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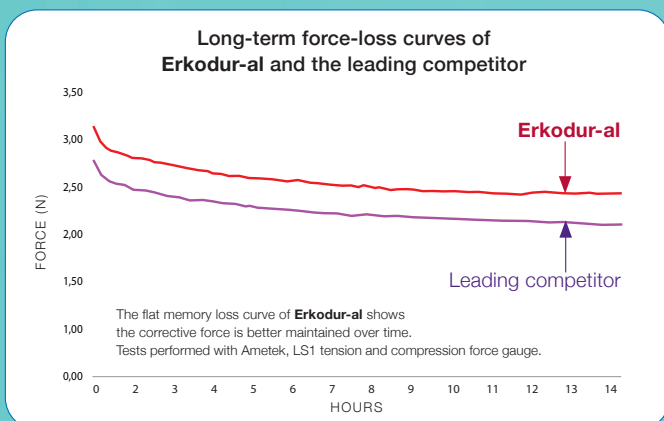
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Siobhan Hiscott
Group managing editor

With January already behind us, 2025 is looking ready to match the pace of 2024. Everyone I've spoken to seems to feel the same: by all accounts, we've hit the ground running!

To help you keep up, this issue is packed with strategies, inspiration and guidance on taking your practice to the next level: how to boost performance, improve your leadership and, ultimately, increase your bottom line.

Talking of next-level practices, we're thrilled to present Black Swan Dental Spa – winner of Practice of the Year 2024 at the Private Dentistry Awards – as this issue's How I Did It. On page 16, Ahmad Nounu details the trials and tribulations of opening the practice and how he transformed it into an award-winning clinic.

Did you know that How I Did It has been a part of *Private Dentistry* since day one? Showcasing some of the grandest designs in the profession, it's all about the experience of building high-end private practices – and hopefully, something that inspires others looking to turn their own dream practice into a reality.

Not every practice update needs to be a grand design, of course. Even something as simple as a fresh lick of paint can make all the difference – and we've got you

covered on that front too. We're introducing a brand-new feature – called Get the Look – to help dental practices get out of a style rut. This month we've selected products that will style well with this year's colour of the year, mocha mousse. Turn to page 22 to 'get the look' for yourself!

Of course, the arrival of February means the countdown to the North of England Dentistry Show is also officially on.

Returning to Manchester on Saturday 8 March, the show will offer everything you need to flourish in your career, from inspirational lectures to networking opportunities.

Across the lecture theatres and hubs, you'll find the hottest topics in dentistry including new clinical skills and technological innovations to strategies for business growth. In addition to the unmissable line-up of speakers, the North of England Dentistry Show will see more than 100 of the UK's most forward-thinking dental companies sharing their latest innovations.

And to whet your appetite, you'll find articles from some of the speakers presenting on the day throughout this issue, as well as an in-depth guide detailing what's in store. Turn to page 65 to find out more!

A free event where you can expand your knowledge, sharpen your skills and connect with like-minded colleagues – what's not to love? I'll see you there!



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DENTISTRY

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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Key dental events coming from FMC this year

FMC has announced its line-up of unmissable shows and awards for 2025.

With shows for dental professionals, dental students and senior leadership teams, this year's events will allow attendees to sharpen their skills and increase their knowledge, while the awards recognise and celebrate dental talent and excellence in the UK and Ireland.

All in all, FMC events provide an unrivalled opportunity for essential learning, networking and, of course, fun.

Up first is the North of England Dentistry Show, which will be returning to Manchester Central on Saturday 8 March. This vibrant dental event will offer attendees inspirational lectures, the latest innovations and networking opportunities – everything you need to flourish in your career, all free of charge.

Bringing fresh insights and deeper connections, the North of England Dentistry Show will open up the world of dentistry to visitors like never before. It's totally free to attend, and is sure to have something for everyone – from hours of verifiable CPD and access to the biggest dental brands to the chance to hear from some of the UK's most exciting speakers.

With more than 100 of the UK's most innovative dental companies sharing their latest innovations, it's the perfect place to access the technology and services you need to grow. Turn to page 65 for further details, including a detailed look at the speaker line-up in the Business Lounge, powered by Towergate.

From cutting edge clinical expertise to passionate debate on today's biggest issues, the North of England Dentistry Show has it all. Register today at dentistry.co.uk/shows/north-of-england-dentistry-show.

FMC's 2025 dental events



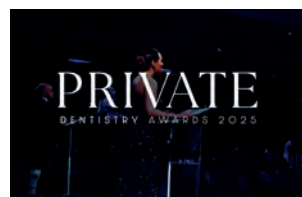
North of England Dentistry Show – Manchester, Saturday 8 March



Dentistry Awards – Leicester, Friday 6 June



Association of Dental Groups Conference – November



Private Dentistry Awards – London, November



Dental Industry Awards – London, December

Sweet indulgence: Pantone colour of the year revealed

Colour specialist Pantone has named 'mocha mousse' as its much-anticipated colour of the year for 2025.

Each year, a team of global art and design experts decides on the Pantone colour of the year, which sets out to define the moods and modes of the upcoming 365 days.

For 2025, the Pantone Color Institute has chosen Pantone 17-1230 Mocha Mousse, a warming, brown hue imbued with richness.

Mocha mousse is a versatile shade infused with inherent sophistication and earthy refinement, making it ideal for dental practice décor.

Whether appearing on flooring, a painted wall or wall coverings, or in more natural materials including wood and stone, rattan and wicker, and leather and linen, mocha mousse is the shade of choice for dental practices wanting to keep up with the latest interior design trends.

For practices looking to convey comfort and opulence, mocha mousse is an evocative rich brown infused with sensorial warmth.

For ideas and inspiration on how to incorporate the colour in your practice design, turn to page 22.









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New president and honorary patron for orthodontic society



Robbie Lawson has been announced as president of the British Orthodontic Society and Roz McMullan as honorary patron.

A founding partner in a multi-surgery specialist practice, Robbie has been a specialist orthodontist in Edinburgh since completing his specialty training in Cardiff in 1996.

Commenting on his new role as president of BOS, Robbie said: 'It is daunting, but I am deeply honoured to be taking on this responsibility. I am humbled to follow such eminent colleagues who have served as executives within the BOS. I am under no illusions about the myriad of challenges that face our specialty and the society, but am heartened to know that I will be joining a wide team of dedicated colleagues who give so freely of their time and expertise. I am sure that, together, we can ensure that the BOS continues to provide strong, relevant advocacy for all sectors of the specialty and our patients in the years ahead.'

Roz McMullan, the new honorary patron of the BOS, is a retired consultant orthodontist in the Western Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland (NI). During her long and distinguished career, Roz was a past president of the British Dental Association (BDA) and the Northern Ireland Branch, past chair of NI Council BDA, and until recently, worked with the association in matters relating to wellness and mental health. She is a life member of the European Orthodontic Society and the NI Orthodontic Study Group.

Of her new role, Roz said: 'I am honoured, humbled and delighted to be installed as patron of the BOS for 2025. Every voice in this society, no matter how quiet or lonely, is valued and valuable. As patron I am not an elected representative, nor a voting member of the board with all the governance responsibility that carries, but I do hope to be a connection between the quiet voices and the leaders within the BOS, while also representing the society with the respect and gravitas it deserves. You can trust me to laud you, and the brilliant work you do every day that is so valued by your patients. I look forward to working closely with the president, Robbie Lawson.'

'Ozempic face' prompts rise in demand for cosmetic facial fillers

A dermatology group has reported a 'significant uptick' in cosmetic filler sales due to facial sagging caused by weight loss drug Ozempic.

Galderma clinical investigator Michael Somenek said: 'As medication-driven weight loss becomes more prolific around the world, so do the associated impacts of facial volume loss and other unwanted cosmetic effects like shadowing and hollowness.'

Ozempic is a brand of semaglutide produced by Novo Nordisk. It works by mimicking the sensation of fullness, allowing users to eat less without experiencing hunger.

In the UK, another formulation of semaglutide called Wegovy is now prescribed by the NHS. From September 2023, the drug became available to those with a BMI over 30 and at least one related comorbidity.

Galderma said there were several reasons for the facial changes known as 'Ozempic face', including loss of fat, collagen, elastin and essential nutrients such as fatty acids. Proposing dermal fillers as a solution to these aesthetic concerns, the company described the results as 'improved mid-face shape and contouring along with improvements in cheek wrinkles and an overall improvement in facial appearance'.

In a study of the use of fillers to combat 'Ozempic face', 89% of subjects reported feeling 'more attractive and happier with their appearance'.

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MORE INFO



Driving progress

Chris Barrow on testing dental practice ownership



CHRIS
BARROW

Thankfully, no one can legally drive a car until driving lessons have been taken and a test passed. The same applies for trains, boats and planes.

Simply because, without training and experience, we put ourselves and others at risk. Now let's consider the dentist who has decided to either buy or open their own dental practice.

The independent valuer sends a prospectus and offers advice on the merits of a purchase. The accountant provides the financial support. The lawyer does the law, contracts, HR, conveyancing documents etc. The architect, builder and designer offer to assist with refurbishment, extension and construction, as well as kit-out. The banks and finance companies provide the funding.

However, so far, nobody in this process has asked: 'Have you had any lessons or taken a test on how to run a business?'

In fact, the only lessons and tests required to buy or open a dental practice are:

1. Do your registered clinicians have a dental qualification?
2. Are you compliant?

Yes, you can own a practice if you don't have a dental qualification (provided those delivering the dentistry are qualified), but you don't need any qualification in how to run a business.

Yes, there are regulators who will make sure that you don't pose a risk to patients.

But nobody is going to teach nor test you to make sure that you're not a risk to your suppliers, employees, lenders, self-employed clinicians, professional advisers and, most importantly, family. If you screw up in business, all of those people stand to lose.

CHILD'S PLAY?

I've attended the British Undergraduate Dental Research Conference in Manchester three years running to lecture on starting a business in dentistry. I've presented the same session to three consecutive audiences on a Saturday afternoon, and begun them all with: 'How many of you are considering practice ownership at some future date?'

It's an interesting litmus test on confidence and, over the last few years, the number of raised hands has gradually increased (although never more than 20% of those attending). The next 45 minutes is then spent talking about the

reality, risks and rewards of business ownership. I often liken business to a 'monster child': it wakes you every night, it fills its nappy, it vomits, it screams, it demands attention every minute of your life, it gives no thanks – and – it never grows up.

Indeed, business ownership is like parenting young children – you cannot do it 9 to 5 and then switch off and go home. Kids grow up, leave home (and cause a bit less trouble when they have gone) – a business never grows up and never leaves home. It comes with you to the cinema, on holiday, to bed. You can never get away from it.

BURNING DESIRE

I get many messages from dentists who want to buy or build a practice for the first time, and I base my advice on the dentist's opening comments, which typically go along the lines of:

1. I'm thinking about buying/opening a dental practice and I'd like to ask for your advice and guidance
2. I have a burning desire, keeping me awake at night, irrespective of the demands it will make on my time and lifestyle, to buy/open a dental practice and I'd like to ask for your advice and guidance.

'Thinking about' isn't going to get the enquiring dentist from the 'auditions' to 'judges houses' – and I'm quite direct (harsh?) sometimes when I reply asking that they come back to me when they have stopped thinking about it and developed the burning desire.

At the start of my dental business coaching career, I naively approached some dental schools to offer my services on business training for dental students. Doors were slammed in my face – perhaps because dental schools aren't there to teach business.

But don't you think it would be a good idea to create a school for wannabe first-time dental practice owners? Encouragingly, a couple of UK dentists have launched start-up schools, and I applaud their initiative. As a profession, we should encourage that. I don't expect a compulsory 'driving test' for dental business owners anytime soon, and I could argue that business owner 'pilots' flying blind is a valuable source of business for me. I'd rather that those who aspire to ownership were well-informed and trained before they begin their journey.

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Black Swan Dental Spa

Ahmad Nounu shares his inspiring journey of taking over a struggling dental practice, overcoming financial challenges and turning it into a thriving, luxurious dental spa known for excellence and innovation

After completing my vocational training (VT) in 2009, I embarked on a career journey that shaped my clinical skills and entrepreneurial spirit.

Early on, I had the chance to train at a corporate practice in Somerset. Having experience working in a dental environment, I was fortunate enough to avoid some initial nerves other new graduates experience.

My mentor, Jill Rogers, recognised my interest in pursuing more complex cases and allowed me flexibility with my time, which included shadowing cosmetic dentists such as Neil Gerrard in Bristol.

This exposure to high-quality cosmetic dentistry, mainly through my involvement with the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD), broadened my vision of what was possible in dentistry.

These early experiences and my first post-VT role in Cheltenham gave me a strong foundation. I focused on building a loyal patient base, stabilising patients' dental health early on through NHS treatment, and eventually transitioning them to private options when necessary.

During this time, I completed the Chris Orr course with Advanced Dental Seminars, which deepened my interest in restorative and aesthetic dentistry.

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THE TURNING POINT

In 2013, even before completing several advanced courses, including restorative work with the Spear Institute in Arizona, I wasn't ready to take the next step in my career yet, but it came nonetheless.

Black Swan Dental Spa in Somerset offered that opportunity – but it wasn't without its challenges. The practice was failing financially, and the owner, Steve Davis, was struggling after a severe horse-riding accident, which left him unable to practise. With the bank pressuring him to sell, he offered me the opportunity to take over.

It was a daunting decision. At 27, I didn't have the financial resources to buy a practice outright, nor the business experience to run one, but I saw potential in Black Swan. The patient base was loyal, and there was a lack of competition in the area.

With my accountant's guidance and family's support, I agreed to take on the project, fully aware that it would be a long-term commitment.

REBUILDING AND EXPANDING

Taking over the practice involved a steep learning curve. One of the first steps was to rebrand and refurbish the clinic.

The practice had a gothic, uninviting feel, and many patients thought it was part of the neighbouring tattoo

The ethos

Black Swan Dental Spa is dedicated to redefining dental care by offering a luxurious and calming experience unlike any other. The state-of-the-art dental spa combines an exceptionally high standard of care with a tranquil, spa-inspired environment.

At Black Swan Dental Spa, wellness meets dentistry where patients enjoy complimentary pampering treats and unparalleled attention to detail in a setting that feels like a retreat.

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parlour. We rebranded it with a softer, more luxurious feel, incorporating a swan into the logo and changing the interior to be more welcoming.

The refurbishment was done in stages due to financial constraints. Still, we focused on what was essential: a new reception area, updated surgeries, and reconfiguring office spaces to maximise clinical efficiency.

Managing cash flow was one of the key challenges we faced during this time. As a new practice owner, balancing the finances for daily operations while investing in renovations was difficult.

We had to stagger some of the purchases, such as the latest equipment and a website redesign, for a couple of years.

BRINGING IN EXPERTS AND SPECIALISTS

I quickly realised that I didn't need to be a master of every dental discipline. Instead, I could build a team of specialists to provide the highest level of care.

We brought in a root canal specialist and an implant surgeon early on, which allowed us to handle more complex cases in-house rather than referring patients elsewhere. This decision was vital to growing the practice's reputation and revenue.

At the same time, I continued my own education, particularly in orthodontics and implants. I trained with Ross

Hobson and the IAS Academy and completed the All-on-4 implant course at the Malo Clinic in Portugal.

