centre
- Smile Orchard Dental Practice
- Victoria Road Clinic

Scotland & Northern Ireland

- Aberdeen Dental Care
- Broxburn Smile Centre
- Citi Aesthetics
- La Belle Dental Clinic
- Nigel Smith Dental Care
- Orchard Road Dental Practice

WEBSITE OF THE YEAR

North

- Art of Dental Care by Divya Reddy
- Carisbrook Dental
- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- The Dental Architect
- Dental Opulence
- Dentique Dentistry
- Dr Rez Dental
- Dr Uzair Janjua
- Durham Family Dental
- Four Oaks Dental Practice
- Hampton Dental Care
- Hermitage Dental Practice
- Hilton Dental Clinic
- Holly Tree House Dental Practice
- La Belle Dental Clinic
- Leeds City Dental Care
- Meliora Dental
- Parbold Dental
- Scottish Denture Clinic
- Springmount Dental & Aesthetics
- Stretford Road Dental Practice
- Vici Dental Leeds
- Whitefield Dental

South

- Abbey Mead Dental & Implant Clinic
- Alban City Dental & Surgical Centre
- Bespoke Dental Lounge
- Court Drive Dental & Implant Centre
- Dentaal Wisdom
- Dental Smile Clinic
- Dynamic Dental Studio
- Heyford Smiles
- Highfield Dental & Facial Clinic
- Kempston Dental Practice
- Kimberley Park Dental Practice
- Laffan Dental Care
- Manraj Kalsi
- Riverside Dental
- The Smile Centre
- Smile Clinic Group
- Surrey Dental Spa
- Talbot Dental
- Thornbury Dental Wellness Clinic
- Tooth Club
- Widcombe Dental

London

- Abbey Road Dental
- Aura Dental
- Brightside Dental
- Chingford Smiles
- Envy Smile
- Martin Wanendeya
- Mint Dental Care
- My E20 Dentist
- NG Smiles
- Pall Mall Dental
- Park Avenue Dental Care
- Shiraz Khan
- Siha Dental Facial
- Treehouse Dental
- Vdental Smile Studio
- Welbeck Clinic
- White Dental & Cosmetic Rooms

DIGITAL PRACTICE

North

- Aberdeen Dental Care
- Blossomfield Dental Care
- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Clavell-Bate & Nephew
- Cloud Dental
- Crown Bank Dental
- The Dental Barns
- Dr Rez Dental
- Hereford Dental & Implant Clinic
- Hermitage Dental Practice
- Mydentist Heaton Moor
- Nigel Smith Dental Care
- Springmount Dental & Aesthetics
- Whitefield Dental
- Willows Dental & Implant Centre

South

- Angel Smile Dental
- Black Swan Dental Spa
- Didcot Dental Studio
- Dynamic Dental Studio
- Emicare Dental & Spa Centre
- Greenwich Dental Health
- London Dental Arts
- Miguel Farran
- Taverham Dental Health Clinic
- Watford Smiles
- Widcombe Dental

PRIVATE
DENTISTRY AWARDS 2024

NOVEMBER 2024

PRACTICE BRAND & DESIGN**North**

- Art of Dental Care by Divya Reddy
- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Clear Smiles
- Cloud Dental
- The Dental Barns
- Dentique Dentistry
- Dr Rez Dental
- EverySmile Dental Clinic
- Harley Private Dental
- Henley Dental
- La Belle Dental Clinic
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist
- Re-Ignite Dental
- Springmount Dental & Aesthetics
- The Orthodontic Clinic
- The Smile Boutique
- The Smile Designers
- Whitefield Dental

South

- Alban City Dental & Surgical Centre
- Cobbins Brook Smile Clinic
- Cuffley Smile Clinic
- Dental Smile Clinic
- Didcot Dental Studio
- Eilertsen Dental Care
- Harrow Smile Clinic
- Lady Bay Dental Care
- Pearl Dental Care Centre
- Pennypot Dental
- Pine Dental & Aesthetics
- Staffa Lodge Smile Clinic
- Tooth Club
- Viva Dental Studio
- Watford Smile Clinic
- Widcombe Dental

London

- Aura Dental London
- Balham Smile Clinic
- The Cosmetic Dental Gallery
- Miswak Dental and Facial Aesthetics
- NG Smiles
- Park Royal Dental Clinic
- Siha Dental Facial
- Twoth Dental + Facial Aesthetics
- Yourdental Wellness

CHILD FRIENDLY PRACTICE**North**

- Aberdeen Dental Care
- Abs Casaus
- Broxburn Smile Centre
- Clarendon Dental Spa
- Crown Bank Dental Implant & Cosmetic Centre
- The Dental Clinic
- Love-Teeth Dental Practice
- SA Smile Clinic
- Willows Dental & Implant Centre

South

- Edward Byrne Associates – part of the Kana Health Group
- Graystone Referral Centre
- Love Teeth Dental
- Perfect Smile Dental Clinic
- Sherwood Park Dental Practice
- Toothbeary
- Urchfont Dental Care
- Wilson House Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group.

