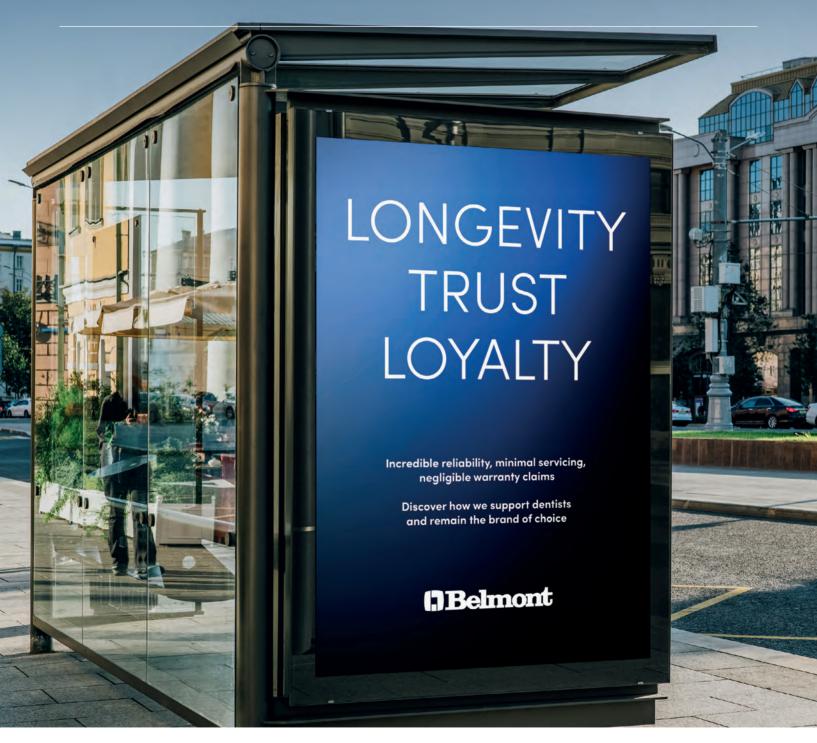
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## Standing the test of time

Siobhan Hiscott

Group managing editor

joined the editorial team at FMC nearly 20 years ago, with no dental background to speak of. And I will admit to thinking – as I suspect most non-clinicians who come into this sector do – that dentistry was just about 'teeth'.

Let's be charitable and say that my understanding was... limited! While the skill needed to deliver treatment was obvious to me (on the surface at least), I never anticipated the wealth of non-clinical considerations that dental practice relies upon.

Needless to say, I quickly realised how much there really was to learn! And that's something I'll be forever grateful for: the interplay of business acumen, politics and technology, on top of the clinical techniques and

research, has given me a varied, endlessly fascinating career in writing about these

hidden depths.

Over the last 20 years, I have been gifted with a front row seat from which to watch UK dentistry evolve. We've certainly seen some huge changes in that time, but regardless of how dentistry is delivered, there have been some constants too: education, connection and recognition are all critical parts of the mix. There are few better places to pursue all of these things than at

dental conferences, which is why I'm looking forward so much to the North of England Dentistry Show.

On Saturday 8 March, the FMC team will hit Manchester Central for a day you won't want to miss. Across nine lecture theatres, more than 70 speakers will offer thoughtprovoking presentations on the latest, hottest topics and you'll walk away from the day having refined your clinical skills at the various hands-on sessions taking place.

Dental awards are another route for expanding your professional horizons, and to that end, I'm delighted to announce the return of the Private Dentistry Awards in this

On page 63, you'll find this year's entry guide, detailing everything you need to know about the categories

> and how to enter. Entering awards is a great opportunity for self-reflection, goal setting and benchmarking: even the process

of applying encourages you to assess your achievements, identify areas for improvement and set ambitious new

Those lessons I learned nearly two decades ago are still serving me well, years down the line: clinical expertise is absolutely vital, but it's only part of a complex equation for success in dentistry. What part of the formula are you going to work on this year?

PRIVATE DENTISTRY MARCH 2025 Contents

11

#### Headlines

The latest news and developments affecting the dental profession

14

#### **Opinion**

Chris Barrow explores the role of Chat GPT in dental business marketing

16

#### How I Did It

Husband and wife Ismail Qazi and Naznin Dawji share their journey of creating Bourne Dental at SOBO

22

#### Get the look

Brighten your practice's interior design with this month's very yellow mood board

25

## The challenge of self-promotion

Could the dental profession benefit from rethinking its approach to selfpromotion, asks Shaz Memon 29

### The business of biofilm: part two

Claire-Louise Berry considers the core strategies for successfully marketing a 'sexy' oral health concept

#### **Regulars**

3 Lead editorial

71 Industry innovations

72 In the hot seat with Rana Al-Falaki

#### **Spotlight**



#### PRIVATE DENTISTRY AWARDS

Presenting the Private Dentistry Awards 2025! With registration now open, turn to page 63 to find out everything you need to know about entering this year's awards!