I was also personally mentored by implant experts Zaki Kanan, Nik Sisodia and Martin Wanendeya, who further inspired my skills. These experiences equipped me to take on more advanced cases, further broadening the scope of services we could offer at Black Swan.

Expanding the practice also meant growing the team. When I took over, there were just seven staff members. Now, we have grown to a team of nearly 40, including additional dentists, hygienists, and support staff.

Managing this growth came with challenges, particularly around HR and staff management, which required me to step up as a leader and ensure everyone shared the same vision for the practice.

THE PANDEMIC AND THE FUTURE

COVID-19 was huge for us. It caused us to rethink and ultimately plan the future more quickly. We had already reached the stage of maximising the existing building and needed to consider moving into a new site. The costs would be astronomical to move an entire practice into new premises, but it was time to take that challenge on.

As a result of the recent downturn and COVID-19, a local Co-op shop building had permanently closed right in front of the Waitrose entrance at the heart of Crewkerne overlooking the main car park. Prior to COVID-19, the rent was well out of our budget, but with all other negotiating companies disappearing during COVID's lockdowns, the climate had changed, and our negotiating strength grew.

A deal was struck, and one of the most impressive dental projects undertaken in the UK was confirmed. It took 18 months to redesign, plan and build before we moved into our new five-surgery site with training facilities all built from scratch.

The remit given to the designers was for a five-star Dubai hotel experience and feel, which they achieved to perfection.

The team

SMILE DESIGNER COSMETIC DENTIST

Ahmad Nounu

TRADITIONAL AND IMPLANT DENTIST

Steve Conteh

TRADITIONAL AND COSMETIC DENTISTS

Tochukwu Udeh and Dooha Elbouni

DENTIST AND FACIAL REJUVENATION PRACTITIONER

Maisie Harper

DENTIST

Jayesh Nagpal

SPECIALIST PERIODONTIST

Dominic Sinson

SPECIAL INTEREST IN ENDODONTICS

Anthony Ihimekpen and Andy Bartley

SPECIALIST ENDODONTIST

Mohammed El-Neklway

CLINICAL DENTAL TECHNICIAN

Steve Smith

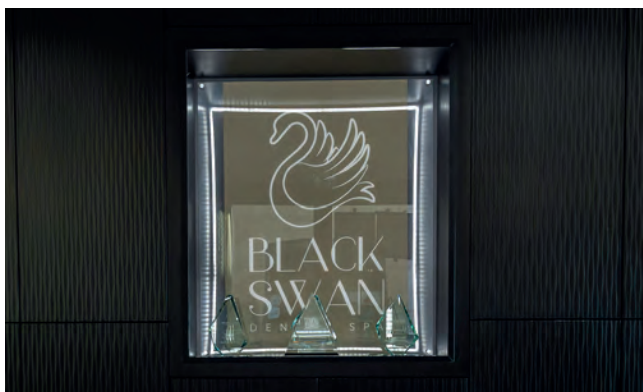
DENTAL IMPLANT SURGEON

Richard Brookshaw

HYGIENISTS

Naomi Finnegan, Donna Hicks, Tracy Edwards, Leah Liennard and Claire Handscomb





I never truly understood what the ‘wow’ factor meant until now because everyone who walks into the premises gives a genuine stunned expression, and that means everything to us. We have proved that you do not need to be on London’s Harley Street to provide that experience, and you can achieve whatever your dreams are and wherever you are in the UK.

Marketing played a crucial role in attracting new patients. We moved away from traditional leaflet drops and focused on relationship-building with the local community.

Given our affluent location near Waitrose, we targeted high-end local businesses, golf clubs, gyms, and other community hubs aligned with our patient demographic. This approach helped us establish Black Swan as a practice that offers high-quality, patient-centred care.

LOOKING FORWARD

Black Swan Dental Spa has grown significantly, and we are exploring further expansion. The practice now runs five surgeries at full capacity with nearly a six-month waiting list, and we are considering adding another three.

The practice’s reputation continues to grow, and we have attracted international patients who appreciate the high level of care and the personal touch we bring to dentistry.

Reflecting on the journey, I wouldn’t change much about how we approached the project. While it was a huge learning curve, personally and professionally, the experience has been invaluable.

I advise anyone considering a similar path to take the leap but be prepared for the long haul. Plan meticulously, manage cash flow carefully, and surround yourself with a strong team of specialists who share your vision.

We are committed to delivering dentistry of the highest standard at Black Swan. Our ethos revolves around patient-centred care, and we offer a wide range of treatments, from cosmetic work to advanced restorative cases, all in a welcoming and luxurious environment.

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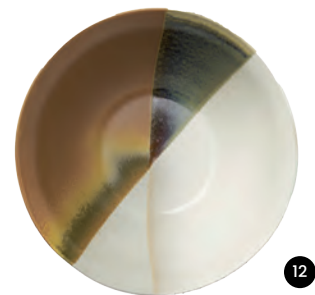
2 Secluded Orange Emulsion
Yescolours, £28

3 The Alton Pendant Light
Fritz Fryer, £2,250

4 Frame Accent Chair
M&S, £149

5 Ingo Coffee Table - Cream
Habitat, £130

6 Rust Scalloped Wall Storage Shelf - 61cm
Melody Maison, £29.95



7 Brown 02 Eggshell Emulsion
Lick, £45

8 Zahara Vase, Brown Stone Effect
with Spike Detail
Where Saints Go, £59

9 Check Sideboard
John Lewis & Partners, £1,079

10 Brown Patchwork Check Cube
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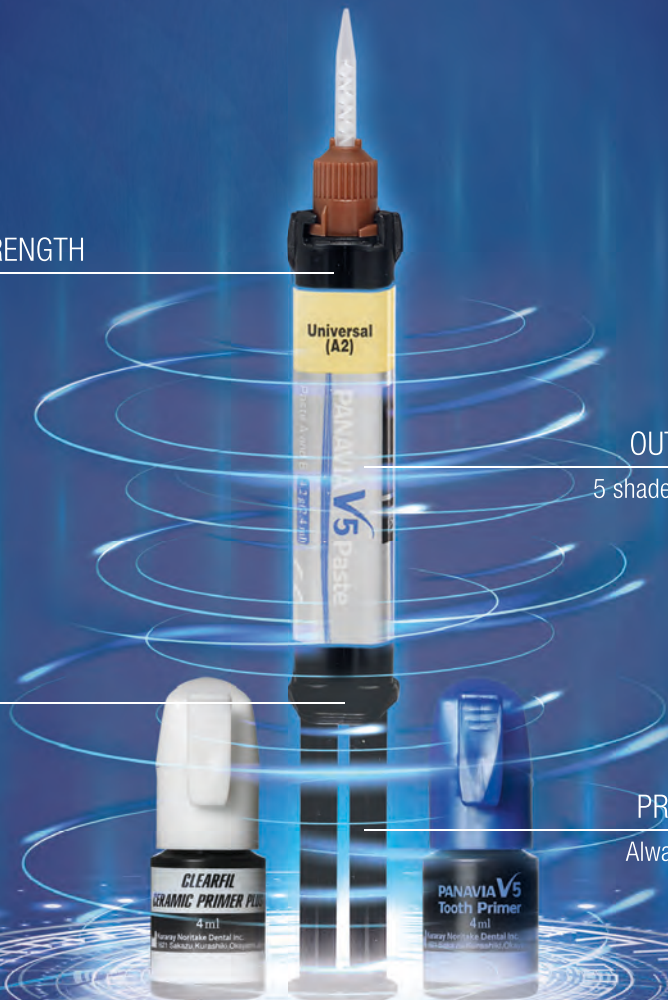
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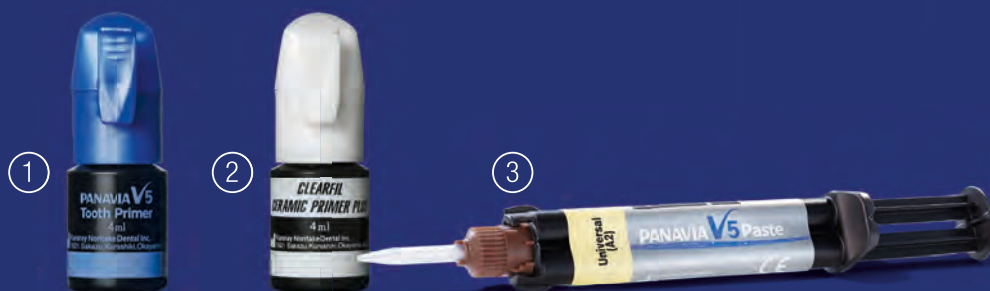
Business Development Manager
Mobile: +44 (0)7818 457 568
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Making *profits* work for you

Could your dental practice profits be working harder for you? **Stephen Barry** highlights opportunities practice owners may have for putting their profits to work

While running a successful dental practice requires hard work and much effort, it can also be incredibly rewarding and lucrative.

As a dental specialist financial adviser, I often come across practice owners operating limited companies who have accumulated surplus profits that are simply left sitting in their business bank account. These profits could potentially be put to work.

Surplus profit is the additional cash that a limited company retains after paying for the day-to-day running, the directors' salaries, and any liabilities as they fall due. In the first instance, it is important to understand how much of the company's cash holdings are required as working capital, and how much is excess.

A specialist tax accountant can help a practice owner to determine how much surplus cash is available to declare as dividends or invest.

WORKING HARDER

Depending on the circumstances of the practice, investing may offer the potential for any surplus cash left sitting in a business bank account, to work harder – offering a chance to maximise your business and to combat the effects of inflation.

Leaving surplus cash in a business bank account means that its purchasing power will

effectively be eroded over time by the effects of inflation – this is especially true during recent times of high inflation where interest rates fail to keep pace.

To offer a simple, yet illustrative example using the Bank of England inflation calculator, goods and services costing £1,000 in 2019, would cost £1,257.22 in December 2024.

Investing may offer the potential for higher returns on your money than one would generally receive from the interest accrued in a business bank account. This would give your surplus cash a chance to grow and potentially generate more revenue, which could either be reinvested back into the business, or taken out as income or lump sums in the future – while lessening the impact of inflation.

Consideration could also be given to investing some of the excess profits into a director's pension, which would reduce the taxable profits and any corporation tax payable.

INFLATION RISK

Of course, it is true that investments come with risk, however, deciding to do nothing can expose your hard-earned profits to 'inflation risk'. This means that the real value of your money decreases

when inflation exceeds the interest rate the money attracts over the long term. Investments typically depend on a number of factors. It is important to consider the level of returns you are looking for, how much you would like to be involved, and how long you are happy to invest for.

When thinking about any type of investment, it is a good idea to seek professional support. A dental specialist tax accountant can help you to maximise the tax efficiency of any investment and a dental specialist financial adviser – someone who understands dentistry and practice ownership but is also an expert in financial guidance – can assess your individual circumstances including your attitude towards risk and offer bespoke guidance.

They will determine if investment is appropriate and explain what the options are as well as any advantages or disadvantages, to put you in an informed position and ensure that your profits are working as hard as possible.

Just remember that the value of your investments can go down as well as up, and you may get back less than you put in.

For a financial review, visit wesleyan.co.uk/dental or call 0808 149 9416 (charges may apply. You will not be charged until the services required and the associated costs have been agreed).



Stephen Barry

Stephen is a dental specialist financial adviser at Wesleyan Financial Services.



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Patient finance – benefitting from the human touch

Simon Thackeray details the benefits of joining patient finance provider **Medenta**

When Medenta customer dentist Simon Thackeray bought his practice in Mansfield in 1997, it was a single-handed NHS practice. Within two years he had added two surgeries, despite the difficult economic conditions being faced by the town.

However, as news of the proposed 'new' NHS contract spread he was concerned its terms would restrict the types of treatments he would be able to offer. His decision in 2005 to offer solely private dentistry for adults was, according to him, one of the best decisions he's ever made, although he admits it was scary at the time.

That 'scary decision' later allowed him to buy the building next door and knock through to grow the practice to five surgeries. He now has five dentists and two hygienist/therapists working there providing what he calls 'bread and butter dentistry'.

Simon's philosophy is that private dentistry doesn't have to be expensive dentistry, 'it just needs to be good quality dentistry delivered independent of a third party (the NHS)'. Being independent of the NHS allows dentists to provide a wider range of dental treatments, including cosmetic dentistry.

HELPFUL TO PATIENTS

Mansfield is a former mining town and considered to be mainly working class. With a single implant costing £1,600 and Invisalign Lite starting at £3,000, being able to offer patient finance is important for Simon's practice. Patient finance brings treatments within the reach of some who would not otherwise be able to afford them. As Simon says: 'I'm not particularly driven by money but if

money is an obstacle to some people having the treatment that they want, and it's legitimate and ethical to offer finance, having a system that allows them to budget for it and access it is helpful to the business. If a patient can responsibly say, "I can afford this", then having a system that is simple, ethical and competitively priced does help them a lot. It also helps our bottom line.'

Since joining Medenta's list of customers, as well as the simplicity of the system, Simon has been grateful to the Head Office team for the help he has received. 'The support from the Medenta team has been great,' he says. 'When you start offering finance, there are things like the FCA regulations that you must go through. While dentists usually tend to be quite clever people, sometimes when you start to go through some of these websites about compliance on the financial side, you realise you're not as clever as you thought you were!' he admits. 'Understanding what's required can be really difficult sometimes. So, the help we received from Medenta when we first started was fantastic. Also, when there were changes to regulations, we were kept up to date with them and reminded that we might need to do certain things and keep our eye on others.'

RELIEVING THE BURDEN

Being able to speak to a member of the Medenta team has also made a difference to smoothing the process of offering finance to their patients and relieving the practice's administrative burden. 'Although it's still our responsibility to ensure we're compliant, it helps that we can pick the phone up and say, "what's this that's just landed. I don't know how to fill this

in". That's important because a dental practice is a building largely surrounded by bureaucracy. So, the more frequently you can get somebody to help you comply with all this bureaucracy, the better. And I found that Medenta were very good at doing that.'

With Medenta a well-established feature of the practice, Simon has been able to adopt a 'hands-off' approach. He rarely, if ever, gets asked to deal with a Medenta query, which is fine with him! 'Most of the time it's the team that are using it, because they'll be talking to the patients about the finance options that are available,' he says. 'So, they're the ones filling in the applications. On a busy reception, you want something that is simple, straightforward, and time efficient, which the portal always seems to be. I never hear them complaining "this hasn't gone through, that's not happened". It does seem to be quite seamless. It's then processed very quickly. So, the fact that I'm not aware of any problems is what it should be like.'

'As a boss, you only get to find out when something's gone horribly wrong and usually you are the one picking up the pieces. The fact that I'm not suggests to me that it's a very slick system because my staff would be reporting back saying, 'we don't want to do this anymore, we want to use somebody else' if it weren't.'

Would he recommend Medenta as a patient finance provider? 'Absolutely,' he says. 'The rates are good, the portal is easy to use and being able to pick up the phone and ask for help, rather than having to go online to find the answer to a query is a real bonus.'

For more details, call 01691 684175 or visit www.medenta.com.

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Leveraging the power of SOCIAL MEDIA

Emma Flunt speaks to Gemma Starkey about maximising your practice's social media – and why it's a team effort that can garner the best results

Whether you view social media as a blessing or a curse, it's hard to avoid it. From local village groups to multinational companies, everyone has a presence. So, what's the best way to get the most out of it? With a little help from my friends and followers, I'd like to offer some practical suggestions.