TREATMENT OF NERVOUS PATIENTS**London**

- Battersea Park Dental
- Greenwich Dental Health
- Serene Dental and Facial Aesthetics
- Tdc Implant Centres
- Toothbeary

North

- Baycliff Dental & Implant Surgery
- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Clarendon Dental Spa
- The Dental Hygiene Studio
- Dr Rez Dental
- Gayathiri Ramani Balasubramaniam
- Harley Private Dental
- Love-Teeth Dental Practice
- Taylored Dental Care
- Toothwise – Hurworth Dental Practice
- The Waterside Dental Clinic
- Whitefield Dental

Midlands

- Abs Casaus
- All Saints Dental Clinic
- Clear Smiles
- The Dental Barns
- EverySmile Dental Clinic
- Hereford Dental Implant Clinic
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Teeth & Face

South East

- Adelaide House Practice
- Alban City Dental & Surgical Centre
- Chapel Dental
- Colchester Dental Specialist Centre
- Edward Byrne Associates – part of the Kana Health Group
- Enanee Dental Practice
- Hampshire Dentists
- Iconic Smiles
- MK Smiles – part of the Kana Health Group
- Norfolk House Dental Care
- Oxford House Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group
- Reading Dental Spa
- Sura Makki – Bupa Dental Care Wantage
- Tara Barry – North Hill Dental
- Wilson House Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group
- Woburn Sands Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group

Scotland

- Aberdeen Dental Care
- Broxburn Smile Centre
- Cherrybank Dental Spa Edinburgh
- Citi Aesthetics
- Dentistry on the Square
- Hamilton Dental Centre
- Queens Drive Dental
- St Andrews Dental Care
- Tooth Doctor

South West & Wales

- Affinity Dental Care & Implant Centre
- Contemporary Dental
- Fusion Dentistry Ltd
- Inspired Dental Care
- Narbeth Dental Health Practice
- Parkway Clinic
- Urchfont Dental Care

CHARITY/COMMUNITY PROJECT**North**

- Aberdeen Dental Care
- Broxburn Smile Centre
- Diana Omar
- Mydentist
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist
- Sa Smile Clinic
- Tiegán Dixon
- Willows Dental & Implant Centre

South

- Alban City Dental & Surgical Centre
- Awesome Smiles September Stations
- Breaking Down Barriers
- Dynamic Dental Studio
- Earley Dental Practice
- Narbeth Dental Health Practice
- Odl Dental Clinic
- Oxford House Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group
- Sakina Syed

PRACTICE MANAGER

North

- Carrie-Anne Abba – Hereford Dental Implant Clinic
- Sarah Aldridge – Henley Dental
- Ibrahim Al-Kaddo – Clarendon Dental Spa
- David Drew – The Dental Barns
- Melissa Nicholson – Mydentist Olivers House
- Simona Pacuraru – All Saints Dental Clinic
- Amanda Reast – The Dental Architect
- Lauren Toms – Dr Rez Dental

South

- Angeline Anderson – Dental Beauty Bow
- Maiara Ban – Odl Dental Clinic
- Natasha Blackwell – Causeway Dental Practice
- Caroline Delaney – Oxford House Dental Practice
- Veronica Diaz – [Le] Dental
- Jo Douglas – Eden Dental Centre
- Nicole McLean – Wilson House Dental Practice
- Alex McWhirter – North Cardiff Dental & Implants
- Brittany Pittham – Inspired Dental Care
- Zoe Pollard – Black Swan Dental Spa
- Natasha Smith – The Dental Centre Bedford
- Michelle Steffin – Broadwater Dental Clinic
- Debbie Tester – Dynamic Dental Studio

RECEPTIONIST

North

- Maria Firdaus – Aberdeen Dental Care
- Erin Lawton – Smile Stylist
- Lin Mare Melville – Tooth Doctor
- Naomi Penny – Mydentist Olivers House
- Paula Petruyte – Aberdeen Dental Care
- Kimberley Robb – Aberdeen Dental Care

South

- Danielle Ashby – MK Smiles – part of the Kana Health Group
- Shauna Church – Inspired Dental Care
- Esther Egan – Widcombe Dental
- Layla Gooch – Wilson House Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group
- Shenaya Menezes – Greenwich Dental Health
- Kayleigh Rickwood – Oxford House Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group
- Tina Shaw – Perfect Smile Clinic
- Margaret Sutton – Alban City Dental & Surgical Centre

DENTAL NURSE

North

- Chris Bustard
- Tiegan Dixon
- Rhiannon Drummond
- Eleanor Edmundson
- Karima Ewida
- Stephanie Gillies
- Alicja Grzanka
- Lynne Johnston
- Aimee McGhee
- Valeria Pirlog
- Emily Whittaker
- Shannon Wilkes

South

- Alexei Bondarenco
- Alex Bone
- Noorul Ain Chaudhry
- Rachel Chilcott
- Julie Crane
- Kelly Hills
- Lisa Hilton
- Eszter Janusek
- Lauren McCartney
- Nicoleta Mihai
- Brittany Pittham
- Simona Podelskyte
- Rebecca Silver
- Parinaz Taheri
- Andrea Turanova

DENTAL HYGIENIST

South

- Zahira Burmawala
- Victoria Louise Corner
- Claire Handscomb
- Sarah Hardie
- Maria Hussain
- Deimante Kerpauskiene
- Wajeeha Khan
- Makhosi Mguni
- Rafina O'Brien
- Rose O'Keeffe
- Eli Pesario
- Justine Ping
- Lauren Whelton

London

- Mia Burt
- Harry Davies
- Gelareh Haghi
- Danuta Kucharczyk
- Sejal Patel
- Melody Lynne Schwartz
- Sakina Syed
- Shakhnoza Tosheva

North

- Jacqui Armstrong
- Maria Firdaus
- Jules Fisher
- Kathryn Mayo
- Lilly Moffatt

DENTAL THERAPIST

North

- Mariam Khalil Al-Ani
- Neringa Babusis
- Paula Bell
- Rachael Hartley
- Jagjit Malhi
- Freya Milnes
- Michaela Robinson

South

- Javeria Anwar
- Agata Casey
- Chloe Evans
- Nathan Fisher
- Shannon Flack
- Georgina Hughes
- Karolina Jaloveckaite
- Amy Mesilio
- Shalin Sharma
- Chloe Sharpe
- Esme Stewart
- Tracy Tang