33

### Marketing: squat versus new to you

This issue, Faye Mear considers communication strategies for patients, the community and the team

43

### Handling complaints: emerging trends

Jennie Jones explores what the future looks like for complaint resolution across different healthcare sectors 38

### Choosing and using an accountant

Need an accountant? Adam Bernstein offers nine tips to help you choose one that's right for you

46

#### Three pillars of leadership

Barry Oulton explains how to build a unified and empowered team by focusing on vision, communication and culture 40

#### Leading with wisdom

Sarika Shah shares six strategies to be a wise leader in dentistry

49

#### Reducing waste in dentistry

John Timson on the five Rs of waste management and shares a framework for sustainable dentistry

53

### Why sustainable dentistry is the future

Mark Topley offers practical steps to help practices adopt sustainability

55

#### **Bouncing back**

Rana Al-Falaki dives into bouncebackability and uncovers the secret to resilience in dentistry

59

#### Practice philosophy

Mervyn Druian and Bernita Shelley delve into philosophy, and explain the role it plays in practice culture

63

## Private Dentistry Awards: entry guide

Details of this year's Private Dentistry Awards – the categories, criteria and how to enter





#### 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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#### WITH THANKS TO

Julie Bissett

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> Printed by Buxton Press ISSN: 1742-1896

Private Dentistry is a membership-only journal. Call 01923 851777 for membership.

Print membership (12 issues a year)

Three years (36 issues) £310

One year (12 issues) £115

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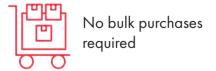


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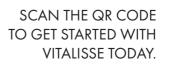














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BDS, is the founder of Bespoke Smile Clinic & Academy, which trains dentists on occlusion, porcelain veneers, and rehabilitations. Sam is on the board of directors at the BACD, and has been a judge for the Private Dentistry Awards.



ANGELA LY

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She works at Brigstock Dental
Practice and Oaktree Dental Practice.
Kreena runs an online endo course,
The Endo Course.



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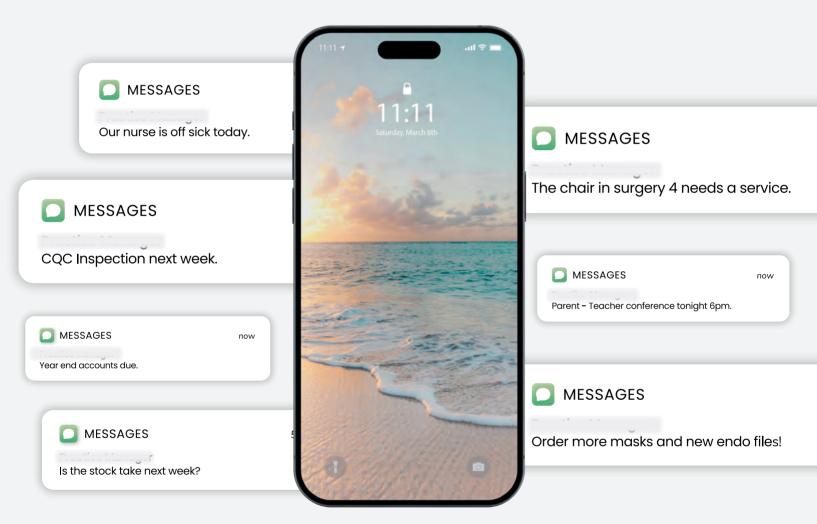


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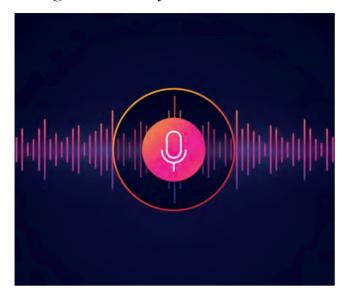


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## **New AI tool** identifies diabetes using voice analysis



Vocal analysis could revolutionise type 2 diabetes screening, according to Luxembourg researchers.

The Luxembourg Institute of Health (LIH) Deep Digital Phenotyping Research Unit has developed a voice-based artificial intelligence (AI) algorithm capable of accurately detecting type 2 diabetes. By analysing subtle vocal changes, this non-invasive and cost-effective method could make diabetes screening accessible to millions, especially in underserved

Using advanced machine learning techniques, a team of researchers led by Abir Elbeji and Dr Guy Fagherazzi from the Luxembourg Institute of Health's Deep Digital Phenotyping Unit identified vocal biomarkers that correlate with type 2 diabetes, offering a glimpse into the future of non-invasive, scalable and affordable health screening where type 2 diabetes could be diagnosed using a simple voice recording.

The study, published in *PLOS Digital Health* and part of the larger Colive Voice programme, analysed speech recordings of more than 600 participants in the United States.

Using artificial intelligence algorithms, the team achieved a predictive accuracy comparable to the risk score widely used by the American Diabetes Association (ADA). Notably, detection rates were even better in key demographics, including women over the age of 60 years and individuals with hypertension.