A large part of my role involves me visiting practices to help them to run their business better. Which means I see many different attitudes towards social media. Believe it or not, there are still some practices out there who have yet to grasp the power of a good social media strategy. Which is why I feel it's important to offer some advice on how to get started.

At Practice Plan, we're lucky enough to work with some of the dental industry's leading consultants, one of whom is Gemma Starkey, aka Miss Social (www.missocial.co.uk). Former dental nurse Gemma got the bug for marketing in the early days of social media and has since helped many practices up their social media game.

WHO TO CHOOSE?

First and foremost, how do you decide who should be responsible for your social media accounts?

'A mistake often made by practices in the past is to assign that role to the

youngest person on the team in the belief that as they'll use social media in their personal life, they'll be able to handle it for the business,' Gemma says. 'That's not usually the best tactic. It's better to train a person who has a flair for it and make sure their training covers business and marketing principles, as well as social media.'

Good advice. It's also important to make sure that your vision and branding are clear and understood. Is your focus on cosmetic dentistry or do you aim to be the local village dentist, a family dentist? How would you like to be perceived? Are you advanced or helpful? These are important questions to be answered so you can be authentic with your posts.

It's important not to misrepresent online what your practice personality is, as it will be revealed in your reviews. So, it's not appropriate to say that you're a high-end cosmetic practice when really your focus is being a family practice offering predominantly general dentistry.

It's important to bear in mind that, although there may be a single individual who oversees your social media, it should, as Gemma says, be a whole team effort to come up with the content. 'It should see multiple people coming up with ideas, so everyone's a part of it,' she advises. 'You can try different ideas and give responsibility for them to a few different team members. But the burden shouldn't fall on just one person's shoulders.'

Indeed, the most successful practice social media sites I see are ones where everyone pitches in.



About Gemma

Gemma Starkey, aka Miss Social, was a dental nurse who took a detour from the usual progression route of a dental nurse into the business side of dentistry. She loved dental marketing and had a flair for social media.

Over a decade later, she has refined her skills in social media marketing, helping dentists and their teams to shine on social media. She creates bespoke social media posts that authentically reflect the dental clinics she works with, and which enhance their online reputation.

As an ex-dental nurse, she understands the pressures the whole team are under. Her goal with Miss Social is not to add to a team's to-do list but to be an extra team member that takes care of it and does a great job.

For more details, visit www.missocial.co.uk or follow Gemma on Instagram @missocialuk.



Emma Flunt

Emma is a regional support manager for Practice Plan Group and has over 20 years' experience in dentistry working in general and specialist referral practices, and training environments where she won multiple awards.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

When developing a social media strategy Gemma advises her clients to think about who they want to reach with their posts. 'Facebook is still the most widely used platform in the world,' she says. 'People can view your posts from anywhere across the globe. However, your patients are likely to be people who live or work near where you're located. They're the people you want to attract.'

'To narrow down your audience as well as posting on your practice's account, you may want to think about joining Facebook groups local to where your practice is based, if they'll let you. So, if you're located in a village or a small town, then the sorts of groups to look out for are the "spotted in" pages.'

To keep people interested Gemma suggests posts should be a mix of informative, educational, topical and fun. 'A good post would be branded to the practice, and it would have relatability,' she advises. 'It's also important for it to have a good hook. Nobody wants to go onto Facebook either to be sold to or to be preached at about needing to brush their teeth twice a day.'

But what does a 'good' post look like? 'A good post for Facebook would have a personal look to it. Using either a photo or a video of yourself as a dentist, it would be short and concise, and it would have a conversational, rather than "preachy" tone.'

THE RIGHT MIX

However, Gemma warns against just chasing likes and shares. 'Remember you are a dental practice,' she says. 'So, while fun posts may get a lot of engagement, it's still important to post your before and after photos and your oral health and education tips. Prospective patients still need to see examples of the types of treatments you offer. So, while these types of posts may not get the most likes, they're still an important part of the mix.'

One way to ensure you have a good mix of posts is to develop a



content calendar. This can be physical or digital and helps you to plan your content in advance. It can be populated with notable dates such as mouth cancer awareness month, dental nurses' day, Easter, Halloween, Christmas, Diwali etc.

You could also go online and find a list of awareness days or add in any dates that are significant to you as a practice. This allows you to have a clear view of what's coming up.

Content doesn't have to be filmed on the day as you can prepare for things in advance. Gemma suggests putting aside some time every month to film your videos. As producing content is a team effort, why not devote some time in a team meeting to come up with ideas?

That way everyone gets a chance to contribute and share some of the load.

IT'S YOUR SHOP WINDOW

Social media isn't just good for attracting patients, it's also a way of showcasing your practice's culture and personality to prospective employees. Which is why authenticity is important. People love to see behind-the-scenes content, so it's good to include the odd post when someone in the team's marking a milestone in their life such as a big birthday, getting married, or having a baby. It's also great to celebrate

passing exams and qualifications too. All this helps to foster a sense of community on your socials.

Here's a final piece of advice from Gemma to help make your 'social life' a bit easier. 'Experiment with your posts so you can get an idea of what works and what your goals are.'



You can then create a format that you can put out on social media,' she suggests.

'After all, social media can involve a lot of effort, so, find a format that works, such as taking a question a patient has asked and videoing the answer to it. If you can find a fun or niche way to do that, then that is something you can rinse and repeat for lots of different problems. This makes life a lot easier, and as you get more experienced, you'll see what works and what doesn't.'

'You can then tweak the performance, and your patients will come back to your account for advice because they know they can trust you. You can then be seen as a trusted source of information, which helps foster good relationships with patients.'

For more information about Practice Plan, a leading provider of practice-branded patient membership plans, call 01691 684165, or visit www.practiceplan.co.uk.





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Squat versus new to you

Faye Mear considers the different marketing approaches for squat practices compared to those that may be ‘new to you’

Whether you are becoming a practice owner through buying an established practice or setting up a squat, having an effective marketing and communication strategy will be key to your success.

Both present different opportunities, as well as challenges, and require differing approaches and strategy, but taking time, thought and effort on how you attract and keep your patients both initially, and in the longer term, is crucial.

This two-part series will explore the initial items, your team, your patients and your community to consider for either option.

YOUR LOCATION

Squat

Gone are the days of dental practices being tucked away in a backstreet or upstairs above another business. To give your practice the best chance of success, and to give yourself a leg-up in the marketing stakes while you are developing the premises, it needs to be visible and have substantial passing footfall.



Faye Mear

Faye is client liaison at Corona Marketing, a specialist dental marketing agency. She is passionate about supporting individuals and businesses to be the very best that they can be.

With the increase in popularity of elective cosmetic treatments, practices now need an enticing ‘shopfront’ to attract passers-by.

You also need to think about the future; how will returning patients access you and why will they keep doing so? A leading comment in patient surveys is often ‘ease of parking’ – it still matters! Is there a car park with the premises or is parking available nearby?

Secondly, how are the public transport links? Both are important if you want to attract patients from further afield, and it’s particularly important if you are planning to specialise in particular treatments and want to welcome referrals.

Don’t be afraid to think outside the box on locations either – check out existing shopping malls or new retail developments that may be out of town but are on good arterial roads.

New to you

You have an advantage in that the location is already tried and tested, and existing patients know where you are, but location and accessibility are still important considerations, as you grow and develop the practice.

This location will be your professional home for a while so research planned changes for the area. New housing developments, additional or expanding

schools etc are things that will have a positive impact from a business point of view.

YOUR BRAND

Squat

Along with being visible, your practice needs to be noticeable!

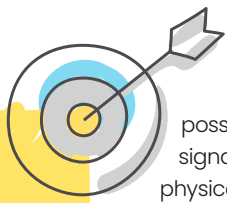
Starting fresh is an incredibly exciting personal opportunity, but your brand and ethos need to resonate with and attract patients. Profiling your perfect patient is an excellent exercise for honing your aspirations, but don’t forget the community you are launching in and consider what will appeal to them as they are likely to be your very first patients.

The look and feel of your brand needs to appeal to you, but it’s essential that it attracts clientele through your door.

Your brand, such as your logo and your look, need to be consciously planned far in advance of colours being painted on your practice walls. Your brand should project how you want to make your future patients feel and is crucial if people can’t yet physically see inside your premises or meet you and your team face-to-face.

Your logo design, your colour palette, your snappy tagline and your overall vision and practice ethos all need to convey that feeling.

To build interest, your brand identity needs to be deployed as soon as



FIVE TOP TIPS

1. Choose a location strategically

- » Squat practice: select a highly visible location with substantial footfall, easy parking, and strong public transport links. Consider out-of-town retail developments or shopping malls that offer accessibility and visibility
- » New to you practice: leverage the tried-and-tested location but evaluate future developments in the area to position yourself for growth.

2. Build a distinctive brand identity

- » Squat practice: create a compelling brand from scratch. Use a professional logo, attractive signage, and consistent branding across your website and social media to attract attention even before opening. Take your community along on your journey through engaging content and stories
- » New to you practice: modernise and evolve the existing brand subtly, aligning it with your vision while maintaining familiarity for existing patients. Focus on improving digital assets like the website and social media profiles.

3. Tailor marketing efforts to your audience

- » Squat practice: start a patient waiting list and promote your services aggressively through paid ads, flyers, social media, and local press. Build awareness with free content and engaging stories that connect with the community
- » New to you practice: use the inherited patient database to maintain loyalty while encouraging referrals. Focus on personalised promotions that align with what has worked in the past.

4. Be budget-savvy and data-driven

- » Squat practice: allocate a significant budget to branding, advertising, and patient acquisition. Track marketing campaigns rigorously and optimise them for ROI. Use cost-effective PR strategies by collaborating with local media and encouraging patients to promote you on their own social platforms
- » New to you practice: lower marketing costs by leveraging the goodwill of the existing patient base and capitalising on past successful promotions.

5. Communicate transparently and engage with the community

- » Squat practice: use bold campaigns, open houses, and community engagement to build trust and excitement. Showcase your team's personality and ethos through authentic social media content
- » New to you practice: focus on clear communication with inherited patients to ensure a smooth transition. Use the practice's established reputation as a foundation for your messaging while making gradual improvements that align with your vision.

possible, so get your external signage up to advertise your physical presence and back it up online with a full website as well as social media accounts on all the popular platforms.

Open a patient waiting list and invite people to join it now using every possible channel – a big poster in the window, flyers, local media and online via Meta and Google. Paid for advertising is great but create organic opportunities too via your socials and keep your 'offline' audience in the loop by sending newsworthy editorial to the local press.

Developing and launching a brand new practice is a great story to share with your followers and the local community – take them on the journey with you to build rapport and get your messages out there ahead of opening day.

New to you

If launching a squat is a creation; taking over an existing practice is an evolution.

Inheriting an established brand gives you a head start, but it may not align with your taste or vision – it may well need modernising, too.

Think about your vision and end-goal of how you want the practice to be, and then work back to what you are taking over. Devise a strategy and make a plan, starting with soft and simple changes that won't alarm existing patients but will start to introduce you.

You're inheriting the reputation of the practice as well and you need to prize that along with the associated goodwill. Whereas a squat can launch with surprise, pizzazz and fanfare, taking over an existing business needs clear and open communication at every step of the transition to maintain that good feeling. This creates a strong marketing narrative that can be shared in every way possible.

In this situation, less physical aspects of the brand can be prioritised, so get your website ready to go and ensure you have logins and access to all the business associated social media platforms, including the Google listing!

YOUR BUDGET

Squat

Along with the significant investment in your new premises, new equipment and tech, fully expect and embrace allocating a significant budget to

branding, advertising and patient acquisition.

Investment in your marketing when you're starting from scratch is as essential as your dental chair or scanner, but target and spend wisely. Track the performance of all marketing endeavours, monitor their effectiveness and their ROI. Don't be afraid to try lots of different methods and tweak or discard ones that aren't working.

Harness the power of PR to get as much free coverage about the practice as possible by cultivating relationships with local media and sharing your milestones with them as news.

Use your social media platforms to share authentic content from your team and your patients. It's so easy to take photos and record short videos on mobiles – encourage your team to regularly generate new and interesting content for your pages.

Encourage your patients to create content about you too via their own socials and tagging you in. If they like your practice, you can guarantee their friends will too!

New to you

Buying an existing practice means marketing costs will be lower than launching a squat. Prioritise utilising the existing patient database to encourage retention and promote all the treatments and services you provide.

Encourage personal referrals from everyone who attends so you can keep growing your patient base.

Pick the brains of the previous owner and your inherited team about what promotions have worked in the past and what has been of interest to the existing patient base to give you an initial steer.

PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Whichever way you choose to become a practice owner, effective marketing and communication is essential for business success. Don't underestimate the time, thought, effort and cost this will involve, how it permeates almost every aspect of your practice and the fact that it will be an ongoing and movable feast.

Taking time at the outset to consider all angles, and to develop a realistic and clear plan will set you in good stead.

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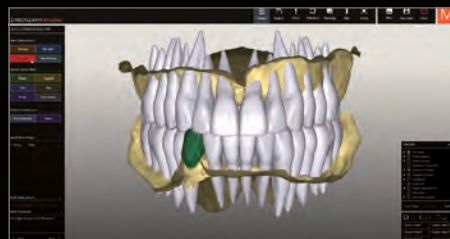


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The new patient pipeline

Nivert Tamraz reveals how to master the art of attraction and retention

Attracting and retaining patients is the cornerstone of a thriving dental practice. As such, the Olive Tree Dental philosophy is rooted in creating a seamless and memorable journey for every patient, from their initial interaction with us to the ongoing care and support we provide.

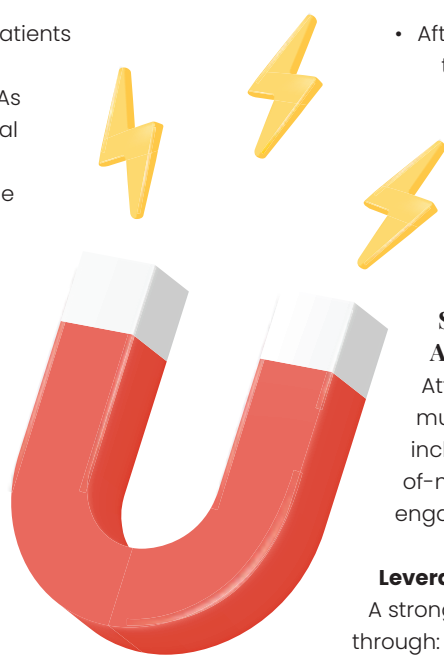
In this article, I want to explore how we've mastered the art of building a robust patient pipeline that not only attracts but also retains loyal patients.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW PATIENT JOURNEY

The first step in mastering the patient pipeline is understanding the journey from a patient's perspective.

At Olive Tree Dental, we focus on:

- Building trust: our welcoming environment and transparent communication set the tone for trust from the very first contact
- Comprehensive assessments: we ensure that each new patient receives a thorough initial assessment, designed to uncover their needs and craft a personalised treatment plan
- Exceptional first impressions: from our state-of-the-art facilities to our friendly team, every detail is curated to make patients feel valued and cared for
- Consent: actively listening to patient needs, ensuring they are in full agreement with the recommended treatment plan. We provide clear information on all available treatment options, empowering patients to make informed decisions
- Treatment delivery: our skilled team ensures treatments are carried out with precision and care



- Aftercare: follow-up post-treatment to ensure the healing process has been completed and patients have no ongoing concerns that need to be addressed
- Follow-up and maintenance: regular check-ups and personalised oral health plans help patients maintain their results and overall dental health.