SPOTLIGHT

London

- Sheethu George
- Amrit Kaur
- Navid Khan
- Chrystal Sharp

PRACTICE PRINCIPAL

London

- Arman Barfeie – London Dental Arts
- Ani Kalustian – [Le] Dental
- Sumair Khan – Woodhouse Dental Practice
- Marisa Monteiro – Battersea Smiles
- Nissit Patel – Progressive Dentistry
- Sorabh Patel – Dental Beauty Lee
- Mihir Shah – Battersea Park Dental
- Neil Shah – Woodberry Down Dental Practice
- Khilan Shah – Hampstead Dental Studio
- Kevin Silver – Cavendish House Dental Practice

South

- Parminder Singh Battu – Viva Dental Studio
- Farhana Campbell-Barr – Wembley Orthodontic Centre
- Rachel Derby and Neil Evans – Chapel Dental
- Hema Dhingra – Biggleswade Dental Centre
- Ankush Garg – Watford Smiles
- Vivek Giddani – Larkham House Dental Practice
- Chloe Harrington-Taylor – Hereford Dental & Implant Clinic
- Aarti Kohli Jain – Ikigai Smiles & Aesthetic Studio
- Andre Faro Leite and Amish Bhayani – Inspired Dental Care
- Ahmad Nounu – Black Swan Dental Spa
- Mark O'Hara – Causeway Dental Practice
- Kaival Patel and Shreena Patel – part of the Kana Health Group
- Kish Patel – Watford Smile Clinic

- Prakash Promod – Alban City Dental & Surgical Centre
- Pritpal Singh Reel – Rudgwick Dental Practice
- Nicheal Sandher – Earley Dental Practice
- Glenn Steffin – East Preston, Ferring and Broadwater Dental Clinic
- Jin Vaghela – Cuffley Smile Clinic
- Jiten Vaghela – Staffa Lodge Smile Clinic

Midlands

- Myria Akhtar – The Dental Clinic
- Nora Albaldawi – Beautiful Smiles
- Dumitru Aunianu – Hermitage Dental Practice
- Neel Barchha – Willows Dental & Implant Centre
- Malcolm Campbell – Springmount Dental & Aesthetics
- Dave Dehal – Henley Dental
- Ahmed Farooq – All Saints Dental Clinic
- Gurprit Jandu – Teeth & Face
- Nida Kamal – Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Chetan Mathias – Longfellow Road Dental

North

- Wajiha Basir – Trinity House Dental Care
- Lisa Currie and Ivan Tan – The Orthodontic Clinic
- Reza Dilmah – Dr Rez Dental
- Hashim Hafeez – Altrincham Dental Practice
- Shi Karim – Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Quasim Munir – Aberdeen Dental Care
- Raphy Paul and Puthri Raphy – Bright Orthodontics
- Ilana Pine – Love-Teeth Dental Practice
- Kunal Rai – Meliora Dental
- Nigel Smith – Nigel Smith Dental &

Hollywood Dental Care

- Mehdi Yazdi – Crown Bank Dental Implant & Cosmetic Centre
- Nafees Zakir – Manchester Dental

REFERRAL PRACTICE

North

- Bright Orthodontics Warrington
- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Citi Aesthetics
- Clarendon Dental Spa
- Harley Private Dental
- Hereford Dental & Implant Clinic
- Lincoln Orthodontics
- The Orthodontic Clinic
- Renovo Dental
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Smile Perfections
- Vermillion – The Smile Experts Ltd

South

- Bancroft Dentistry
- Belur Orthodontics
- Causeway & Blackhorse Way Dental Practice
- The Cosmetic Dental Gallery
- Cuffley Smile Clinic
- Harpenden Dental Referral Centre
- Kai Orthodontics
- Larkham House Dental Practice
- Love Teeth Dental
- Marylebone Smile Clinic
- Oxford House Referral Centre – part of the Kana Health Group
- Smile Tailor

PATIENT CARE

South East

- Adelaide House Dental Practice
- Alban City Dental & Surgical Centre
- Blake Dental
- Broadwater Dental Clinic
- Bupa Dental Care Hornchurch
- Chapel Dental
- Cj Dental Studio
- Colchester Dental Specialist Centre
- College Street Dental Centre
- The Dental Centre Bedford



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- Love Teeth Dental
- Park Street Dental Clinic
- Pine Dental & Aesthetics
- The Rickmansworth Clinic
- Wembley Orthodontic & Aesthetics
- Weston Cottage Dental and Beauty
- Zen House Dental

London

- Battersea Smiles
- Dental by Design
- Douglas Miller Dental Practice
- Greenwich Dental Health
- Odl Dental Clinic
- Pure Periodontics
- Serene Dental and Facial Aesthetics
- Twoth Dental + Facial Aesthetics
- Woodhouse Implants & Aesthetics

North

- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Clarendon Dental Spa
- Clear Smiles
- The Dental Barns
- Dr Rez Dental
- Everysmile Dental Clinic
- Gayathiri Ramani Balasubramaniam
- Honour Health
- Lincoln Orthodontics
- Parkside Dental Care
- Pearl Dental
- Smile Studio
- Smile Style
- Smile Stylist
- Taylored Dental Care
- The Waterside Dental Clinic
- Whitefield Dental

Scotland

- Cherrybank Dental Spa Edinburgh
- Cloud Dental
- Dentistry on the Square
- The Gentle Touch Dental Practice
- Hamilton Dental Centre
- Integrated Dental Care
- Inverleith Dental Care
- The Orthodontic Clinic
- Queens Drive Dental Practice
- Sa Smile Clinic
- Tooth Doctor
- Vermilion – The Smile Experts

South West & Wales

- Backwell Dental Care
- Black Swan Dental Spa
- Cheriton Dental Practice & Implant Centre
- Cyncoed Dental Surgery
- Evolve Dentistry
- Inspired Dental Care
- Larkham House Dental Practice
- Ruabon Road Dental Practice
- Urchfont Dental Care
- Wadebridge Dental Care