'This research represents a major step in diabetes care. By combining AI with digital phenotyping, we are ushering in a more inclusive and cost-effective approach to early diagnosis and prevention.

'The ability to screen for diabetes using a simple voice recording could dramatically improve healthcare accessibility for millions of people around the world,' said Dr Fagherazzi.

In the future, the researchers aim to refine the algorithm for early detection of prediabetes and undiagnosed type 2 diabetes cases.



## **Dental recovery plan has failed**, NHS leaders admit

The previous government's proposed dental recovery plan has not been successful, NHS leaders have acknowledged.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) heard from senior government officials last month on the progress of the plan that was released in February last year.

One of the plan's measures, the 'golden hello' incentive, aimed to encourage dentists to work in underserved areas for one-off payments of up to £20,000. Out of a target of 240 dentists, 39 have been appointed – the first of which was in October last year. In addition, the introduction of mobile dental vans, another aspect of the plan, did not deliver any extra capacity. Amanda Pritchard, NHS England chief executive, acknowledged that a recent report found the plan's modelling and calculations to be flawed. She said: 'What has become clear is that, in taking account of what the £200 million funding for the plan would buy, we have overstated the number of new patients that that would cover.'

This is despite consistent concerns since March 2024 from the health committee and the British Dental Association (BDA) on the plan's modelling. However, Pritchard admitted that this 'does not change the fact that it was not a successful plan'.

NHS leaders and MPs also recognised that the NHS dental contract was the fundamental issue, with both Pritchard and Whitty agreeing that it is not fit for purpose. Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, MP for North Cotswolds, suggested the best solution might be to rip up the existing contract and start again, which Pritchard agreed is 'exactly what we're going to need to do'.



## Report finds 'little change' to oral health gap in England

A new oral health survey has revealed that 'wide variation' in the prevalence of decay in five-year-old schoolchildren across England remains.

Five-year-olds in the most deprived areas of the country were more than twice as likely to have experienced decay (32.2%) compared to those in the least deprived areas (13.6%).

In addition, the survey found disparities in the prevalence of decay by ethnic group, with significantly higher percentages in the 'other' ethnic group (45.4%) and the Asian or Asian British ethnic group (37.7%).

Regionally, the north west had the highest prevalence of decay, with 28.7% of five-year-olds likely to have experienced it. At a local authority level, Brent had the highest rate with 43.4%.

The report presents the results of the National Dental Epidemiology Programme oral health survey of five-year-old schoolchildren attending mainstream, state-funded schools. Collecting data during the 2023-24 school year, the survey also found that the decay rates in four regions have worsened: London, Yorkshire, the south west and the north east. Overall, the report states that 22.4% of five-year-olds from the survey had experienced decay – a slight reduction from 23.7% in 2022. Among these schoolchildren, each child had, on average, three and a half teeth with decay.

In addition, the prevalence of decay decreased from 30.9% in 2008 to 23.3% in 2017, but this stalled in 2019 and 2022. However, the recent report shows a slight decrease from 23.7% in 2022 to 22.4% in 2024.

## **Lab-grown 'replacement teeth'** successfully implanted into jaws

Scientists have successfully grown human-like replacement teeth in a lab setting and implanted them into the mouths of miniature pigs.

Human and porcine tooth cells were combined and grown into tooth-like structures inside samples of pig tooth. This approach was taken because pigs grow many sets of teeth throughout their lifetime. Once mostly grown, the teeth were implanted into the jaws of pigs for two months and then removed. The researchers found that the finished teeth had developed hard layers of dentine and cementum.

In earlier stages of the research, the pig-human hybrid teeth were grown on biodegradable scaffolds, which were implanted into the stomachs of rats.

The researchers said they had not yet created 'beautifully formed teeth'. However, they hope that this new development will one day be used to replace human teeth that have been lost.

The study highlights the advantages of natural teeth over dental implants. It says: 'The direct transmission of mechanical forces of chewing from the implant to the supporting jaw bone can result in bone resorption over time and implant failure. In contrast, natural teeth are tethered to the jawbone via periodontal ligament (PDL) tissues, which absorb and modulate the forces of mastication, thereby promoting healthy bone maintenance.'

12 PRIVATE DENTISTRY MARCH 2025

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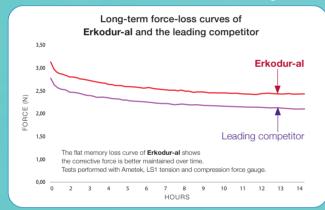
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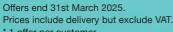
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## Bot versus brain

**Chris Barrow** pits Chat GPT against *University Challenge* in bid to determine the future of AI in dental business marketing

ne of the annual highlights of television viewing at chez Barrow is *University Challenge*. Each year we begin a mammoth season in the hope that we might be able to answer a few of the questions in each episode while marvelling at the knowledge of the participants.

I personally also enjoy the Christmas celebrity edition, simply because the questions are easier and there might be the opportunity to beat my previous best score of three!