STRATEGIES FOR PATIENT ATTRACTION

Attracting new patients requires a multifaceted approach. Some of key strategies include leveraging digital presence, word-of-mouth and referrals as well as community engagement.

Leveraging digital presence

A strong online presence can be maintained through:

- A user-friendly website optimised for search engines, ensuring prospective patients can easily find the practice
- Informative blog posts and treatment pages that showcase your expertise and provide value
- Engaging social media campaigns. At Olive Tree Dental, we highlight patient results, 'role in focus' posts to familiarise patients with our team, success stories and reviews, educational content, and the warm practice atmosphere.

Word-of-mouth and referrals

Satisfied patients make the best ambassadors. We actively encourage:

- Patient referrals by offering incentives and expressing gratitude
- Positive reviews on platforms like Google, which enhance credibility.

Community engagement

Olive Tree Dental is proud to be part of the local community. The team regularly participates in events, hosts oral health seminars, and collaborates with local organisations to increase visibility and build relationships.



Nivert Tamraz

Nivert is senior practice manager and head of marketing at Olive Tree Dental.

The retention blueprint

Attracting new patients is just the beginning; retention is where long-term success lies. Ensuring patients stay comes down to consistent and quality care, an exceptional patient experience, proactive follow-ups and patient education.

Consistent and quality care

Every visit to Olive Tree Dental reaffirms our commitment to excellence. We prioritise:

- Tailored treatment plans that evolve with each patient's needs
- Clear communication about treatment options, costs and follow-up care.

Exceptional patient experience

Beyond clinical care, it's important to offer:

- A warm and professional team dedicated to ensuring every interaction is a positive experience
- A judgment-free environment where patients feel welcome and supported, regardless of their current oral health status
- Thoughtful amenities that enhance the visit, including refreshments, snacks or music for those who suffer from dental phobia.

Proactive follow-ups

An effective patient management system ensures:

- Timely reminders for check-ups and treatments
- Regular follow-ups to monitor progress and address concerns.

Patient education

At Olive Tree Dental, we believe in empowering patients with the knowledge they need to take control of their oral health. Through personalised consultations, informative materials and digital resources, guidance is provided every step of the way.

Our website features a dedicated patient resource page with valuable content, including advice for those exploring dental care abroad, and tips for parents. The aim is to ensure that every website visitor gains insightful information and feels confident in choosing us for their care.

MEASURING SUCCESS

It's vital to continually evaluate the effectiveness of your patient pipeline by:

- Monitoring patient feedback to identify areas of improvement
- Analysing retention rates and patient satisfaction scores
- Adapting strategies to stay ahead of industry trends and patient expectations.

CONCLUSION

At Olive Tree Dental, mastering the art of attraction and retention isn't just about filling appointments; it's about building lasting relationships. Our approach ensures that every patient feels heard, valued, and cared for, fostering loyalty and trust.

By continuously refining our strategies and staying attuned to our patients' needs, we've created a practice where exceptional care meets an outstanding experience.



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Building *relationships*

Mervyn Druian delves into how passion-centred practices can build solid relationships

In private dentistry, relationship building is crucial for success. It involves establishing and nurturing connections with patients, colleagues and other organisations. Remember, patients don't care how much you know, rather how much you care.

Building strong relationships helps foster trust, collaboration and loyalty, which can lead to long-term partnerships and personal business growth.

Building relationships takes time and effort, but the benefits are invaluable in creating a supportive and thriving personal and business environment.

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

Another pointer to remember is it's not who you know, it's who knows you.

Surround yourself with like-minded people – people who can educate you, people who can support you, people that want to grow with you.

Talk to as many people as you can,

wherever you can. You can learn a lot from everyone and there is always someone who will know more than you.

Expand your network by attending industry events, joining professional organisations and connecting with like-minded individuals. Building a diverse network can lead to valuable opportunities and collaborations.

Remember:

- Be honest, reliable and transparent in all your interactions
- Be proactive in following up and delivering your commitments. Consistency and reliability go a long way in building trust and maintaining relationships
- Say thank you often.

Passion is worth billions. It attracts patients, and even more clearly, it helps keep those patients for life.

In my experience, to win devoted patients, you have to sacrifice, add knowledge and add value.

Dr Omer K Reed once said: 'The more you give, the more you get back, and the more you teach, the more you learn'.

When it comes to adding value, look for ways to provide value beyond your treatments and services. Share your knowledge, offer support and be a resource to others. Building a reputation as a helpful and valuable resource strengthens relationships.

NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

Be clear in your communication with patients coming in for care. Speak your patient's language.

To build strong relationships it's key to personalise interactions. Take the time to understand the needs and preferences of your patient. Then you'll

be able to tailor your approach and provide personalised solutions to hold strong connections.

Your relationship with your patients can be deepened with:

- The assurance of continuing professional education of the entire dental team
- Ensuring the practice is pleasant and uplifting
- Tip top cleanliness and infection control of the practice
- Care that provides relief from pain and fear
- Managing the practice so appointments run on time
- Procedures of lasting quality.

If your self-belief is not strong enough to evoke and emote your passion, then others will not catch it, nor be convinced or persuaded that your idea, product or way is best for them.

Someone will decide if they like you or not within the first few minutes that you talk to them. The more you talk about and ask about them, the more they will like you.

Your friendliness, combined with your passion and the conviction of your self-belief, will allow your presentation to be positively received.

What happens to you is not as important as to how you react to what happens to you.

Finally, another quote from Dr Reed: 'Do the right thing, at the right time, in the right place, with the right people, for the right reasons'.

Relationship building: effective strategies

- Active mindful listening
- Clear communication
- Delivering on promises
- Going the extra mile to meet the needs and expectations of others.



Mervyn Druian

Mervyn is a cosmetic dentist, one of the founders of the British Dental Bleaching Society and the honoured international president of the Alpha Omega Dental Society. He is co-author of *Dream Believe Achieve*, a book on how to grow, progress and succeed in dentistry (dreambelieveschievesuccess.com).

Mervyn will be speaking at the North of England Dentistry Show on 8 March in Manchester. For more details, visit dentistry.co.uk/north-of-england-dentistry-show.

Shaping our future

The **PortmanDentex** Leadership Conference provided a platform for empowering clinicians and colleagues to take themselves and their practices to the next level

On 3 December 2024, over 500 clinicians and colleagues from across the PortmanDentex network gathered at the Hilton Metropole in Birmingham for the *Shaping Our Future* Leadership Conference. The day was a celebration of progress, values, and the unwavering commitment to care for people, clinical excellence and business growth.

From inspiring keynote addresses from leaders within the PortmanDentex group and guest speakers, including Baroness Sue Campbell, to interactive clinical development sessions, the event underscored how the business's values – rooted in celebrating individuality, growing together and aiming higher – continue to fuel its expansion while keeping its people and patients at the heart of everything it does.

A SHARED VISION: ONE TEAM, ONE PURPOSE

The conference opened with an address from Sam Waley-Cohen, group CEO and founder of PortmanDentex. He reflected on the merger that created PortmanDentex as a single unified organisation – a milestone that solidified the company's shared purpose of enabling better health and happiness across lifetimes.

Despite the challenges that come naturally with process of merging two businesses, Sam shared how the business successfully grew by 9% last year. This has allowed PortmanDentex to reinvest in its people through training and growth opportunities for colleagues and clinicians, pay rises and bonuses for colleagues, as well as further investments in clinical excellence and patient care. For Sam, the message was clear: 'The goal is to lead change, aim higher, and be the best dental group in the world.'



EMPOWERMENT: LEADING FROM WITHIN

A highlight of the conference was the address by Rebecca Sadler, newly appointed chief clinical officer and practising dentist. Rebecca's practice was the very first to be acquired by Portman Dental Care, 16 years ago. Her practice's growth from a single location to a thriving 14-surgery business is a powerful testament to the company's commitment to clinical excellence.

Louise Oates, the newly appointed chief operating officer, shared her inspiring career journey, having started as a dental nurse and rising to one of the highest leadership positions in the company. Her story was a powerful reminder of how personal drive and passion, coupled with a culture of support and development such as that within PortmanDentex, allows people to reach their full potential.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Another key message from the conference came from Owen James, managing director UK and Ireland. Owen emphasised the importance of adaptability, highlighting that PortmanDentex's ability to evolve and

support its clinicians and colleagues will be crucial to its continued success.

'It's not about change for change's sake,' Owen stated. 'We need to continue to evolve to counter external factors and capture new opportunities and fulfil the potential that we know we have as a business. The focus will remain on supporting our clinicians and colleagues by investing in new systems and processes, best-in-class technology, our practice estate, and, importantly, our people.'

A PURPOSE-LED FUTURE

It was clear that the *Shaping Our Future* Leadership Conference was not just an event to celebrate past success but also to set the tone for the future.

As the day drew to a close, guests were excited to attend the gala dinner and awards ceremony, an inspiring evening that recognised the incredible talent within the PortmanDentex group. Through the insights shared on the day, and the fantastic atmosphere in the room, it became evident that PortmanDentex is focused on sustainable growth that aligns with its core values of clinical excellence, care for people, and investment in the future.



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PART 1

The business of biofilm

Biofilm is not just a clinical issue; it's a business one. Its effective management can drive better patient outcomes – and practice growth. **Claire-Louise Berry** shares her blueprint for success

The success of a private practice hinges on the quality of each patient journey. A seamless, engaging experience at every stage is vital for growth – and retaining these patients and encouraging referrals are critical. However, I also believe that enhancing our patients' understanding of biofilm and the oral-systemic connection is vital in driving any positive transformation.



Claire-Louise Berry

Claire-Louise is an experienced dental hygienist, qualifying in 2009 while serving in the Army. She passes on her expertise in hygiene department growth by working with practices as a business consultant. She is also a key opinion leader for Oral-B, a Swiss Dental Academy trainer for EMS, co-host for Your Dental Besties podcast, co-founder of Dental Ofcourse and Contemporary Hygienist and international speaker on topics that include systematic and oral health links.

By integrating proactive biofilm management and general health screenings into routine hygiene appointments, practices can enhance outcomes to create long-term patient relationships while ensuring a robust business model.

The benefits are manifold – a healthier patient base well-suited to aesthetic dental treatments equals a more profitable, ethically driven dental business. Adopting this new approach can quickly distinguish a private practice from its competitors.

IGNORE BIOFILM AT YOUR PERIL

Biofilms, composed of pathogenic bacteria, play a central role in dental diseases like caries, gingivitis and periodontitis and contribute to systemic issues, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes

and adverse pregnancy outcomes. Neglecting biofilm control escalates dental issues, turning minor cavities into root canals or gingivitis into periodontitis, requiring costly interventions.

If biofilm control is suboptimal, we should schedule frequent recall appointments to restore the patient's health rather than adhering to three- or six-month intervals. Failing to prioritise healthy endpoints means we risk perpetuating disease. While patients do play a role in outcomes, we set them up for failure if we expect significant change with infrequent appointments. 'Ethical profitisation' involves successfully treating periodontitis and driving meaningful patient behaviour change. It requires high skill and dedication, which cannot be accomplished within a 20- or

A STREAMLINED HYGIENE EXPERIENCE BOOSTS CONFIDENCE IN THE TEAM, PATIENT VOLUME AND SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES THROUGHOUT THE PRACTICE



30-minute appointment. Practices must realise the vital role of the hygiene department in elevating its overall quality of care. When the value is right, cost becomes irrelevant.

Of course, there is also a loss of trust and reputation. Poor management might risk treatment failures and patient dissatisfaction. Complications arising from suboptimal oral health and poor biofilm control may lead to complaints, further affecting reputation.

Therefore, a streamlined hygiene experience boosts confidence in the team, patient volume and successful outcomes

throughout the practice. Efficient booking and attentive service encourage patients to choose (and recommend) your practice, creating higher revenue from essential and elective treatments.

A UNIFIED APPROACH DRIVES FINANCIAL SUCCESS, ENHANCES PATIENT CARE AND STRENGTHENS TEAM COHESION

CHANGE MINDSET

Changing the mindset and language of the entire dental practice team is essential in supporting this new and profitable model. A unified approach drives financial success, enhances patient care and strengthens team cohesion.

To transition from a reactive to a promotional care model, education and early detection should be prioritised over merely addressing problems. This mindset shift requires changing the language from 'reactive care' to a more preventive and proactive 'oral health optimisation' model.

This patient-centred approach also creates a more personalised experience than what can feel like a transactional interaction. Enhancing communication and collaboration among team members ensures everyone is on the same page.

Staff should be encouraged to recognise their role in delivering care that ensures profitability without compromising care quality. Regular 'practice growth' discussions can help motivate the team.

Promoting continuous improvement also supports staff and encourages them to seek innovative solutions and openly discuss potential enhancements, fostering an adaptable workplace culture. This shift – from selling to educating – empowers patients to make informed decisions about their oral health, further enhancing trust.

DIVERSIFY HYGIENE OFFERINGS

General health screenings are often a significant and frequently overlooked component of dentistry's preventive and oral health optimisation approach.

With an ever-growing understanding of the oral-systemic link, integrating general health screenings into dental care will enhance the overall experience to give patients a more holistic understanding of their health.



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10 ways to make hygiene profitable

1. Emphasise preventive care. Preventive services like biofilm management, patient education and early screenings will foster trust, promote oral health and ensure ongoing patient visits with less invasive, cost-effective treatments
2. Rethink scheduling. Expanding appointment times for quality care and zoning the diary to ensure availability ensures all patients are able to attend for lifelong care. Grow the team as the diaries get full, rather than squeezing appointment times
3. Make hygienists your 'patient hero'. With ample appointment times, hygienists can build trust and loyalty by providing empathetic care. Ensure patients are always assigned to the same hygienist to foster familiarity and improve retention
4. Expand your services. Invest and equip the hygiene department with the tools and training to provide advanced periodontal care. These higher-value services can increase the department's revenue potential. Hygienists can offer additional services such as tooth whitening, desensitisation treatments, health screening and nutritional counselling. These add value while driving incremental revenue for the practice
5. Integrate hygienists into treatment plans. Hygienists can identify and discuss potential issues with patients before the examination, saving valuable time. They can also encourage patients to commit to oral health before, during and after treatment to support long-lasting results
6. Invest in continuing education. Encourage hygienists to pursue ongoing education to provide the best (and latest) periodontal care, enhancing department leadership and ethical profitability. This also allows the hygienist to develop and grow the department, adding their own value to the practice mission
7. Put patients at the heart of hygiene care. Individualised care plans based on specific patient needs emphasise long-term health focus. Hygienists need time to educate patients on risk factors that benefit the practice's bottom line. A welcoming, tailored experience will improve satisfaction
8. Optimisation before restoration. Treat the hygienist as a gatekeeper for treatment. Once oral health is optimised, the hygienist can refer back to other clinicians to advance the patient's treatment plan. This improves outcomes and longevity. It's a win-win: patients are healthier, treatments are performed ethically, outcomes are optimised – and the practice benefits from ethical profitisation
9. Leverage technology. Equip the hygiene department with tools like intraoral cameras to help patients visualise and understand their oral health, improving compliance. Use patient portals for follow-up, reminders, and hygiene tips, keeping patients engaged in oral health
10. Boost patient retention. Enhance word-of-mouth referrals by engaging patients consistently through regular, proactive communication like appointment reminders and helpful health tips, keeping your practice in mind. Strengthen your reputation with exceptional hygiene standards to boost patient retention and encourage referrals, making your practice a trusted choice for new patients.