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Scotland

- Aberdeen Dental Care
- Cherrybank Dental Spa Edinburgh
- Cloud Dental
- Dentistry on the Square
- Dundee Nethergate Care
- Edinburgh Dental Studio
- Hamilton Dental Centre
- La Belle Dental Clinic
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist
- Orchard Road Dental Practice
- The Orthodontic Clinic
- Sa Smile Clinic
- Tooth Doctor
- Vermillion – The Smile Experts

London

- Balham Smile Clinic
- Battersea Park Dental
- The Behrens Dental Practice
- Belgravia Dental Care
- Hampstead Dental Studio
- Odl Dental Clinic
- Ruh Dental Fleet Street
- Twoth Dental + Facial Aesthetics
- Woodhouse Implant and Aesthetics

South East

- 2 Green Dental
- Adelaide House Dental Practice
- Beech House Smile Clinic
- Biggleswade Dental Centre
- Billericay Dental Care
- Causeway & Blackhorse Way Dental Practice
- Caversham Heights Dental Practice
- Cheam Village Dental Studios
- Cobbins Brook Smile Clinic
- Complete Smiles
- Cuffley Smile Clinic
- The Dental Centre Bedford
- Dynamic Dental Studio
- Edward Byrne Associates – part of the Kana Health Group
- Harrow Smile Clinic
- Iconic Smiles
- Lady Bay Dental Care

- Leigh Dental Centre
- Love Teeth Dental
- Mydentist Eastleigh
- Oxford House Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group
- Staffa Lodge Smile Clinic
- Stradbroke Dental & Implant Clinic
- Viva Dental Studio
- Watford Smile Clinic
- Watford Smiles
- Wembley Orthodontic & Aesthetics
- Wilson House Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group
- Woburn Sands Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group

Midlands

- Aesthetic Smiles
- All Saints Dental Clinic
- Clear Smiles
- Hereford Dental & Implant Clinic
- Hermitage Dental Practice
- Longfellow Road Dental
- Priors Hall Dental
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Smile Perfections Dental & Cosmetics
- Springmount Dental & Aesthetics
- Teeth & Face

South West & Wales

- Affinity Dental Care & Implant Centre
- Black Swan Dental Spa
- Brynteg Dental Practice Tenby
- Contemporary Dental
- Eden Dental Centre
- Evolve Dentistry
- Inspired Dental Care
- Larkham House Dental Practice
- Parkway Clinic
- Ruabon Road Dental Practice
- Smile Stories
- Urchfont Dental Care

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SPOTLIGHT

North

- Altrincham Dental Practice
- Baycliff Dental & Implant Surgery
- The Crescent Dental and Implant Centre
- Crown Bank Dental
- The Dental Hygiene Studio
- Dr Rez Dental
- Harley Private Dental
- Honour Health
- Lismore House Dental Practice
- Love-Teeth Dental Practice
- Parkside Dental Care
- Ruh Dental Manchester
- The Smile Designers
- Smile Stylist
- Taylored Dental Care
- Vici Dental
- The Waterside Dental Clinic
- Whitefield Dental Practice
- Wiltshire Dental Clinic

PRACTICE OF THE YEAR

London

- Balham Smile Clinic
- Battersea Smiles
- The Behrens Dental Practice
- Boston Orthodontics
- The Cosmetic Dental Gallery
- Covent Garden Dental Spa
- Dentapride Dental Clinic UK
- Greenwich Dental Health
- Hampstead Dental Studio
- Odl Dental Clinic
- Pure Periodontics
- Ruh Dental Fleet Street
- Serene Dental and Facial Aesthetics
- Twooth Dental + Facial Aesthetics
- Woodhouse Implants & Aesthetics
- Yourdental Wellness

North

- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Clear Smiles
- The Crescent Dental and Implant Centre
- Crown Bank Dental
- Dr Rez Dental
- Hereford Dental & Implant Clinic
- Honour Health Jesmond
- Lincoln Orthodontics
- Longfellow Road Dental
- Love-Teeth Dental Practice
- Mydentist Olivers House
- Parkside Dental Care
- Pearl Dental
- Renovo Dental
- Ruh Dental Manchester
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Smile Perfections Dental & Cosmetic Clinic
- Smile Studio
- Smile Style
- Smile Stylist
- Teeth & Face
- Toothwise – Hurworth Dental Practice
- Vici Dental
- The Waterside Dental Clinic
- Whitefield Dental

Scotland & Northern Ireland

- Broxburn Smile Centre
- Cherrybank Dental Spa Edinburgh
- Cloud Dental
- Edinburgh Dental Studio
- The Gentle Touch Dental Practice
- Hamilton Dental Centre
- Hollywood Dental Care
- Integrated Dental Care
- Inverleith Dental Care
- La Belle Dental Clinic
- Nigel Smith Dental Care
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist
- The Orthodontic Clinic
- Queens Drive Dental Practice
- Sa Smile Clinic
- Tooth Doctor

South East

- 2 Green Dental
- Adelaide House Dental Practice
- Alban City Dental & Surgical Centre
- Ascot Dental Suite
- Beech House Smile Clinic
- Belur Orthodontics
- Bupa Dental Care Hornchurch
- Cheam Village Dental Studios
- Cobbins Brook Smile Clinic
- College Street Dental Centre
- Cuffley Smile Clinic
- The Dental Centre Bedford
- Dynamic Dental Studio
- Feel Good Dental
- Harrow Smile Clinic
- Kingston Dental Clinic
- Love Teeth Dental
- MK Smiles – part of the Kana Health Group
- Norfolk House Dental Care
- Pennypot Dental
- Pine Dental & Aesthetics
- Red Lodge Dental Surgery
- The Rickmansworth Clinic
- Rudgwick Dental Practice
- Smile HQ
- Staffa Lodge Smile Clinic
- Watford Smile Clinic
- Wembley Orthodontics & Aesthetics
- Woburn Sands Dental Practice – part of the Kana Health Group

South West & Wales

- Backwell Dental Care
- Black Swan Dental Spa
- Cheriton Dental Practice & Implant Centre
- Cyncoed Dental Practice
- The Dental Barns
- Didcot Dental Studio
- Evolve Dentistry
- Inspired Dental Care
- Larkham House Dental Practice
- North Cardiff Dental & Implants
- Parkway Clinic
- Smile Stories
- Urchfont Dental Care
- Zen House Dental

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CHARITY PARTNER



Philanthropy through reluctant self-promotion

How **Shaz Memon** turned the spotlight inwards to power a global charity movement

Words by Julie Bissett

For any entrepreneur looking to make a significant philanthropic impact, there comes a point when becoming the face of a business is essential, however discomfoting. Human connections are far more potent than commercial channels when it comes to sharing significant causes that are personally meaningful.