At the start of every episode, host Amol Rajan introduces the teams and, in later rounds, highlights the subjects on which they were knowledgeable and those on which they may have fallen short.

I'm beginning to realise that there is an interesting comparison between that and Chat GPT.

#### FEEDING THE BOT

I'm spending more and more time teaching my own open Chat GPT – the Extreme Business Autopilot – to answer questions in line with the business principles that I teach.

Having fed the bot with the content of my website, previous blog posts, newsletters and access to our e-learning academy, I'm now asking questions about financial analysis, marketing, the customer service experience in dentistry, leadership, management and HR issues

Just like a *University Challenge* team, the breadth of knowledge is amazing but there are some subjects on which Chat GPT will return a correct answer and others on which it might get things quite wrong.

For example, I was recently presented with a very complex HR issue involving two team members who were arguing over a work rota and, as well as offering my own observations and advice, I asked my Chat GPT to provide an answer by way of contrast and comparison.

Perhaps I should not be surprised to find that the AI answer did not consider the most up-to-date employment legislation and could have seriously misled the manager handling the issue. I'm well aware that on the open AI webpage there is a statement that reads: 'Chat GPT can make mistakes. Check important info.'

#### INBOUND MARKETING

In spite of the reservations, I am, however, becoming increasingly fascinated as I listen to more and more people telling me that they are now beginning to use Chat GPT as a search engine in preference to Google.

Whether searching for the best restaurant in town, the best dental practice or the cheapest place to buy a product or service, Chat GPT will have a pretty impressive go at answering the question. Which has led me to research further as to the basis upon which Chat GPT was making its recommendations.

It turns out that the bot is heavily influenced by what would be described as 'inbound marketing'.

It's only in recent weeks that I've joined the dots and realised that effective inbound marketing is not only good for Google search but for Chat GPT search as well.

It will be interesting to see whether Chat GPT search catches on with the general public, but I'm certainly advising my clients to be prepared. In fact, I'm so motivated by this that I'm putting together a workshop presentation on how to optimise your dental business for search within Chat GPT, involving a combination of traditional SEO techniques and strategies tailored to Al-driven search models.

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

I began this article by suggesting that not everything Chat GPT tells us can yet be trusted, but I do want to make sure that if a potential new patient asks who 'the best dentist in town' is then Chat GPT will point them in the right direction.

I predict that Chat GPT search optimisation is going to become a major new objective in dental practice marketing.

In the meantime, I'm going to keep on watching *University Challenge* in the hope that I can maintain my batting average of three correct questions answered per episode (with no aid from outside devices).

Perhaps that's the limitation of my brain, compared to the very clever people that take part in the show, but let's hope that we never have Amol Rajan asking questions of a team of avatars. How boring that would be.



4 PRIVATE DENTISTRY MARCH 2025

## INDVATION NEVER SLEPS







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## Bourne Dental at SOBO

Husband and wife **Ismail Qazi** and **Naznin Dawji** share their journey of transforming a rundown accountancy office into an oasis of tranquillity

hen we embarked on the journey to create Bourne Dental at SOBO, our vision was clear: to take the fear out of going to the dentist and to raise the standard of care.

We found that many people visiting the dentist were nervous or hadn't visited a dentist for a long time because of COVID-19, so we planned to establish a dental environment that felt more like a tranquil oasis than a clinic

We wanted to create a space where patients could feel at ease the moment they walked through the door. I think we've achieved this – many of our patients have since commented that it feels more like a spa than a dental practice.

We opted for soft colours to create a relaxed environment. The inspiration behind our design elements – from the earthy colours to the brushed gold details – stemmed from our desire to create a warm space. It is this personal style that helps patients feel at ease.

We incorporated soft textures, wood tones and greenery to reflect this. We chose wood, embraced curves and opted for a neutral palette complemented by soft lighting. The result is a modern clinic with a natural ambience. It is a soft, fluid space with

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many natural materials and textures, such as Venetian plaster, hessian, timber and linen.

The gold signage adds a luxurious touch to what is essentially a general dental practice.

#### WELCOMING WAVES

Choosing Southbourne on Sea (the SOBO in the clinic's name) in Dorset for our location was intuitive. Just a 15-minute walk to the beach, it's a vibrant, family-friendly, upcoming suburb with a strong sense of community, and it seemed a perfect fit for our practice ethos.

The building was an outdated accountancy office that needed significant transformation. This required much time and attention to detail to turn it into the welcoming space it is today.