Regular health screenings, including blood pressure and glucose tests, will identify risk factors and facilitate early intervention.

Patients with chronic conditions, in particular, will benefit from coordinated care between dental and medical providers. Such an integrated approach demonstrates a commitment to patients' health and can attract new patients seeking comprehensive care, opening up new revenue streams.

By acknowledging the oral-systemic connection, dental practices can identify and manage systemic diseases early, prevent potential health complications and deliver more personalised, patient-centred care. This improves outcomes, builds trust and fosters long-term relationships that contribute to a more ethically sustainable practice.

A dental practice will enjoy enhanced revenue stability by aligning patient experiences with business objectives and prioritising lasting relationships over one-time transactions, positioning it for success in patient care and business growth.

Next month: core strategies for successfully marketing this ethical and profitable oral health concept.

Looking to boost your hygiene department? Email Claire-Louise at info@clairerlouiseonline.co.uk.



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The partnership paradigm

Mark Topley discusses a new approach to leading teams in private practice

We all appreciate that there's a great deal that goes into building a successful practice – clinical excellence, patient care, and efficient operations – but none is more critical than the strength of your team.

The old leadership model, where leaders issue orders and teams follow without question, no longer works in today's world. Employment relationships have evolved from transactional to transformational, and private dentistry must adapt to this shift.

By treating your team members as partners rather than subordinates, you can unlock their potential, boost your productivity, and create a practice where everyone thrives – patients included. This is the essence of the partnership paradigm, a leadership mindset that transforms private practices into places where high-calibre professionals want to work, patients feel valued and outcomes improve for everyone.

FROM TRANSACTIONAL TO TRANSFORMATIONAL

The traditional view of employment as a transactional relationship – a simple exchange of work for pay – is outdated. Today's workforce, particularly younger generations, seeks more than a pay cheque. Employees want purpose,

growth, and a sense of belonging. They want to feel that their work matters and that their contributions are valued.

In private dentistry, this shift is especially significant. Practices are no longer just workplaces; the very best ones are communities where people collaborate to deliver exceptional patient care. Recognising this change is essential for attracting and retaining motivated, engaged team members.

Transformational leadership focuses on development, autonomy and shared purpose. It's about moving from 'how can I get the most out of my team?' to 'how can I help my team become their best selves?'

When you invest in your people, they invest in your practice.

Why partnership works

Viewing your team members as partners rather than subordinates changes the dynamic in profound

ways. There are three key benefits of adopting this mindset:

1. Attracting high-calibre people
2. Boosting productivity
3. Enhancing the patient experience.

Attracting high-calibre people

Talented individuals want more than a job; they want a workplace where they can grow, feel valued and make a difference. A partnership mindset shows potential hires that your practice is a place where their skills will be developed and their contributions recognised. This attracts top-tier professionals who are motivated to excel.

Boosting productivity

When team members feel like partners, they take ownership of their roles. They're more likely to go above and beyond because they see their success as tied to the practice's success.



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.

BEST PRACTICE

This sense of shared responsibility creates a motivated, high-performing team that drives better outcomes.

Enhancing the patient experience

A happy, engaged team creates a positive atmosphere that patients can feel.

When team members are empowered and aligned with the practice's purpose, they deliver exceptional care that keeps patients coming back. Happy teams lead to happy patients.

HOW TO BUILD A PARTNERSHIP CULTURE

Shifting to a partnership paradigm requires intentional changes in how you lead. Here are some practical steps to get started.

Focus on development

The best people want to grow, both professionally and personally. Offer training opportunities, mentorship and a clear path for advancement. This not only enhances their skills but also shows that you're invested in their future.

For example, in my Great Boss Bootcamp, we teach leaders to see development as a core part of their role. Whether it's coaching team members through challenges or helping them identify their next career step, growth becomes a shared goal.

Grant autonomy

Micromanagement stifles motivation and creativity. Instead, give team members the autonomy to make decisions within their areas of expertise. This doesn't mean stepping back entirely – it means providing guidance, setting clear expectations and trusting your team to deliver.

One of the principles I emphasise in leadership coaching is 'freedom within a framework'. Set the boundaries, but let your team decide how to achieve the desired outcomes. This approach builds trust and empowers individuals to take ownership of their work.

Create a sense of purpose

Purpose is a powerful motivator. Help your team members see how their

work contributes to the practice's mission and the wellbeing of patients. Share stories of the impact your practice has on patients' lives and celebrate successes as a team.

In private dentistry, purpose can be as simple as reminding team members that they're not just fixing teeth – they're improving lives.

By connecting daily tasks to a bigger vision, you give your team members a reason to care deeply about their work.

Listen and involve your team

Partnership means collaboration. Involve team members in decision-making processes and seek their input on how to improve the practice. Regularly ask for feedback and act on it.

When people feel heard, they feel valued – and they're more likely to contribute their best ideas.

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN THE PARTNERSHIP PARADIGM

The partnership paradigm doesn't mean giving up your leadership role; it means leading differently.

As a leader, your role shifts from being the one with all the answers to being the one who supports, develops and inspires your team.

This requires self-awareness and a commitment to continuous growth. Leadership isn't about perfection – it's about progress. Be willing to learn from your team members, adapt to their needs, and model the behaviours you want to see.

REAL-WORLD RESULTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

When leaders adopt the partnership mindset, the results speak for themselves. Teams become more engaged, turnover decreases and the overall culture improves. Practices that embrace this approach often find that patient satisfaction and loyalty increase, too.

Last year, as a judge for the Private Dentistry Awards, I had the privilege of seeing some truly exceptional practices shine. What stood out most was how the very best practices embraced a holistic approach to leadership, one that prioritised their teams as much as their results.

A hallmark of the winning practices was how they put their people front and centre – literally. Every winner ensured their team went onto the stage first, often stepping aside to let others take the spotlight. One principal gave the award to a team member and stood to the side for the photograph, while another stayed off the stage entirely, capturing the moment on video as their team celebrated.

This is a powerful reminder that great leadership isn't about claiming the glory; it's about empowering others to succeed. These leaders recognised that their practice's success was built on the collective effort of the entire team. By creating a culture of development, autonomy and shared purpose, they unlocked the full potential of their people.

This kind of leadership fosters loyalty, motivation and pride, and it doesn't just stop at the team. Patients notice the difference too.

Practices that lead in this way build stronger connections, deliver better care and stand out as places where everyone – staff and patients alike – wants to be. It's a clear example of how the best leaders inspire through humility and a genuine commitment to their people.

START YOUR JOURNEY TO PARTNERSHIP TODAY

The partnership paradigm isn't just a leadership style – it's a commitment to creating a workplace where everyone thrives. By treating your team as partners, you'll attract top talent, boost productivity, and deliver a superior patient experience.

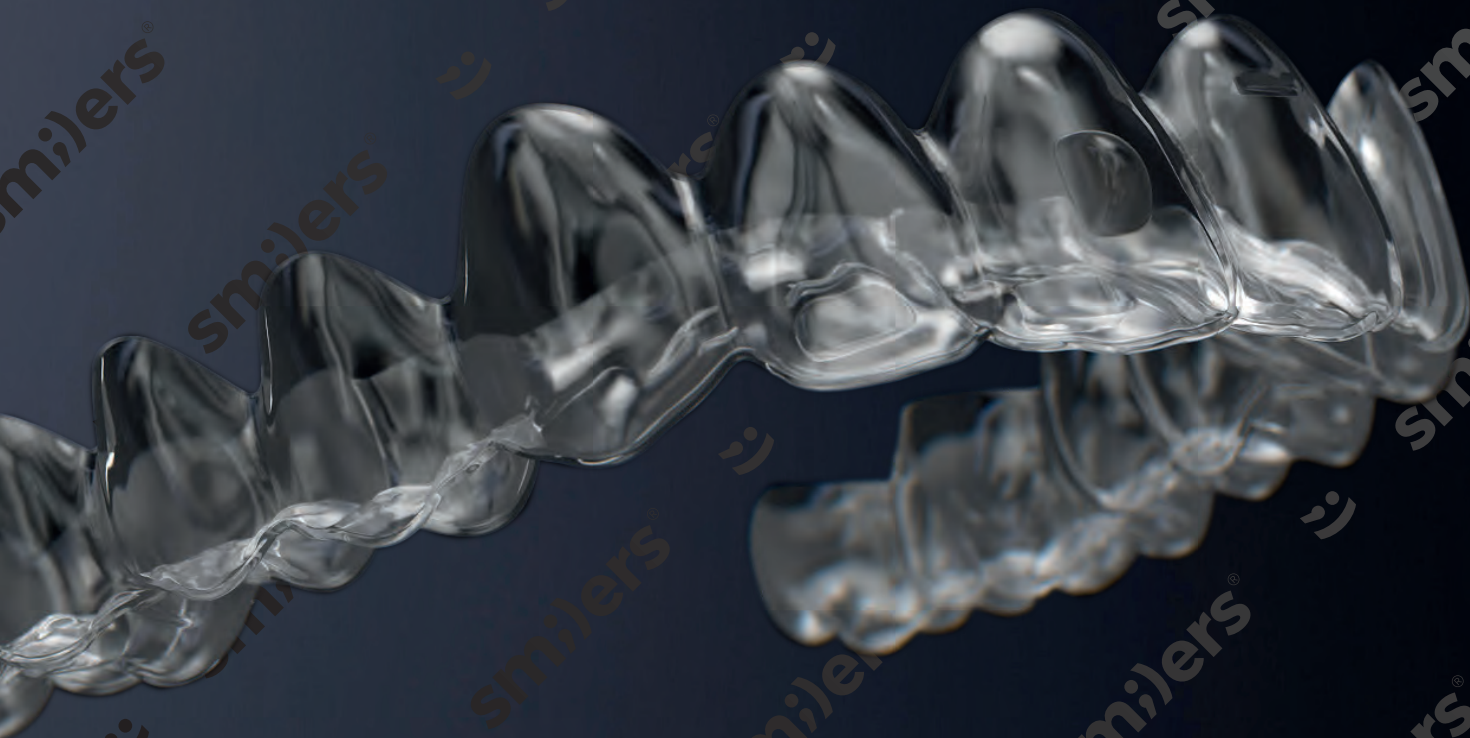
Leadership in private dentistry is evolving, and practices that embrace this transformation will be the ones that succeed in the long term.

Start today by reflecting on how you can incorporate development, autonomy, and purpose into your leadership approach.

Small changes can lead to big results – for your team, your patients, and your practice.

Mark will be speaking at the North of England Dentistry Show on 8 March in Manchester. For more details, visit [dentistry.co.uk/north-of-england-dentistry-show](https://www.dentistry.co.uk/north-of-england-dentistry-show).

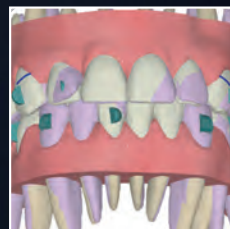
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Stressful BEHAVIOUR

How do you behave under stress? **Rana Al-Falaki** reveals the key to breaking the stress cycle in dental practice

Imagine it's Monday morning and you've arrived early at the practice, thinking you're ahead of the day. All is calm.

Then the phone rings... it's your dental nurse calling in sick. Your practice manager has just handed in their notice. Several patients have cancelled at the last minute. Your associate has been messaging you repeatedly, asking to have their entire day cancelled. It's also the end of the month, and the practice bills are due.

To top it off, a letter marked 'official' sits ominously on your desk, looking disturbingly legal. You don't have time to open it, but you know it's there.

And now, you have a full day list of patients waiting for you!

WHAT HAPPENS?

For most, the stress would spill over. You might find yourself snapping at an innocent team member who asks a simple question.

You might get distracted during a patient consultation, missing vital details or failing to convert a new patient due to your lack of focus.

The day might spiral into chaos – running late, more frustration, and ultimately leaving everyone in your practice tense, drained and unproductive. This is known as contagion. Your emotional state

impacts on everyone around you, your team, your patients – and, ultimately, your business.

This isn't just one stressful day; it's a cycle many dentists live with. Dentistry is, after all, one of the most stressful professions. A recent survey by the British Dental Association found that 75% of dentists report experiencing stress-related issues in their work.

Stress impacts not just your wellbeing but also your relationships with patients, your ability to lead your team effectively, and your practice's overall productivity and revenue growth.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

This is exactly what one of my clients, Dr AP, described when they came to me. For them, this scenario was more the norm than the exception.

When I suggested emotional intelligence (EQ) as the key to breaking the stress cycle, Dr AP was sceptical. 'Emotions are fluffy,' they said. 'I don't have time for all that breathing and mindfulness nonsense! I've got real problems to deal with!'

This is the biggest misconception about emotional intelligence. It's not about sitting cross-legged on the floor and chanting mantras.

It's about practical tools that help you recognise and regulate your emotions so that you can lead yourself and your practice effectively and successfully – despite being under constant immense pressure.

THE TRUTH ABOUT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Studies show that emotional intelligence is one of the most critical factors in leadership and professional success. The benefits of emotional intelligence include:

- Higher performance: 90% of top performers possess high emotional intelligence. Leaders with high EQ are four times more likely to succeed than those who rely on IQ alone (Social)
 - Reduced stress: emotional intelligence training can reduce workplace stress by up to 25% (Jobera)
 - Improved mental health: 91% of individuals report improved mental health after undergoing emotional intelligence training (Jobera)
 - Enhanced decision-making: higher emotional intelligence enhances decision-making skills and improves cognitive focus (Neuropsychiatric Investigation and Frontiers in Psychology)
 - Higher productivity: emotional intelligence positively correlates with job performance and leadership effectiveness, leading to higher productivity (IJBMI)
 - Positive financial impact: it's financially rewarding – those with high EQ earn significantly more annually than their lower EQ counterparts (Niagara Institute).
- With statistics like these, it's clear that emotions aren't fluffy at all! Instead, I suggested to Dr AP that they view emotions as data. Then I taught them what to do with that



Dr Rana Al-Falaki

Rana is founder of Meddent Leadership & Wellbeing Academy, a multi-award-winning periodontist, coach, author, speaker. She blends more than 25 years' experience with the NAIL-IT system to transform lives. For more details, visit www.meddent.co.uk.

data to make the difference between thriving under pressure and being overwhelmed by it.

TEACHING EQ: THE RULER MODEL

For Dr AP, I introduced them to the RULER model.

RULER is an acronym that stands for the five skills in emotional intelligence: recognising, understanding, labelling, expressing and regulating.

It is one of the many models within the NAIL-IT system that forms the foundational training at Meddent Leadership & Wellbeing Academy. Let's explore the steps in more detail.

Recognise

Dr AP began by checking in with their emotions throughout the day using an app I provided for them. By asking, 'How am I feeling right now?' several times within a day, they were able to start plotting data that they could use in the subsequent steps. It's like checking in with yourself before you end up spiralling out of control.

Understand

They explored the triggers behind these emotions. For example, when frustration arose, it was often tied to feeling unsupported by their team. By understanding this, they could address the root cause rather than reacting impulsively.

It was also great at identifying when their stress was not in fact due to their circumstances, but they may have been feeling it from the team around them and being impacted by it.