Dental marketing expert Shaz Memon understands this dilemma well. As founder of the multi-award-winning design agency Digimax, he has made a lasting mark on the dental marketing industry. And, though initially hesitant, he has mastered the art of self-promotion to ensure his charitable efforts attract the support they need.

BUILDING POWERFUL BRANDING

Emboldened by early, tentative successes, Shaz's self-marketing has grown ever more imaginative. From his first Instagram selfie in March 2019 to now, he has built countless websites, created powerful branding, penned much-lauded books, supported, advised and even pranked the industry, and invited those within it to multiple events that have powered his business to new heights.

Along the way, he has also made a considerable number of friends. But more importantly, it has all been for the betterment of Wells on Wheels (WOW), the charity he founded in July 2019. Its mission is simple: to implement practical solutions to alleviate the burden on the women and young girls in India responsible for collecting water.

WOW provides rural communities with innovative water wheels that make transportation more efficient and give girls better education opportunities by freeing up their time so they can attend school regularly.

Thus, Shaz's reluctant acceptance of personal publicity has proved a significant driver in amplifying WOW's efforts and opened up new doors for collaboration – an innovative partner programme now enables dental businesses to help his charity make tangible differences.

But let's roll back a bit. We first crossed paths in 2008. I was a seasoned journalist, new to dental B2B publishing, and he was a rising star in dental marketing.



TO REACH AND HELP MORE PEOPLE, I HAD TO STEP INTO THE SPOTLIGHT. I STARTED TO SAY YES TO MORE OPPORTUNITIES THAT INVOLVED BEING IN FRONT OF A CAMERA OR ON A STAGE

Shaz's social media tip

Shaz has one tip for those who might be reluctant to embrace social media to face a broader audience: 'No one cares or thinks about you as much as you might think.'

'People are so caught up in their own lives that they aren't judging you nearly as much as you imagine. If you can show up on social media and speak offline like you do with your patients and friends, you're simply transferring your authentic "self" to online. Share your journey and document parts of your day.'

'It's a proven model: educate your audience, grab their attention and consistently show up. Build trust and connections. Social media gives you that perfect platform to educate, inspire – and perhaps make a difference.'

He had a story to tell, and I was looking for a front-page lead. With the doyen of TV's *Dragons' Den*, James Caan, among his clients at the time, it ticked the boxes.

POSITIVE SPIN

We catch up on the phone in July just as the far-right riots rip through the UK, erupting after the mass stabbing in Southport. With three children tragically killed, we lament the senseless violence as well as the mindless attacks on communities that ensue. These dark times threaten social stability and instil fear. But Shaz is sanguine. 'The same people who were the school bullies when I was growing up in London are those rioting on the streets now,' he says. 'My wife asks if she should be worried, but I'm not and am pretty sure it will blow over.'

His positive spin on a bleak situation is borne out when, that evening, thousands of people turn up on the streets of rumoured hotspots to stand firm against any further rioting. I recount our conversation, and the next time we speak, I ask if his glass is usually this half-full.

Successfully launching a charity within dentistry that had little (directly) to do with the profession must have required a degree of optimism – and possibly courage. Indeed, both are significant to building a business.

'I am neither positive nor negative but ambitious, which might sound like positivity, but I don't think it is. I will simplify ideas, think about executing to a good standard and ask myself, "What if it doesn't work?". The answer is usually that I may lose money, which doesn't faze me. I always use my money in ventures to take full responsibility.'

'Positivity is undoubtedly needed for success, but so is what might seem unrealistic ambition. But this can become greater than expected with the right drive and effort.'

EQUILIBRIUM

With Wells on Wheels now known worldwide and covered by multiple media outlets, the documentary film he directed, showcased on Prime Video, was developed from an ambitious dream.

But none of it was to the detriment of other areas of his life. He explains he broke this into manageable small parts

backed by daily actions to ensure no area of his life was overwhelmed or forgotten.

'I'm all about balance. My health, family and our happiness come first, and I won't sacrifice them for any ideas I might have. I'll nurture everything so that it grows together.'

'When I founded Wells on Wheels, it all happened so quickly in 2019 that I didn't consider the associated risks. I saw an incredible opportunity and ran with it. I brought the idea into dentistry, and almost everybody greeted me with open arms. I wasn't expecting or asking directly for support, but when it started to fly in from people I didn't know, I learned they could see what I saw.'

There are always naysayers in any sector – and marketing within dentistry is not without its critics.

'There are always those that will try to use something against you. In my case, a few people told clients I had exited the business to focus on charity, which isn't true. My business allows me to support the charity; we donate a lot of our funds, and all the costs of set-up and initiation were and still, in many cases, my own. So, I guess that could be considered a risk.'

LITTLE ACORNS, MIGHTY OAKS

Initially shying away from the spotlight, he has been described by dental business coach Chris Barrow as a 'quiet leader and hero' – an insightful description of Shaz's introspective nature. The irony is that, despite being a successful marketer, he was hesitant to embrace the core principles of his own business – namely, promotion and publicity. So, what finally got him on board?