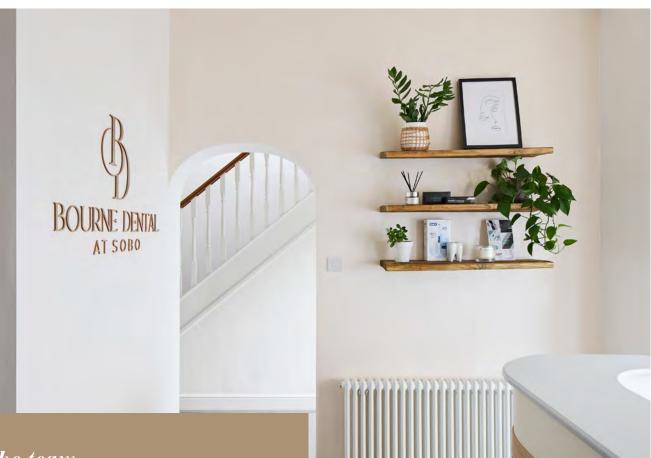
In our consultation room, we've again moved away from the more traditional dental environment to create an area that we hope fosters open conversation and relaxation. We use the consultation room when someone wants to have a general chat or is nervous. They can relax and ask questions while enjoying a cuppa.

Once we have found out more about what they're after, we can spend time making a clinical assessment and talking them through their options.

Meanwhile, the more relaxed setting of







The team

DENTIST/OWNER Ismail <u>Q</u>azi

RECEPTIONIST/OWNER Naznin Dawji

DENTAL NURSES

our consultation room helps them relax so they can get to know us and vice versa.

This personalised approach allows us to truly understand each individual's needs and preferences, ensuring tailored treatment plans and a positive patient experience.

We offer hour-long check-ups as standard, and the success of the patient experience has as much to do with getting to know the person in the chair as it does our clinical assessment.

Our team comprises dedicated professionals committed to providing exceptional care. Every member plays a crucial role in delivering the highest standard of service. Their expertise and support have been invaluable in bringing our vision to life.

#### A RIPPLE EFFECT

We opened in January 2023 and were overwhelmed with interest. The introductory offers may have initially attracted many, but there's more to it than just the price point. People are genuinely impressed with our service, and the word spreads organically.

Patients are pleasantly surprised by the level of care we offer. They sign up themselves and eagerly recommend us to others, creating a ripple effect in the community. We're grateful for their trust and loyalty; many have become like family. Patient care always comes first.

At the heart of our business ethos lies the principle: 'No patient should be treated by a stranger'. Providing the best service is our top priority – and it has only been possible to shine with practice ownership.

Nervous patients especially feel at ease when they enter and meet our staff, even before they start their journey with us. We encourage them to share any concerns before an appointment. An initial consultation via a video link is always an option, and we offer virtual guided tours for those who need it if it helps them take that first important step.

We have noise-cancelling headphones, or they can listen to music as a distraction during any of the treatments we offer. We have a judgement-free, no-pressure approach. It's their dental health, and we let them decide what they want for themselves while giving them the best possible advice.

#### LOOKING GOOD, FEELING GOOD

Creating a squat practice is hard work, takes time and is a tough, emotional and financial road. But, if you are committed and that's what you want, you can do it.

In the year since opening, we now have regular patients, and they have recommended their families and friends to us. This results from our hard work, commitment and exceptional service over the 15 months.

It's not just the aesthetics that attract people; it's also how they are made to feel from the moment they enter our practice until they leave.

#### kuraray



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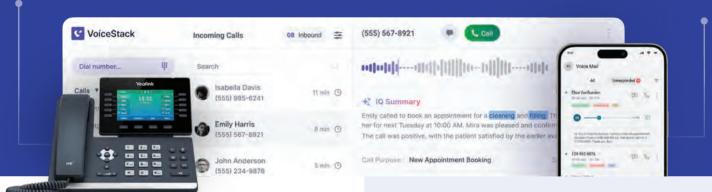
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any people find self-promotion uncomfortable, and even more are put off by those who engage in it. This sentiment is particularly prevalent in dentistry, a field that traditionally prioritises academic excellence, clinical achievements, and meticulously validated research over a

perfectly curated Instagram selfie.
Critics often wince at the sight of
a carefully crafted elevator selfie,
complete with a subtle display of an
exclusive watch – the kind that requires
generations of waiting lists to acquire.

#### IS A PUBLIC IMAGE IMPORTANT?

While some dentists value academic and clinical accomplishments exclusively, others recognise that a well-maintained public image can enhance their appeal to potential patients.

There are also those who are more business-focused, who don't engage in selfies or strive to outdo others but seem perfectly content with their chosen path.

Then there are individuals who combine different approaches, or who forge their own distinct path altogether.

Amid the world of scanners and latex gloves, a growing number of dentists are recognising the power of crafting an engaging public persona – one that draws patients with the same effectiveness as a laundromat attracts those with a pile of washing.

In the UK, celebrating wealth, grand homes and flashy cars is often seen



as distasteful. It's simply part of the culture. By contrast, in regions like the Middle East, opulence and flamboyance are met with admiration. Personally, I find excessive displays of wealth quite unappealing – they trigger an instinctive discomfort.

It's no surprise, then, that contemplating self-promotion can bring about mental roadblocks. I've faced these challenges myself and, to some extent, still do.

However, adopting one simple principle transformed my perspective. Observing successful individuals, I noticed they approach self-promotion with a key understanding.