Label

I taught Dr AP to name those emotions. There are hundreds of different emotions and bringing awareness to that instead of using vague terms like 'stressed', or 'fine', gave them clarity and helped them navigate next steps more appropriately.

Express

I then taught them several different forms of communication, including needs-based, dynamic and influential communication, so they could express their emotions constructively, powerfully and authentically. Instead of lashing out, they might say: 'When



10 steps to enhance emotional health

1. See emotions as data points – not signs of weakness
2. Encourage a team approach to identifying and labelling emotions openly and without judgement
3. Collaborate to co-regulate emotions that enhance performance for specific tasks
4. Stop using vague terms like 'fine' and dig deeper
5. Approach emotions – yours and others' – with curiosity, not judgement
6. Practise compassion and reframing to defuse emotional triggers
7. Take responsibility for your emotions and identify triggers
8. Replace negative self-talk with positive affirmations
9. Embrace vulnerability as a strength – it builds trust and enhances performance
10. Determine what you want, set boundaries to achieve it and communicate your needs bravely.

tasks are delayed, I feel overwhelmed because it affects my ability to focus. Here's how we can fix this together.'

Regulate

Finally, I taught Dr AP a wide range of regulation strategies, including breathing hacks, reframing situations, best-self associations, externalisation, centring techniques, physical poses, sensory regulation, tension mapping, micro-moment mindfulness, and boundary-setting, among others.

These tools empowered them to maintain calm and composure, even on the most chaotic days, and enabled them to perform better both personally and professionally.

THE RESULTS

Within weeks of focusing on emotional intelligence, Dr AP noticed a dramatic shift. They were calmer, more focused and better equipped to handle the

unexpected challenges of running a practice.

Their team responded positively to their new leadership style as they also started to embrace the power of elevated EQ and the impact it can have on the business and patient care.

Most importantly, Dr AP felt in control – not just of their practice, but their own emotional health with positive results spilling into their personal lives as well.

Stress is inevitable in dentistry, but suffering under it doesn't have to be. Emotional intelligence isn't about 'fluff' – it's about mastering the most powerful tool you have: your emotions.

Rana will be speaking at the North of England Dentistry Show on 8 March in Manchester. For more details, visit dentistry.co.uk/north-of-england-dentistry-show.

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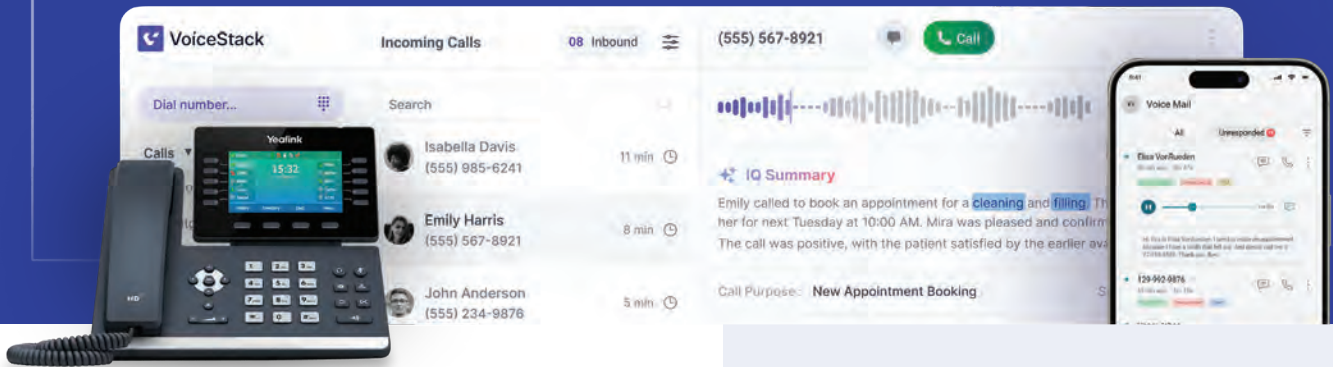
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Defining success: LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Sarika Shah shares the five leadership skills that will define success for clinicians in 2025

Dentistry is evolving at an unprecedented pace. As technological advances, patient expectations and team dynamics shift, clinicians are faced with a rapidly changing landscape that requires strong leadership skills. In 2025, success will no longer solely be defined by clinical knowledge or expertise but by the ability to lead teams, engage with patients, and adapt to new innovations. It is essential that every clinician must recognise themselves as a leader and learn to master self-leadership first.

Here are five essential external leadership skills that will shape the future of clinicians and determine their success and that of their teams in the year ahead.

1 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

In an era of increasing patient complexity and higher demands on clinicians, emotional intelligence (EQ) will be a critical leadership skill. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions, recognise emotions in others, and use this information to guide thinking and behaviour.

For all dental clinicians, this means cultivating empathy, improving communication and managing stress effectively.



Sarika Shah

Sarika is the founder and owner of Platinum Dental Care in London. She is an Invisalign and cosmetic dentist. She created the leadership course, Flourish as a Female in Dentistry for women in dentistry. For more details, visit www.flourishasafemale.com.



In 2025, the practice of dentistry will involve more diverse patient populations, each with individualised needs and emotional responses. Dental clinicians who can connect with patients on an emotional level, listen actively and provide comfort and support during treatment will be more successful in building trust and improving patient satisfaction.

Likewise, clinicians with high EQ will be better able to lead their teams (those immediately around them or a practice as a whole), recognising the needs and concerns of staff members and fostering a positive, collaborative working environment.

2 ADAPTABILITY AND TECHNOLOGICAL SAVVY

The integration of technology in dentistry is no longer optional but essential. As we move into 2025, clinicians, including dental care professionals, must possess a keen understanding of new technologies in diagnostic tools, treatment options,

and patient management systems. However, it's not just about adopting the latest technologies but adapting to the rapid pace of change.

For example, advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), scanning, 3D printing and emerging software are transforming patient care and clinical practice. Clinicians who can embrace these tools, leverage them to improve patient outcomes, and stay current with the latest developments will stand out as leaders in their field.

For practice principals and managers, being able to lead a team through technological transitions, ensuring everyone is well-trained and confident in using new systems, will be a critical aspect of leadership in the future.

Adaptability extends beyond just technology – it also includes being open to new clinical techniques and materials, adjusting to new compliance regulations, and responding to shifts in patient expectations.

3 COLLABORATION AND TEAM BUILDING

Working in isolation within clinical practice is also shifting. Today's clinicians work as part of multidisciplinary teams that may include dental specialists, therapists, hygienists, dental nurses, receptionists, treatment coordinators and even virtual dental personal assistants. As such, one of the defining leadership skills for any clinician in the dental team in 2025, will be the ability to foster collaboration and build cohesive teams so that they can work productively and provide holistic patient-centred care.

Leadership in the future will require clinicians to delegate effectively, empower team members and encourage open communication. Building a culture of teamwork not only improves patient care but also boosts staff morale and retention.

Great leaders will inspire their teams to work toward shared goals and help them navigate challenges together.

Additionally, as healthcare systems become increasingly collaborative and integrated, clinicians will need to work seamlessly with other professionals outside of their practice to provide comprehensive care for patients. Those who can navigate inter-professional relationships with ease will be more successful as leaders within their field of dentistry.

4 INNOVATION AND FORWARD THINKING

This year, healthcare in general will face new challenges, such as the global shift toward preventive care, the integration of patient-generated health data (such as health and lifestyle data collected by smart watches), and the rise of personalised medicine (identifying individual oral microbiomes, for example). Clinicians will need to be forward-thinking and innovative in their approach to patient care and practice management.

Clinicians who demonstrate leadership will actively engage with emerging trends, experiment with new treatment techniques, and be willing to take calculated risks to improve patient outcomes. For instance, a dentist who embraces teledentistry, or a clinician who integrates AI-powered diagnostics into their practice, will be seen as



innovators who are shaping the future of their field.

Being an innovative leader also means promoting a culture of continuous learning within the practice, encouraging staff to stay ahead of the curve and challenge traditional approaches. This will create an environment where patients benefit from the latest developments and where the practice itself thrives.

5 STRONG COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

In 2025, the ability to communicate effectively will be more important than ever. Whether interacting with patients, colleagues or external stakeholders, communication is the foundation of strong leadership.

Clinicians will need to be skilled in conveying complex information in an understandable manner, ensuring patients fully comprehend their treatment options and are empowered to make informed decisions.

Strong communication is also vital when advocating for patients, teams and the profession. Clinicians who can effectively advocate for improved patient care, access to services and

support for their teams will stand out as leaders in their communities.

Additionally, communication skills will be essential for managing conflict, providing constructive feedback, and ensuring that the practice's values, mission and vision are clearly understood by all team members.

CONCLUSION

As the landscape in dentistry evolves, clinicians will need to embrace new leadership skills to navigate the challenges and opportunities of 2025 and beyond.

Emotional intelligence, adaptability, collaboration, innovation and communication will be essential in ensuring that clinicians not only succeed in their practice but also contribute positively to the broader healthcare community.

By focusing on these leadership skills, clinicians can position themselves as successful, forward-thinking professionals who will lead the way in patient care and clinical excellence for years to come.

Follow Sarika on Instagram @drsarikashah.

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Defining your ethical compass: the psychology of ethics

Jonquille Chantrey highlights the importance of moral values and principles and how to maintain them in aesthetic practice

It is expected that all dental and medical professionals know the difference between right and wrong. Across the world, there are laws governing practice and regulatory bodies aiming to ensure that clinicians are responsible for their actions. These laws largely reflect good ethics, which should drive behaviour in all areas of dentistry and medicine.

Yet, particularly in the aesthetics specialty, morality and ethics can vary. A variety of definitions of morality and ethics exist in the literature.

The morals of an individual may exist as a personal entity of what one believes is right or wrong. This can be derived from our own experiences, conscience, integrity, honesty and self-awareness, which then creates an internal reference for decision making and behaviours.

Ethics may be influenced by external sources within different social settings and regulatory frameworks, creating common codes



Dr Jonquille Chantrey

Jonquille is a surgeon, beauty scientist as well as a global thought leader. She is a key opinion leader for Allergan Aesthetics, an Abbvie Company, who paid her an honorarium for this article.

of conduct. While philosophical contrasts may be described, ultimately they are a reference for human conduct – individually and collectively.

While we can each set the points of our own ethical compass, comprising different values and principles that we strive to uphold in all areas of our

work, it's surgeon and aesthetic practitioner

Dr Jonquille Chantrey's belief that the needle of the compass – which guides us to make ethical decisions – should always be in the direction of the highest

physical and psychological safety of the patient.

KEY ELEMENTS OF SAFE PRACTICE

'The phrase "do no harm" from the Hippocratic Oath – one of the earliest expressions of medical ethics – should be ingrained in all our minds as medical professionals,' says Jonquille.

This means that, to support patients' physical and psychosocial wellbeing, we must:

- Be suitably qualified and trained to safely carry out all procedures we offer

- Define our scope of practice and where our limits and boundaries lie – setting up referral pathways with peers is important
- Practise from appropriate, safe and hygienic premises
- Learn how to identify psychological concerns and be confident saying no to patients when appropriate and explain the clear clinical reasons for the patient's best interest
- Have clear complication prevention and management protocols in place
- Invest in only clinically approved products and devices
- Train other staff members to adhere to all safety principles and codes of conduct
- Constantly remain up to date with scientific evidence applicable to our practice
- Ensure we regularly review our standards of practice, reflect on our learnings and make pertinent changes.

She believes that if each of these factors are in place, then defining our ethical compass should be made easier.

ESTABLISHING YOUR MORAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

According to Jonquille, our understanding of good ethics and recognition of what should become part of our compass generally develops over time. 'Our

IT IS OUR INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP OUR ETHICAL COMPASSES COMPASSIONATE, STEADFAST AND STRONG

BEST PRACTICE

conditioning, culture, education, patient interactions and life experiences will all influence what values and principles we hold in high regard. It's crucial to regularly reflect and critique our beliefs in order to develop them to the highest standard,' she explains.

If you're struggling to determine what's most important to you, Jonquille encourages you to think about your purpose; what was your number one reason for building a career in aesthetics? Then think about your patients; what outcomes are you trying to achieve for them? She notes: 'Combining a clear purpose with a heightened self-awareness will help to align with your conscience for providing safe patient care, allowing you to determine the key set of values and principles that will form your ethical compass.'

SHARING YOUR APPROACH

Once you've established your ethical compass, Jonquille urges you not to keep it to yourself. 'First and foremost, you must share it with your team,' she says, advising that the values and principles that you have set must form part of each of their job descriptions, regardless of their role; this could relate to clinical practice, how enquiries are managed, what aftercare advice is given or how complaints are handled.

'You cannot guarantee that every staff member will uphold your values and principles, but you can take responsibility for your team's education and set clear key performance indicators to monitor adherence.'

Next, Jonquille encourages clinicians to add your values to website, highlight them on social media and outline them in of your consultations. 'Doing so will highlight ethical approach prospective patients, a step in the journey of building trust,' she says.

Finally, she emphasises: 'Discussing your ethical compass and exchanging principles with your peers can elucidate ideas that might be essential to your personal practice. The more we share our experiences and challenges, the more we learn, which ultimately benefits our patients.'

MANAGING ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Jonquille acknowledges that all clinicians will at some point experience ethical dilemmas, which is why you need to have established your ethical compass early in your career.

'We can turn to it in times of uncertainty and let it guide us towards the most appropriate, safe and moral decision,' she says.

A dilemma may occur when a patient disagrees with your approach. Jonquille has found that in her own experience, there's generally a strong binding force between your ethical compass and what's right and wrong. 'That said, before rushing in with our opinions no matter how clinically sound, we should absolutely give patients the time to express their point of view,' she advises.

'Remember that actively listening and demonstrating empathy is important, but so is maintaining clinical boundaries and putting patient safety first. For example, if a patient has contraindications to a certain treatment, then an empathic "hard no" is essential. Spend time



explaining why this is the case, making clear that their safety and wellbeing is the first priority.'

In other instances, lines may be somewhat blurred. A common one is the age of a patient. Jonquille says: 'Some practitioners may often have an idea in mind of how old or young an informed adult should be to undergo aesthetic treatment, but demand from the full spectrum of the adult generation is increasing and varies across societies. Therefore, assessing all patients based on their individual circumstances is the most appropriate way to make an ethical decision on whether to treat or not to treat.'

Ultimately, in most challenging situations, Jonquille finds that patients will understand and accept your decisions if you listen actively and demonstrate authentic compassion and empathy.

She affirms: 'Having ethical principles that you adhere to demonstrates that you hold yourself to high standards, understand the comprehensive risks and care about putting patient safety first.'

AN EVOLVING COMPASS

One question Jonquille is commonly asked is whether your ethical compass can alter over time. 'Morals and ethics should not be unstable or at potential risk. I believe that your fundamental ethical compass ought not weaken or diminish, but it can expand and evolve,' she comments.

A good example of circumstances in which a compass may expand is your approach to inclusivity in aesthetics. Jonquille says: 'Clinical research on how to appropriately treat different ethnicities whilst respecting cultural differences is growing rapidly. We're also developing better

understanding of gender fluidity and how this influences aesthetic desires. Establishing ethical principles regarding how we offer inclusive consultations and treatments to all adult patients should be a natural expansion to our compasses.'

Likewise, as new scientific evidence emerges, Jonquille notes that older safety principles can become outdated. Adapting these so they are in line with new practices is a natural and appropriate evolution for an ethical compass.