'I never liked centre stage,' he says. 'Coming from a minority background, I felt the odd one out in class; I am still unsure if this was the reality or something imagined. But

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I had unbreakable self-confidence in my creative ability from an early age. These seeds of confidence my family planted in me gave me great encouragement. But I didn't rate myself high in anything else – last to be picked for sports at school, a bit different in class, popular enough to have lots of friends but different enough to not quite fit in. It just felt easier hiding behind the screen.

As the years went by, it was perfect. He grew comfortable being 'invisible', and no one questioned it – until they did, he says.

'Once Digimax took off, and people recommended my company, they would say, "Speak to Shaz" rather than "Speak to Digimax,"; it felt like I was swimming against the tide.

'I was secretly in awe of those happy to be the face of their business and realised that to reach and help more people, I also had to step into the spotlight. So, I started to say yes to more opportunities that involved being in front of a camera or on a stage.'

He confesses he still gets palpitations before presentations and podcasts, but the more he does, the sooner the panic dissipates. 'I remind myself of all the times I have faced scary situations that have subsequently worked out well. Looking at me now, you would never know how much I struggled, but honestly, if I can do it – so can anyone.'

CREATIVE TALENT

Over the years, Shaz has shown a chameleon-like ability to adapt his business model to trends, often capitalising on them.

He has zeroed in on dentistry marketing, launched books, started a charity, written for major news outlets and shared humorous reels that have brought fun to a typically 'dry' sector. So, what sparks these innovations?

'I enjoy the adrenaline rush from a new project or idea I'm happiest when creating. When an idea comes and I like it, I run with it.'

This includes a Christmas advert, an April Fools' Day campaign supposedly launching a branded drink called Memonade, a *Squid Game*-inspired 'good luck in the awards' missive to clients, directing the Wells on Wheels documentary, *No Water Land* and writing books.

So influential has he been that Shaz is one of the few non-clinicians to consistently rank in the Dentistry Top 50 over the past four years. So, what does that mean to him?

'I always feel I must act responsibly and consistently to deliver value in everything I contribute to the dental space. I keep my feet firmly on the ground and try to see everything from the profession's perspective. But my reputation is more important

than titles, lists or accolades. I don't feel I need this kind of recognition at this stage of my life.

'I've done a lot of growing up since becoming a parent and seeing so many girls in rural India attend school through the work of Wells on Wheels matters greatly. My daughter Helena has taught me how to become a better person. She inspired me to launch Wells on Wheels, which has had a meaningful impact on me personally more than professionally.'

And what of his legacy – especially for Helena and others of her generation?

'I haven't fully grasped the concept of legacy,' he admits, 'but when I think about it, I want Helena to remember me as a father who genuinely cared, tried his best to make a difference and wasn't driven solely by money. I hope she emulates these traits in her own work. I see qualities in her through the thoughtful questions she asks.

'I suppose I've emulated many of these qualities from my own father, so I'm hopeful that Helena will contribute to the world in a way we all need right now.'

To find out more about Wells on Wheels partner programme, visit www.wellsonwheels.co.uk/wow-partner-programme.

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An aerial photograph of a ski lift against a snowy mountain background. The lift consists of a central cable with several chairs suspended from it. Each chair has a red seat and blue safety harnesses. The chairs are spaced out along the cable, moving upwards. The background is a vast, textured expanse of snow with some faint tracks or lines visible.

ON AN ADVENTURE

*Private Dentistry catches up with **Cat Burford** ahead of her trek to the South Pole to find out what inspired her to take on the challenge*



Q What got you into dentistry?

I wanted to be a dentist since I was about 10 years old.

A I was always out on my bike with my sister. One afternoon, at the top of a steep hill, I decided to race her to the bottom. I went flying over the handlebars and smashed my front tooth.

It was then, sitting in the dentist's chair, seeing the curing light for the first time and having my smile fixed that I thought: 'This looks pretty cool.'

After graduating, with a love for the outdoors, I flipped a coin between working in the Lake District or Cornwall.

The coin chose Cornwall, and it's been my home ever since.

I trained in Falmouth and found a practice in St Agnes with a principal that shared the same values, a love for adventure and was supportive of a life outside of routine dentistry.

They encouraged my passion for travel and volunteer work. I regularly volunteered abroad before they kept my job open to allow me a year away, practising as a dentist in New Zealand and volunteering in South America.

My interest in orthodontics began about five years ago.

An opportunity arose to train alongside a specialist, and now I work four days a week in an orthodontic practice, along with my out-of-hours work.

Q Your love for travel and adventure seems to have been a part of your life from an early age. Where do you think it first came from?

A I think it partly came from my parents and being made aware that there was more to the world than just where I lived. Family holidays were predominantly in the UK. My dad hadn't been abroad until he was in his 40s, but

we had a large collection of *National Geographic* magazines at home, and I'd often flick through them, looking at all the amazing pictures of different places around the world.

Both my parents travelled to India, and when they returned with suitcases of colourful souvenirs and stories of children my age, it ignited something in me.

Pictures were just the inspiration, as I felt I needed to experience these places for myself.

When I was 19, I took a year out before university and went to Borneo to teach English.

Q Can you talk us through some of your travel adventures?

A My love for geography has influenced the places I have wanted to visit. It's basically been a tick list of ecosystems: the rainforest, deserts, savannah and now tundra.

My travels have always been about experiencing the culture and people of these places.

In Borneo, I was teaching in a school, and it was an incredible experience being immersed in the local culture. After Borneo, I focused on finding opportunities that would allow me to travel.

During my elective year in dental school, I chose to join a research expedition in the Gobi Desert and to travel through China. I've always searched for those different experiences.

I love to read books on great explorers and adventurers, and I find these heavily influence me. I spent a few months volunteering as a dentist in Nepal, using the opportunity to trek to Everest Base Camp and imagine walking in the footsteps of Sir Edmund Hillary. Later on, I took a year out while working in Cornwall, to practise dentistry in New Zealand and travel through South America.