#### AUTHENTICITY ISN'T ARROGANCE

If you explore my Instagram (@shaz.memon), you won't find posts flaunting luxury watches, high-end cars, or extravagant holidays. That's simply not who I am. Instead, you'll see my passion for work, humanitarian efforts, family, and the joys of everyday life. This is who I am offline, and I've learned to convey that authenticity online – though I'm still learning.

The key to successful self-promotion is bringing your offline self into the online world. It's not complicated.
Be yourself. Our individuality is what makes life interesting.

The most successful dentists and entrepreneurs maintain authenticity both online and offline. When there's a disconnect, it's noticeable and offputting.

I've encountered individuals who exude charisma and humour online but are surprisingly dull

and unengaging in person. The inconsistency is unsettling, and as humans, we instinctively distrust it.

#### SHARE YOUR HUMANITY

By being genuine online, you create opportunities for those who already connect with you to do so on a greater scale.

Focus on your own journey without being overly concerned about what others are doing. You are unique, and comparing yourself to others is rarely productive unless you genuinely admire their approach.

Reframe your mindset. Replace 'showing off' with 'sharing' and 'influencing' with 'building a brand'.

Sharing your experiences and humanity taps into the innate curiosity people have about others. By being open, you invite the right audience – those who already appreciate your values – to connect with you more deeply.

You don't need to appeal to everyone, especially not those who don't naturally align with you. Instead, focus on building a brand that resonates with like-minded individuals.

The discomfort surrounding selfpromotion is often a self-imposed barrier, a product of our inner doubts. It's time to quiet those fears.

Be yourself. That's all it takes. You'll see the benefits soon enough.

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

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#### PART 2

## The business of biofilm

In the second of two articles, award-winning dental hygienist **Claire-Louise Berry** considers the core strategies for successfully marketing a 'sexy' oral health concept



y mission is to make biofilm a 'sexy' topic and enhance oral health so it sparks curiosity

and engagement. When patients understand the significance of biofilm control and view it as a shared goal, it transforms treatment approaches, improving both health outcomes and business.

Last month's article emphasised how biofilm can be a significant business asset. Effectively managing it enhances patient outcomes, which in turn fosters practice growth. The real game-changer? Marketing. Innovative, targeted promotion attracts new patients, retains existing ones and strengthens a practice's reputation.

Before we delve into the how, let's explore the why. What is the objective of hygiene treatment? Ideally, it should guide a patient towards optimal and sustainable health.

Calculus doesn't cause disease; biofilm does. The biofilm lifecycle begins to reaccumulate within minutes of its disruption, and with so many nooks and crannies to clean around, it's not that we don't trust our patients to clean effectively; it's simply that numerous areas exist where biofilm can stagnate and lead to disease, necessitating our assistance



#### 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 which include systematic and oral health links.

in managing this with them. For this reason, biofilm is beneficial for business, not calculus.

Engaging in discussions about dental hygiene doesn't have to be dull or predictable. There are numerous creative ways to involve patients in their oral health, and many clinicians are already discovering unique (and highly effective) strategies.

I utilise Instagram posts and reels, blog articles and Youtube videos to clarify biofilm, its role in oral and systemic health, and how prevention can protect against disease. I simplify complex information into easy-to-understand, digestible content for my audience, emphasising the advantages of early intervention and routine care.

I enjoy incorporating holistic messaging in the care of my patients, highlighting the connection between biofilm and systemic health. This especially resonates with health-conscious patients who want a more comprehensive approach to wellbeing.

If your practice uses innovative technology to manage biofilm, you should emphasise these tools in your marketing. Patients are now more tech-savvy and often drawn to dental practices with high-tech solutions that deliver more efficient and comfortable care.

By positioning your practice as a leader in biofilm prevention and management and emphasising your commitment to safeguarding patients' oral and systemic health, you can set your business apart, attract new patients and cultivate a

loyal patient base that appreciates long-term, preventive care.

Next, let's explore some key areas to consider when harnessing biofilm as a profit builder.

#### **EQUIP AND EDUCATE**

Aesthetic dentistry is a highly crowded space in dental marketing, so why not make your health department your unique selling point (USP)?

Centre your efforts on patient comfort and expertise. You could utilise intraoral photography and scanning, explore systemic health tests such as HbAlC and blood pressure checks, and invest in EMS Airflow or air polishing units that target biofilm removal and management.

Promote continuing education by focusing on biofilm control and preventive care to showcase your team's expertise and commitment to the latest techniques.

Offer curated 'biofilm management' kits for patients to purchase after their appointments. These could include recommended electric toothbrushes or vouchers for purchases elsewhere, interdental/interspace brushes, floss, antimicrobial or desensitising products, salivary substitutes, or even postbiotics and supplements as adjuncts.

Ensure the hygiene department has access to tools such as the Oral-B IO Test Drive, which can be used on patients in the clinic to demonstrate biofilm removal at home. Hands-on instruction helps reinforce behaviour change and encourages patients to buy these products for home use.