UPHOLDING THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES WITHIN YOUR ETHICAL COMPASS

Actions speak louder than words, says Jonquille, elucidating: 'There can be a total incongruence between what some may say in public and what they do behind closed doors, which may be uncovered with time. This is where personal professional integrity is critical in order to have positive impact on society at large. We must always take clear action to establish the values and principles we have built. This unwavering consistency confirms the validity of whether we are truly prioritising patient safety.'

To conclude, she emphasises: 'It is our individual responsibility to keep our ethical compasses compassionate, steadfast and strong. Remaining timeless, with each value and principle having significance and importance. In robust ethical leadership we can enhance our compasses, but they can never be destroyed.'

Remember, the responsibility of treatment decisions remains with the treating practitioner, and treatment requirements should always be based on clinician assessment of individual patient needs.

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Mastering *communication*

Barry Oulton unlocks some of the possible reasons why patients don't hear you when discussing treatment plans

their income while building patient trust. By mastering this skill, you're not just selling dentistry; you're creating genuine connections that lead to better outcomes for both the patient and your career.

Imagine explaining a treatment plan multiple times, only to have the patient say: 'I don't understand', or worse: 'Let me think about it'. It's frustrating, isn't it? You feel like you're clear, but your message just doesn't land.

In the world of dentistry, this is a common scenario that undermines trust, disrupts workflows, and directly impacts the bottom line. But here's the truth: it's not the patient – it's you.

Dentistry is fundamentally about people. Procedures may build your technical reputation, but patient loyalty, case acceptance and practice growth hinge on one critical skill: communication.

The secret to exceptional communication lies in understanding this simple fact – patients don't see the world through your lens. They view it through theirs.

THE COMMUNICATION DISCONNECT

When you explain a treatment plan, you likely assume the patient understands exactly what you mean. After all, it's crystal clear to you. But that assumption is where the breakdown begins.

Each patient filters information through their individual personality, experiences and emotions. What you say may not match what they hear, and what they hear may not align with what they understand.

This disconnect can occur at any point in the communication process, and here's why:

- What you say versus what you meant: you think your explanation is clear, but

subtle word choices or a lack of visual aids might confuse the patient

- What they hear versus what they think you meant: patients interpret your words based on their experiences, fears, or misconceptions about dentistry.

The result? Patients nod along, but they're not convinced or confident enough to say yes. They might even leave your practice without fully understanding the value of your care.

BREAKING THE BARRIER WITH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The first step to solving this problem is acknowledging that great communication isn't about saying more; it's about saying the right things in the right way.

Here are three strategies to instantly improve how you communicate with patients.

1 Discover their model of the world
Every patient processes information differently. Some need to see visuals, others need a detailed explanation, while some respond better to emotional connections. By identifying these personality preferences, you can adapt your communication style to meet their needs.

For example, visual patients might appreciate before and after photos or diagrams, while kinaesthetics patients need to feel reassured through warmth and empathy in your tone.

In my Linchpin programme, we dive deep into communication strategies like these to help associates double

2 Use the power of questions
Instead of assuming what matters to your patients, ask open-ended questions to uncover their emotional drivers. For example:

- How do you feel about your smile right now?
- What would it mean to you to feel more confident when speaking?

Questions like these allow patients to articulate their motivations, helping you align your recommendations with what they truly value. This approach transforms the conversation from a technical explanation to a meaningful dialogue that builds trust.

3 Clarify and confirm understanding

Don't end the conversation with: 'Does that make sense?' Instead, ask the patient to explain their understanding back to you. For instance: 'Can you share what you understand about this treatment and how it can help?'

This simple technique ensures they've grasped the key points and allows you to address any lingering doubts or confusion.

THE EMOTIONAL SIDE OF DENTISTRY

Patients don't seek white fillings or dental implants for the sake of the procedure itself. They want the confidence, freedom and peace of mind these treatments bring. Emotional drivers – not logic – are at the heart of every decision.

When you shift the conversation from features ('this implant will last 20 years') to benefits ('this implant will let you enjoy meals with loved ones without



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).

Key points

To transform patient experiences, increase case acceptance and build a thriving, fulfilling practice, apply these principles:

- Understand patient perspectives: adapt your communication style to align with individual patient preferences, whether visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic
- Ask open-ended questions: use questions to uncover emotional drivers and build trust with your patients
- Clarify understanding: confirm patients' comprehension by asking them to explain your recommendations in their own words
- Shift the focus to value: highlight the emotional benefits of treatment, not just the technical features
- Empower your team: share these strategies across your practice to create a unified, patient-centred culture.

worry'), you tap into what truly matters to patients. This subtle reframing has a powerful effect on case acceptance and patient satisfaction.

This principle is foundational in my More programme, which helps practice owners increase their income, enjoyment, and time. By mastering patient-focused communication, dentists often see significant improvements in case acceptance rates and long-term loyalty.

SHAPING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE THROUGH MINDSET

Great communication starts with the right mindset. If you're focused solely on explaining technical details, you're missing the bigger picture. Instead, adopt a mindset of creating exceptional experiences for your patients.

In practical terms, this means:

- Knocking their socks off: every interaction – from the initial consultation to follow-up calls – should leave patients feeling valued and understood
- Seeing value over price: instead of focusing on cost, help patients see the life-changing impact of their investment

- Empowering your team: share these communication strategies with your team so that every touchpoint reinforces your practice's patient-centred ethos.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

The rewards of effective communication extend beyond case acceptance. When patients feel heard, understood and valued, they're more likely to trust your recommendations, return for ongoing care, and refer friends and family to your practice.

Improving your communication skills isn't just about better patient interactions, it's also about transforming your practice and your professional fulfilment. Whether you're an associate looking to build confidence and income through Linchpin or a practice owner striving for more time, income, and enjoyment with More, the principles of communication are your foundation.

The question is: are you ready to close the communication gap and unlock the full potential of your practice? If so, the tools are waiting for you.

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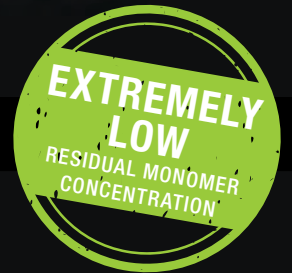
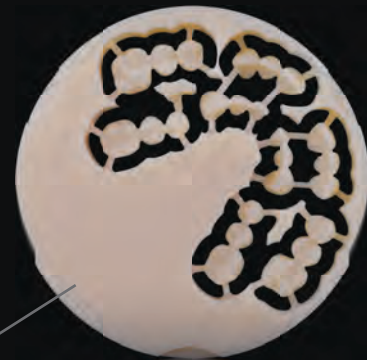
MORE
INFORMATION

r.zirkonzahn.com/tw

Ø98
mm

ALSO AVAILABLE IN
Ø98 mm WITH STEP

Ø95
mm



NEW! DENTURE GINGIVA BASIC MONO

Gingiva-coloured resin with improved material properties in terms of flexural strength and fracture resistance, specifically conceived for the production of denture bases. In addition, the extremely low residual monomer concentration greatly improves biocompatibility. The resin blank is available in Ø 125 mm for the manufacturing of up to two denture bases in just one milling process.



MORE
INFORMATION

r.zirkonzahn.com/s47

Ø95
mm

Ø98
mm

ALSO AVAILABLE IN THE STANDARD SIZE OF Ø 95 mm
AS WELL AS IN Ø 98 mm WITH STEP

Ø125
mm



POLIBOND

Liquid for bonding Abro® Basic Mono, Abro® Basic Multistratum® and Denture Gingiva Basic Mono resins. It is also suitable for polishing Multistratum® Flexible and Temp Premium Flexible resins.



High-tech meets handicraft

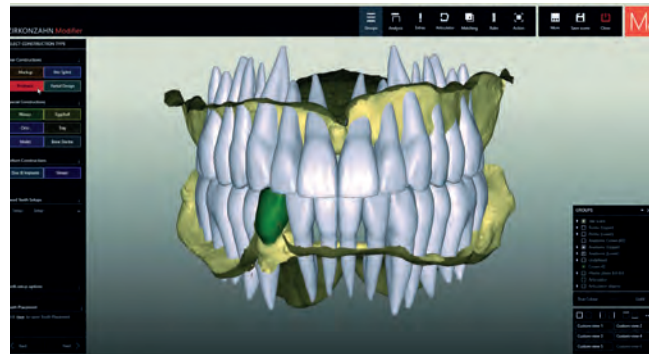
Zirkonzahn shares the details of its upcoming lecture tour in Dublin and Belfast on 4 and 6 March 2025

The dental company Zirkonzahn (South Tyrol, Italy) has announced its 2025 “High-Tech meets Handicraft – Optimisation of the Digital Workflow for the Fabrication of Full Dentures” lecture tour will be coming to Dublin and Belfast on 4 and 6 March, offering dental professionals state-of-the-art methods and techniques for the creation of functional and aesthetically pleasing full dentures as an alternative to implant-supported prostheses.

Indeed, even if minimally invasive procedures are becoming increasingly important, there are still patients who need a complete restoration after total tooth loss. MDT Alessandro Cucchiario will guide participants through the challenges faced when creating a full denture with 28 teeth, considering the different initial patient situations: whether the patient is edentulous or wearing existing prostheses in good or poor condition, the lecture will provide insights into the tailored approaches needed for optimal results.

The process of creating high-quality dentures also involves digital technologies and correct materials. For this reason, the lecture will introduce two new particularly biocompatible PMMA-based resins which feature an extremely low residual monomer concentration and will demonstrate how digital solutions with automated set-up functions can simplify tooth placement and gingiva creation, ensuring an efficient, accurate and optimised workflow.

Furthermore, participants will benefit from hands-on demonstrations of bonding teeth to denture bases using an innovative protocol based on the principle of cold welding.



Digital tooth set-up in Zirkonzahn.Modifier



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To register, scan the QR code, visit www.zirkonzahn.com (events section), call Zirkonzahn UK team on +39 0474 066 680 or email carmen.ausserhofer@zirkonzahn.com, jasmin.oberstaller@zirkonzahn.com.



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GET DOWN TO **BUSINESS**



The **North of England Dentistry Show** returns to Manchester this March – here's what visitors can expect from this unmissable event

This year's go-to event for the whole dental team, the North of England Dentistry Show, is returning to Manchester on Saturday 8 March.

Bringing fresh insights and deeper connections, visitors will experience the world of dentistry like never before.

The North of England Dentistry Show is totally free to attend and offers insightful education, a bustling exhibition hall and unrivalled networking opportunities for every member of the dental team.

THEATRE LINE-UP

Across the lecture theatres, visitors will hear the latest thinking on every aspect of the profession, powered by Dentistry's media insights and built for maximum impact and interaction.

With hours of verifiable enhanced CPD hours, visitors will hear from some of the UK's most exciting speakers.

This year's lecture theatres include:

- **Dentistry Hot Topics.** In this theatre, visitors will have the chance to have their say and join the debate on dentistry's biggest issues – from recruitment to personal branding and the future of AI in the profession
- **Clinical Skills Theatre.** Experience unrivalled learning on every aspect of restorative dentistry, powered by two of the UK's biggest brands in clinical education – Smile Dental Academy and Avant Garde Dentistry
- **Dentistry CPD Hub.** Covering GDC recommended topics for the whole dental team from leading subject experts

- **Business Lounge.** Dental business leaders share the secrets of effective dental organisations – from financial planning to making sustainability pay
- **Digital & Implant Theatre.** The technology transforming clinical outcomes steps into the spotlight to share a roadmap for innovation that any practice can follow
- **Laboratory Zone.** A lecture series customised for technicians and clinical dental technicians – featuring the latest thinking in techniques and technology
- **Hands-On Hub.** In this interactive space, visitors can engage with the latest techniques in clinical dentistry, guided by experts for maximum impact
- **ADAM Theatre.** Uncover the secrets of dental practice management with sessions on everything from patient complaints to increasing online reviews – purpose-built for admin teams.

SHOWCASING INNOVATION

Bringing more than 100 exhibitors under one roof, visitors to the North of England Dentistry Show will be able to discover the most innovative tools, tech and trends shaping the future of dentistry.

If you're looking for new technology and services, head for the exhibitor stands where some of the UK's biggest dental companies will be on hand to share their latest innovations; it's a perfect place to access everything you need to grow the practice.

With inspirational lectures, latest

innovations and networking opportunities, the North of England Dentistry Show has everything you need to flourish in your career, all free of charge.

Don't miss out: register for free today!

NORTH OF ENGLAND **Dentistry** SHOW 2025

Venue: Manchester Central Convention Complex

Date: 8 March 2025

Opening times: 9am to 4pm

More details: dentistry.co.uk/shows/north-of-england-dentistry-show

Reasons to attend

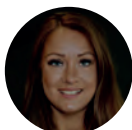
- Free to attend
- More than 30 hours of lecture content from more than 50 of the UK's best speakers
- Cutting-edge innovations from more than 100 exhibitors
- Enhanced CPD for the whole team – including GDC recommended subjects
- Networking, audience interaction and connection opportunities built in from the ground up.

BUSINESS LOUNGE

The North of England Dentistry Show is the must-attend event for those looking to develop the practice this year.

In the Business Lounge – powered by Towergate – dental business leaders will be sharing the secrets of effective dental organisations – from financial planning to making sustainability pay. Here’s what you can expect to see on the day!

Natalia Kitt: Understanding and minimising practice claims



In this session, sponsored by Towergate, Natalia will explore the top reasons for claims within a dental practice and why these happen, how to avoid them, learning ways to minimise potential claims and understand the best way to report claims to an insurance broker.

Mark Topley: Making sustainability pay for you



Sustainability isn’t just good for the planet – it’s good for business too. In this session, sponsored by Go Practice Green, Mark will explain how going green can directly benefit your bottom line, attract the right kind of patients, and create a practice people love to work in. Using insights from Go Practice Green and real-world examples, practical ways to cut waste, conserve resources, and engage your team in making a difference will be explored. By the end of the session, delegates will leave with simple, actionable steps to build sustainability into your practice, meet regulatory standards, and stand out as a leader in responsible dentistry. This is about making sustainability pay – not just in savings, but in loyalty, reputation, and long-term success.

Shaz Memon: From startup to standout – the seven marketing principles for success for any practice owner, whether new or experienced



In today’s competitive world, standing out isn’t just important – it’s essential. This transformative presentation, sponsored by Digimax, will equip dental

professionals, principals, and leaders with the tools to craft a compelling personal or practice brand. Whether you’re looking to grow your influence, enhance your opportunities, or build trust with your audience, this session reveals actionable strategies to take you from being overlooked to being unforgettable.

Discover the secrets to aligning your values, voice, and visual identity to create a brand that leaves a lasting impression. Explore real-world examples, gain insights into branding psychology, and learn how to leverage your strengths to tell a powerful story that resonates. This session isn’t about blending in; it’s about breaking through. Step into the spotlight and uncover the confidence to represent yourself authentically, with impact and purpose. Your unforgettable brand starts here!

Mervyn Druian: Dream, believe, achieve practice success



This session is designed to reduce any stress and anxiety one might come across in a dental practice. Mervyn will steer you in your efforts to create a vision of what you want to achieve, through to forming relationships, finding inspiration, setting out goals, developing your learning and building a team. Plus looking after your health, happiness and motivation along the way. Mervyn will also discuss financial planning and practice profitability.