I volunteered with a project in Bolivia that trained street children to become dental hygienists, a rewarding experience that gave me some much-needed perspective when working back in the UK.

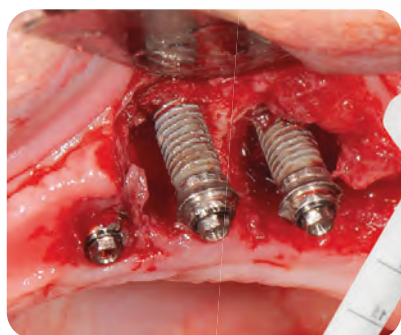


Cat Burford

Cat is a dentist based in Cornwall. She graduated in 2005 from Liverpool University and now works mainly in orthodontic practice. She also works for the out-of-hours dental service and teach expedition dentistry for World Extreme Medicine.

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Q How do you balance your passion for travel with a career in dentistry?

A One of the reasons I chose dentistry was because I believed that it would allow me the flexibility to be able to travel and use my skills abroad.

It's not quite that straightforward, but finding a supportive practice (and husband!) has been key to allowing me to work towards my next adventure. Being self-employed has its pros and cons and I have chosen a lifestyle that means I'll be rich in memories rather than material things!

The job and the travel complement each other well, giving me the perspective I need when I come back to work.

Q Where did the idea to trek to the South Pole come from?

A The idea of going to Antarctica started in school, thanks to my geography teacher, Allyson Taylor.

She was so enthusiastic about her subject, and I remember her asking the class: 'What's the largest desert on Earth?' Naturally, everyone thought of the sands of the Sahara or the Gobi, but then she showed us a picture of Antarctica and said: 'This is the largest desert.'

I was fascinated by the idea of this vast, white wilderness, and it stuck with me.

Over the years, I've read about explorers like Amundsen, Shackleton, and Scott and their experiences in such a hostile environment. I was particularly drawn to the fact that each would return, despite having faced such hardships.

During COVID-19, I felt I'd lost a bit of direction, and my dream of visiting Antarctica had got a bit lost in the stress of day-to-day life. I realised that if I was serious, I needed to look in to how I was going to get there.

I found a training course in Norway, which seemed like a good stepping stone.

Through that, I met Louis Rudd and Wendy Searle, who have both completed incredible Antarctic expeditions, and they offered to mentor me.

Q What will your trek to the South Pole involve?

A I'll be flying to Chile and then to Union Glacier, the base camp in Antarctica.

From there, I'll take a small plane to Hercules Inlet, the edge of the Antarctic landmass, and the starting point of my trek.

I'll be skiing 704 miles uphill to the South Pole, which should take about 50 days.

I'll have enough food for 55 days, but how long it takes will be dictated by the weather and the conditions. With wind chill, temperatures can drop as low as -50°C, and I'll be navigating through sastrugi, wave-like ice ridges that can be up to eight meters in height.

Q Are you doing this trek solo?

A Yes, I'm doing it solo.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the first woman – Liv Arnesen – to complete it, so it's a significant time to be taking on this challenge.

When I started to explore going solo, only nine women in the world had completed it. This figure now stands at around 12.



Q How are you preparing for the trek?

A Training has been intense. I've done team expeditions in Norway and completed a full east to west crossing of Greenland last year.

Since I'm doing this solo, I've also completed solo expeditions to ensure that I have the skills to keep myself safe on the ice. Now, it's about maintaining fitness with a lot of tyre-dragging, running, and strength training.

I live on the coast, which makes training a bit easier, and I've been practising routines like setting up a tent with mittens on to prepare for the conditions I'll face.

Q If things go wrong while you're out there, what's the plan?

A I'll have a satellite phone with me, and I'm required to call in every evening to report my coordinates so that my progress can be tracked.

If something goes wrong, the response depends on the situation and location.

They're very strict about safety, so if rescue seems likely due to illness, for example, they won't wait until I am too sick to move. It is likely that I will need to get myself to a location where a plane can land, which also depends on good weather conditions.

Q When are you setting off, and how can people follow your progress?

A I'm planning to fly to Chile on 12 November for some final preparations before my flight to Antarctica on 18 November. I'll be posting updates on my website, themolarexplorer.com, where people can track my progress and listen to daily voice messages from the ice.

I'm also raising money for Bridge2aid, and donations can be made through my fundraising platform, Givestar (givestar.io/gs/solo-south-pole-expedition).

It would be great if I could get support from individuals and companies within the dental industry!

Huge thanks to AXA, Portmandentex, Denplan, GDPUK, and Shackleton, who are sponsoring this solo, unsupported expedition to the South Pole.

To donate to Bridge2aid and support Cat's trek to the South Pole, visit themolarexplorer.com.



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Dental Practice Accelerator: the clinician

With the Dental Practice Accelerator programme in full swing, mentor **Sameer Patel** shares the recommendations he has made to help London Dental Centre reach new levels of growth

When I first met Hannan and the team at London Dental Centre, the main challenge I could see was that the associates were getting stuck within their own surgeries, which was leaving them practising as individuals.

This is actually a very common problem in most typical dental practices, where we see each dentist carrying out single tooth dentistry and treatment planning for themselves and their own skills, rather than thinking and planning in a broader way to include specialists where they are required.

What I've always found is that if you work as a group, through the addition of hygienists and collaboration with specialists, the result is an increased quality of work, which is beneficial for the patients, rewarding for the team, and great for the reputation of the business.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

With this in mind, the first thing I suggested to Hannan was recruiting a hygienist, as this would free the dentists up to do a higher level of work. He found it relatively easy to recruit a good hygienist but, as always, finding the right person who is a good

fit for the team as a whole is crucial. This is something I left to Hannan as it's very individual to him and who he wants to fit in his business.