## Six of the best marketing strategies

- Digital marketing: we can all recognise that a user-friendly website is essential for patient bookings. Concentrate on prominent search keywords in oral health and collaborate with your hygienist to ensure the content aligns with your inpractice messaging, steering clear of common mistakes made by non-dental marketers
- Social media marketing: use Instagram, Facebook and Youtube to showcase before and after pictures, share oral care tips, and introduce your team. Focus on the link between biofilm and overall health to motivate patients to prioritise oral hygiene
- 3. Community outreach: organise or sponsor dental health events at schools, GP practices, or community centres to enhance your visibility and promote preventive care
- 4. Referral programmes: establish partnerships with other healthcare providers to promote growth through wordof-mouth referrals, while emphasising the importance of collaboration and shared care for maintaining an optimally healthy patient base
- 5. Visual aids: utilise diagrams, digital displays, and take-home materials to educate patients about biofilm and its connection to systemic health. Showcase videos in waiting areas to engage interest and prepare patients for discussions
- 6. Biofilm tools and testing: consider salivary diagnostics or biofilm and bleeding scoring tools to provide patients with a clear understanding of their oral health, reinforce daily hygiene habits, and monitor improvements over time.

Utilise brief virtual consultations or videos where you discuss products online and how to use them before a patient arrives for an appointment. Loom is an excellent platform for this purpose.

These methods ensure patients have the tools to hit the ground running after visiting the hygienist. You could also send pre-recorded 'how to' videos featuring the products you have recommended.

#### MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Ensure that the entire practice maintains consistent messaging. Avoid terms such as 'clean', 'deep clean', or 'scale and polish', as this language downplays what the hygiene department offers.

Remember, if you want to enhance your hygiene department, treatment should focus on getting patients to optimal health, with low bleeding scores, healthy endpoints and disease elimination, rather than merely 'cleaning' for calculus and stain removal. Instead, we could use terminology like 'oral health assessment' or 'oral health optimisation'.

Referring to the hygienist as an 'expert in oral health' clarifies to patients that they are best qualified to handle preventive care. Train the team to effectively explain biofilm, its risks, and prevention strategies. Provide ongoing education on biofilm research and management techniques, enabling staff to inform patients confidently.

Empower your hygiene team members to embrace their role as biofilm experts and consider incorporating biofilm-focused language into your clinic's tagline and marketing materials.







After conducting clinical assessments, provide patients with personalised oral health reports that detail their biofilm levels, risk areas and recommended treatments. If intraoral cameras are used to capture images, share these with the patient to empower them to manage their condition.

Keeping this information solely within our systems implies that the disease is our responsibility. By giving patients access to these data points, we shift the ownership of the disease back to them, encouraging responsibility.

This approach makes patients feel more engaged in their care and increases their likelihood of following your recommendations.



PROVIDE PATIENTS
WITH PERSONALISED
ORAL HEALTH
REPORTS THAT
DETAIL THEIR
BIOFILM LEVELS,
RISK AREAS AND
RECOMMENDED
TREATMENTS

#### CONSIDER A MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING APPROACH

Create a blog or Youtube series focused on biofilm education, addressing topics such as the following:

- The role of biofilm in caries and periodontitis
- Home care tips for reducing biofilm
- New biofilm-related treatments available at your practice.

  Share concise content on social media that explains biofilm, utilising visuals, brief videos and patient success stories to emphasise the importance of biofilm control.

Distribute educational brochures, handouts and emails detailing biofilm, and include them as part of a post-visit follow-up after the patient's first appointment. This demonstrates that the oral health journey is not an 'in the moment'

treatment but rather requires time and effort. It also emphasises that achieving health may take a few appointments before it transitions to maintenance

#### PARTNER WITH INFLUENCERS

If you want to boost your business and gain new patients who value oral health optimisation, consider partnering with local or online influencers specialising in health and wellness.

Influencer marketing can raise awareness about the importance of biofilm management while highlighting the treatments and products your clinic provides.

Additionally, collaborating with nearby health and wellness businesses, such as gyms or health spas, can reinforce your message on overall wellness.

Partnering with local doctors, nutritionists or wellness centres can also benefit mutual promotion. For example, you could co-host a webinar or event with another health or wellness provider, discussing the oral-systemic health connection and emphasising biofilm prevention as essential to total health. This will boost your practice's standing within a broader healthcare network.

#### STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH THE RESEARCH

Keep up with current biofilm research and treatments to provide your patients with cutting-edge care. This may encompass new products, technologies or methods for effectively managing biofilm. Regularly inform your patients and share updates on the latest biofilm-related research or products to enhance their oral health. This can be achieved through newsletters, blog posts or consultations, positioning your clinic as a leader in innovation.

By making biofilm education a central component of your practice, you establish your clinic as an innovative leader in modern dentistry, enhance patient outcomes and foster trust and long-term loyalty among your patients.

Want to boost your hygiene department? Email Claire at info@clairelouiseonline.co.uk.