Richard Scarborough: FCA consumer duty: what every dental practice owner needs to know (but has probably overlooked!)



Confused about the Financial Conduct Authority’s (FCA) consumer duty? You’re not alone! Most dental practice owners don’t realise how these regulations impact their business – from patient financing to compliance risks. Join Richard for a jargon-free, practical guide to navigating the FCA’s rules. Discover how understanding these regulations can protect your practice, build patient trust and even improve your bottom line. Don’t miss out on this essential session, sponsored by Medenta, your practice’s success may depend on it!

Emma Flunt and Chris Nicholson: Leaving the NHS – how to make the change to both survive and thrive



Are you thinking of making the move from NHS to private dentistry? If so, make sure you join Emma and Chris where they will discuss a proven five-step process for a successful conversion from NHS to private dentistry to help you survive and thrive. In this session, sponsored by Practice Plan, Emma and Chris will cover the key things you need to know when considering making the move, including:

- How to decide if the move is the right decision for you and your practice
- What numbers need crunching to assess the financial viability of converting
- How to inform your patients of the transition
- How to gain full support from all involved ahead of the move
- How to keep moving forward and ensure you have the help and support you need to make sure your conversion is successful.

Bethany Rossington: The motherlode – can we really have it all as a woman in dentistry?



Bethany will discuss her own experience so far as a mother and woman in dentistry and business, exploring hurdles and barriers to both success and happiness while uncovering strategies she has developed to overcome them. Finding balance and fulfilment is a goal many of us have, and this session will explore why we find it so difficult and answer the question: is it really possible?

Alan Bailey: Net zero and dentistry: a practical guide for meaningful progress



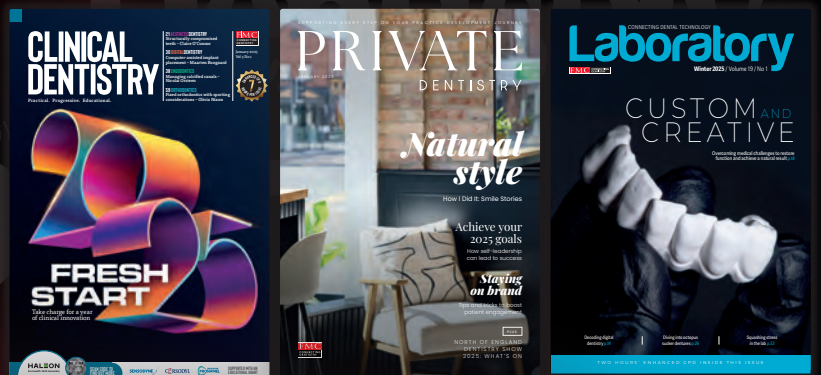
In the session, sponsored by Smilevision, Alan will discuss how the NHS net zero pledge will impact dental practices and commissioned services, and how it is already impacting other businesses in the NHS supply chain. Alan will also explore the journey to net zero, what it looks like and how it’s affecting other business sectors.

Dentistry CPD PRO

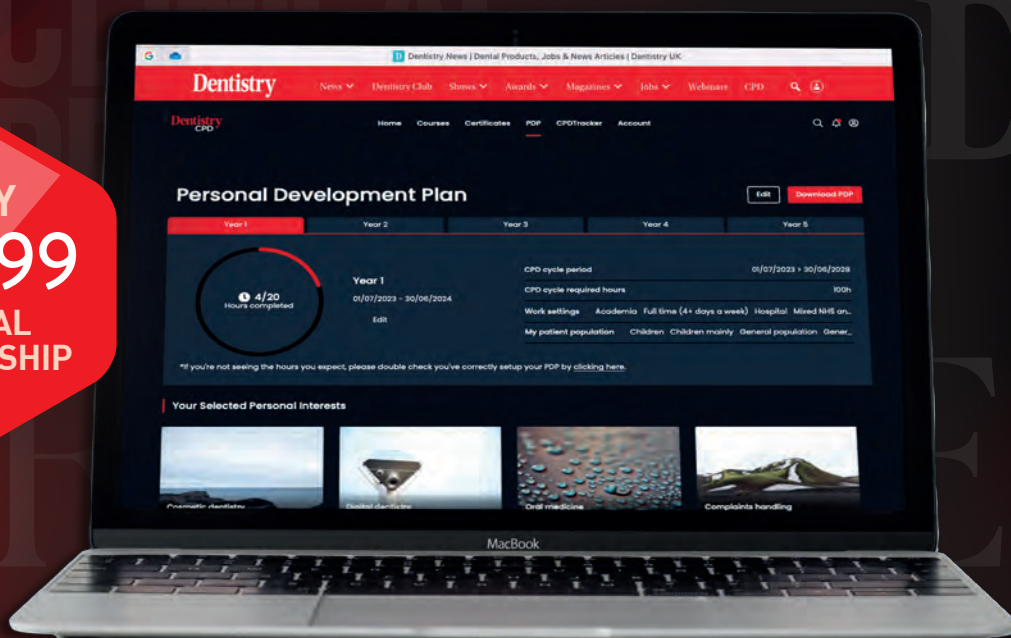
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Private Dentistry Awards 2024: in review

Steve Wright recalls the night of celebrations, networking and fun at the 2024 Private Dentistry Awards

In November last year, I had the pleasure of attending the Private Dentistry Awards with my fantastic colleagues at Kent Oral Care. As one of the most prestigious and respected dental awards ceremonies in the UK, we were anticipating a night full of celebrations, networking and fun – and it certainly did not disappoint.

The 2024 awards were outstanding and definitely a highlight of the year, with teams and individuals from across the UK and Ireland coming together to celebrate outstanding dentistry achievements. The talent in the room was remarkable and demonstrated the vibrancy and richness of the dental profession, with colleagues and peers celebrating what was a fantastic year for the industry and for many practices.

From practice principals to therapists, hygienists, practice managers, receptionists and dental nurses, every role was recognised and celebrated for its invaluable contribution to private dentistry.

SIMPLY THE BEST

Since their inception in 2001, the Private Dentistry Awards have been going from strength to strength and have earned a solid and well-deserved reputation as being one the best.

Over the years, the categories, judging panel and venues have expanded and the quality as well as quantity of entries has increased,



Steve Wright

Steve is CEO of Kent Oral Care. To learn more, visit kentbrushes.com/oral-care.



testament to the exceptional service and skills by both individuals and teams within the private dental sector.

There was definitely a sense of progress last year, and the awards were the sleekest yet, professionally managed by FMC. The event brought the whole community together, allowing dental teams and personalities to be recognised for setting a gold standard for excellence.

Held at the glamorous JW Marriott Grosvenor House London in Mayfair, the room was buzzing with excitement, energy and positivity as the esteemed Dr David Houston chaired the event and revealed the 2024 winners independently judged by professionals in the field.

A particular highlight for me was seeing the winners of the Young Dentist category and the new talent that is making a mark on the industry and continuing to raise the bar when it comes to customer service and professionalism.

With seven worthy winners from across the UK and Ireland, it was great to see their passion and vibrancy for the profession as well as how proud they were to be awarded by the pinnacle of recognition in the UK. Congratulations to all the winners and highly commended – I look forward to seeing their careers develop and the positive impact they will undoubtedly bring to the industry.



DENTISTRY UNITED

Last year was our second year as one of the sponsors of the event and, as a fairly new brand to the sector, we have been blown away by the professionalism, friendliness and positivity of the dental community.

The awards were a great way of bringing everyone together to celebrate the buoyancy of dentistry and provided some exceptional networking opportunities with new connections made and friendships formed.

It was great looking around the room and seeing the joy and excitement on faces as like-minded professionals mingled and discussed the successes and lessons of the year.

With many external pressures on our industry, it is more important than ever to unite and continue to build and thrive together. The awards gave me renewed confidence in the profession

and what we can achieve together in 2025.

New, dynamic and exciting practices are opening all the time – as highlighted in the New Practice category – and innovations and developments are being made across the UK. The achievements by the winners in the Digital Practice category were truly phenomenal.

What was wonderful to see and hear though is the continued commitment to patient care and excellence. As a people-centred profession, we need to show empathy and prioritise the highest levels of customer service, as well as providing exceptional products that support and empower both patients and practitioners.

Building and enriching local communities across the UK and Ireland is also key and it was wonderful to learn about the practices that are best in class when it comes to patient care,

supporting nervous patients as well as those that are actively progressing charity and community projects and offering child-friendly approaches.

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

With 2025 in full swing, I feel positive about the future and am excited to see what the industry can achieve.

It will be hard to top the 2024 awards, but I have no doubt that they will be even better and bigger this year. Thanks so much to everyone that made the 2024 Private Dentistry Awards such a success and congratulations again to all the winners and highly commended.

Thanks must also go to the brilliant personalities on the Kent Oral Care table who made the evening so much fun.

The Private Dentistry Awards 2025 are coming... watch this space!

Be chuffed

Practice Plan celebrates winning three prizes at 2024 Dental Industry Awards

The whole team at dental membership plan provider Practice Plan is celebrating after a fantastic haul at the Dental Industry Awards ceremony at Wembley Stadium last December.

The prestigious Dental Industry Awards recognise excellence in the UK dental industry. The ceremony provides an opportunity for companies, teams and individuals to be formally acknowledged for achievements, projects and the high quality of work they do. The wide range of categories offers entry opportunities for companies of all sizes.

On the night, Practice Plan walked away with not one, not two but three awards:

- Advertisement of the Year for its 'Great Barrier Relief' ad
- Marketing Campaign of the Year for 'Be Practice Plan'
- 'How to build a team of Highflyers' Workshop Tour was crowned Event of the Year.

SOMETHING SPECIAL

Creative Director, Les Jones, and Sales and Marketing Director Nigel Jones were at the ceremony along with a group of Practice Plan colleagues from across the business to collect the trophies.

After the ceremony Les said: 'I am absolutely delighted at these results. To have come away with one award would have been amazing. But to win three is just incredible!

'Our winning "Great Barrier Relief" ad was aimed at busting some of the myths, or perceived barriers, about moving from NHS to private dentistry. The dental landscape has changed so much since the pandemic that some of the things that may have put them off making the move, such as not having enough patients, just aren't the case anymore.

"Be Practice Plan", which won us the Marketing Campaign of the Year Award, focuses on creating an emotional connection with our audience, emphasising the sense of community and support that comes with being part of Practice Plan. We want to convey that, to be part of Practice Plan, is to be part of something special and unique. It's something our competitors are unable to replicate. The campaign has a strong visual approach using real-life clients and Practice Plan staff to convey these emotions and highlight the unique value proposition that Practice Plan offers.

'We foster and encourage creativity at Practice Plan, and we have a talented and super creative group of people who work for us. Whether they work in design, marketing or events they all work together to produce campaigns, collateral and events of the highest standard. To be recognised for this in three separate categories is a brilliant achievement and I couldn't be prouder of everyone.'



HEART AND SOUL

Nigel echoed Les' sentiments: 'We exist to support dentistry and our practices. We put our heart and soul into everything we do. We're not usually the kind of team to blow our own trumpets, but we're often told there's something special about Practice Plan. These awards feel a bit like a validation of that sentiment. To be shortlisted for a Dental Industry Award is an achievement and to win one, a huge honour. But to win three – that was far above our expectations!

'We have brilliant teams working across the whole of the company whose focus is on doing the very best job they can. Being recognised for our creativity is an honour in itself but to also be recognised for the outstanding events we hold for our customers is phenomenal.

'We were up against stiff competition so for our Workshop Tour, "How to Build a Team of Highflyers" presented by Barry Oulton to win is even more of a thrill.

'Our annual Workshop Tour is our most anticipated event of the year. Many of our customers look forward to it so much that they even close their practice for the day. They appreciate it's an opportunity for the whole team to be treated to a fun, interactive and entertaining day delivered by the dental sector's most inspirational and engaging speakers. And, at the end of the day, they know they'll take away a host of practical and impactful ideas, tools and strategies that they can immediately implement into their practice and their personal lives.

'I am extremely proud of everyone at Practice Plan, whether they were involved directly with these campaigns and events or not. We are all part of the family, so I feel these awards can be shared by every single member of the Practice Plan team.'

New materials for full dentures Zirkonzahn

With Abro Basic Multistratum and Denture Gingiva Basic Mono Pink resins, Zirkonzahn introduces new PMMA-based materials, which are particularly biocompatible and health-friendly due to their low residual monomer concentration.

Abro Basic Multistratum shows a natural colour gradient from dentine to the enamel and improved material properties in terms of translucency values, flexural strength as well as fracture and abrasion resistance, which make it particularly suited for the manufacture of denture teeth. However, it can also be used for long-term temporaries and various secondary and tertiary structures.

On the other hand, Denture Gingiva Basic Mono Pink is a gingiva-coloured resin with improved material properties in terms of flexural strength and fracture resistance, specifically conceived for the production of denture bases.

The resin blanks are also available in Ø 125mm for the manufacture of up to two denture bases in just one milling process.

The gingival area of the restorations can be then characterised individually with Gingiva-Composites. Their colour spectrum is based on the company's ICE Ceramics Tissue shades from light to dark: through the temporary, dentists and patients can get an immediate aesthetic impression of the final restoration.

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IN THE HOT SEAT

Ahead of her hands-on session at the North of England Dentistry Show, we get to know dentist **Kiran Shankla** better

Q When and where was your last meal out?

A It was Bar Crudo, a seafood restaurant in San Francisco.

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

A Focus on today and live life to its fullest.

Q What's your guilty pleasure?

A Häagen-Dazs Belgian chocolate ice cream.

I LOVE ATTENDING DENTAL EVENTS – I ENJOY MEETING COLLEAGUES, AND LEARNING NEW CLINICAL SKILLS

Q You're presenting at the North of England Dentistry Show in Manchester this March – what will you be discussing and why should dental professionals attend?

A I will be running a hands-on workshop on Icon resin infiltration. Throughout the session, I will be demonstrating the latest tips and techniques to get the most successful results when treating white spot lesions.

Q What is your favourite thing about dental events?

A I love attending dental events – I enjoy networking and getting the chance to meet dental colleagues, and learn new clinical skills.

Q Describe your perfect holiday...

A It would involve hiking in nature surrounded by mountains.

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

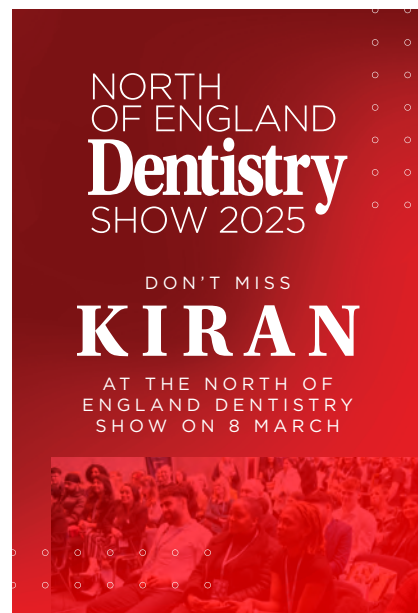
A Freed from desire – Gala, which was re-recorded last year!

Q How do you relax and unwind?

A Walking outdoors always helps me unwind.

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

A I took this picture capturing the sunset over Venice Beach, California, on 6 January 2025 – the day before the devastating wildfires began in Los Angeles.





Winner
Advertisement of the Year
Dental Industry Awards 2024



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



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



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