My second recommendation was to start collaborating with specialists and slowly grow the specialist network within his practice to allow everybody to do what they're good at, and to do it really well.

Ultimately, these changes are designed to create more of a team approach rather everyone working autonomously, resulting in the increased level of patient care that we're searching for.



Once all of this is in place, my third suggestion was to make sure that the clinical team is all offering comprehensive care dentistry rather than single tooth dentistry by using photography and scanners to educate and communicate with patients.

TEAM REACTION

Change is always difficult, we know that, but with it coming from us as mentors, rather than Hannan, it did help to make it a little bit easier.

This also gave Hannan the support that this was the right way to do it, and I think they're now very much moving in the right direction.



Sameer Patel

Sameer is CEO, partner and co-founder of Elleven Dental.



HE WILL NEED TO BE CONTINUOUS WITH HIS MARKETING, CARRY ON EVOLVING HIS WEBSITE, AS WELL AS EDUCATING HIS STAFF AND SHARING HIS VISION

The implementation of the changes was firstly brought about through discussion with both Hannan and his team, and then I allowed them to shadow me at Elleven Dental.

Hannan has also come to the clinic to spend time with me and my senior management to discover how he can move his own practice forward by understanding the systems we have in place.

I believe that having everyone involved in the changes from discussion to implementation has helped to create a unified and positive team approach that they can use and build on to move forward together.

THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

The response from Hannan and the team to my suggested changes has been positive with the feedback that it has worked really well.

They may notice that profits take a slight dip early in the change process, this is normal for a business that is taking on growth – they come down a little bit before going back up again.

If you are putting the right systems and process in place, a period where things take a dip isn't always too concerning because you're doing this to encourage growth. Otherwise, you will just plateau at the same place.

We also know that these systems and process take six to 12 months to really bed in and show their benefits; they aren't quick fixes. You have to stick with the faith that these changes are the right process, you can't deviate too much otherwise you confuse the message to team members and they won't know what to do.

You must retain a clear message and stick with it – I know sometimes that's hard, but it's important.

HOW ARE THINGS LOOKING?

I think things are now set up, as the economy changes, to move so positively in the right direction.

In addition, Hannan has many good systems, processes and branding in place, which means he's fully set up for success when the market picks up.

It's been a challenging year for our whole profession, but the key is to stick with the changes that have been implemented.

Sameer's top tips

for continuous growth

- Make sure you have somebody to answer the phone, otherwise your potential new patients can't get through to you
- Be organised with tracking your new patient leads and existing patient treatment plans
- Ensure the quality of the processes in the surgery – the dentist and dental nurse need to work hard to ensure everything is set up to deliver a great outcome
- Obtain feedback from your patients on how you can improve things within your practice
- Have regular team meetings to request staff feedback on how to improve the business – team members have amazing ideas!

I think these changes are right for Hannan and his team, and with Daniel now joining him at the helm to help out even more I think it's a really great place.

One of the main challenges for any leader or entrepreneur is that we've always got to keep twisting and adapting and making changes and growing our business in a way that the market and our patients demand.

I believe that, with time and thanks to the Dental Accelerator Programme, Hannan will have the tools to be able to see what will be needed for his business.

He will need to be continuous with his marketing, carry on evolving his website, as well as educating his staff and sharing his vision. With time, this will lead to a higher occupancy, which will lead to higher profits and potential for reinvestment within the business.

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IN THE HOT SEAT

Elaine Halley reflects on the highlights of her dental career to date and the plans for the future

Q Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

A I am the owner of Cherrybank Dental Spa in Perth, Scotland, where I have worked as a GDP for more than 30 years. I am also the clinical director for the Pain Free Dentistry Group, which is a group of practices across Scotland and the north of England. I split my time between seeing patients clinically in my own practice, mentoring the associates in the Pain Free Group and teaching. I teach all over world on digital dentistry, smile design, ortho-restorative and my absolute passion, which is comprehensive interdisciplinary treatment planning with patient communication.

Q What is your favourite aesthetic dental treatment to transform smiles?

A In the right cases, I love ortho-

restorative with porcelain veneers on maxillary four incisors. For me, this is can be a minimally invasive treatment to enhance shape/tooth structure, particularly after orthodontics. It can provide a natural and beautiful smile.

Q What's your most rewarding experience in your career?

A When I look back at my career one of the highlights is that, together with my colleagues David Bloom and Chris Orr, we founded the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD). The BACD is not for profit and dedicated to raising the standards in education for aesthetic and cosmetic dentistry. We are celebrating 20 years of the BACD this year and while I am no longer involved in the running of it, I am extremely proud of its existence. The second most rewarding experience has been the book contract with Edra Publishing to write

Elaine's top tips

- 1** Learn good photography! Take a full series including full face photos for every patient as part of your dental records
- 2** Work with a great dental laboratory that understands the digital workflow and can teach you how to give the technicians what they need to provide beautiful results
- 3** If you don't have an intraoral scanner, make that your plan. If you have access to one, then scan every patient and use it as a patient communication tool on a daily basis. It will transform your practising life.

publish my book *Smile Analysis*. This is a documentation of how I implement smile design with comprehensive treatment planning and patient communication.

Q What do you do in your spare time?

A I live in Perthshire, which is a beautiful area. I love to get outdoors in nature with friends and my two dogs – we have so many stunning areas to walk in nearby. I am also an avid reader and love to read and listen to books on all different subjects – a forever learner! I have three children – two have finished university and one still at school, so family time is also very important to me.

Q What do you hope to achieve in the future?

A I am currently building on the work it took to write my book and the teaching and mentoring I do and the education I have invested in. I am planning a continuum of education for those wanting to perfect their patient journey/ comprehensive treatment planning skills based around how I have been running my practice in Perth. It's a project that I'm hoping will be ready in January 2025.

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