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## Squat versus new to you

In the final part of her series on communication strategies for squat practices and those that may be 'new to you', Faye Mear considers patients, community and team

ecoming a practice owner, whether by purchasing an established practice or starting a squat, requires a strong marketing and communication strategy to thrive. Both come with their own set of opportunities and challenges, demanding tailored approaches and careful planning, but investing time, thought and effort into how you attract and retain patients – in the beginning and over the long term – is essential for success.

In last month's issue, we explored key considerations such as location, branding and budget. This month, the focus shifts to the people who matter most: your patients, your community and your team.

#### YOUR PATIENTS

#### Squat

As a brand-new practice, your existing patient list is zero, so an assertive and proactive advertising campaign is required. As you get closer to opening day, escalating the use of your social media channels and your website is essential, as is increased investment in the paid-for methods



#### 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. we have previously discussed. Use all channels (digital and physical) to build excitement and anticipation for your launch.

Dental practices are an integral part of their local community, so it's essential to build goodwill with your neighbours. Reach out to local households with a leafleting campaign (don't assume everyone is on social media).

Every community usually has at least one, if not several, social media groups, so join them and share your posts as appropriate to increase engagement.

Delve beneath the surface on socials and look for authentic local influencers – local people with an active presence on social media. If they seem like the type of patient you want to attract, don't be afraid to reach out with a direct message (DM) and personally invite them in

A big launch for a brand-new practice is essential! Be creative and go as big as you can afford – make it fun! This is your chance to make a great impression, so invite everyone – local people, dignitaries, celebrities and the local influencers you've identified. Get the local press, even the local radio station along too, and – most importantly – make sure everyone has a good time!

To get people through your door, build goodwill and to provide talking points that will be shared, offer incentives for booking a first consultation such as a discount on the price of an initial consultation or offers on future treatments.

Patient retention must be your priority

#### New to you

in the first instance and initial strona communication about the change of ownership will have set a good foundation. Once in possession. consider holding a patient event for existing patients or utilise it as a reason to contact everyone on the patient database (active and inactive) to invite them to attend soon. Use incentives such as a small gift (something branded and useful is an excellent way to keep you visible and in their lives) or create a special offer that's exclusive to existing patients.

Shout about every change you make to the existing practice as you make it and tell patients why this is going to enhance 'their' practice. It will keep them interested, keep you in touch and build rapport.



Reach out to inactive patients on the list with personalised emails and follow-up with a phone call. Reminding them they should look after their oral health and reaching out to show they are not forgotten and that you care can be very emotive and encourage reengagement.

While looking after the existing patients, encourage them to recommend you to their friends and family to help grow your patient base. Be bold and ask for patient testimonials about their experience with you as the new owner.

If there is something that you want to provide at the practice that was not previously available, use this to reach out to different demographics than the ones traditionally served by the practice.

#### YOUR COMMUNITY

As a fundamental part of their local community, patients will love that a great new practice is in close proximity, so it's essential to actively establish rapport and build goodwill within it

Find out about your practice area – are there annual events or local teams you could support or sponsor? Reach out to organisers and offer your support rather than wait to be asked – you'll get extra brownie points for being proactive!

Contact local schools, preschools and nursing homes to offer oral health education talks or visits. Get in touch with other local social groups and offer similar too. This will generate face-to-face contact opportunities before your premises are even open.

#### New to you

Find out about any existing relationships the practice has within the local community, as well as any that have lapsed in recent years (COVID-19 restrictions disrupted lots of outreach previously done regularly by many practices) and be willing to continue or re-establish these.

If support or sponsorship is already provided by the practice, continue that too to maintain the link and establish yourself within the local network. It doesn't have to be sponsoring sports shirts either – be innovative and get involved with what is currently important to the community.

#### YOUR TEAM

#### Squat

Building a new team is your chance to get on board people with the skills you want. Not only in a clinical sense, ie finding professionals with specialist skills and names that may raise your profile, but think about the other roles that make a practice run smoothly.

Your employment budget may be tight, so look for people with extra skills and include capacity within their job role to cover the tasks that lend themselves to those talents. We're talking marketing here, so find someone for your reception or admin teams with marketing experience and include it specifically as part of their remit.

Do this in other areas of your business too, so if you want exemplary patient service, consider employing candidates with experience from different industries that do that well, think hospitality front of house, flight attendants or other customer care

If you want community engagement but don't want to do it yourself, find someone who already has those connections or an aptitude for speaking and engaging with people.

Educate all the team on your practice ethos so every member of the team can talk confidently about what sets your practice apart and why patients should join your practice. Hold the expectation that being part of your team means they all have a responsibility to represent and promote the practice. Support them in this endeavour by giving them the skills and confidence to talk about what you

offer. Keep them informed about new treatments, events or promotions you are planning. Additionally, get them all practised in asking satisfied patients to leave positive reviews via Google and other platforms.

#### New to you

Mine the knowledge of your inherited team! Staff members will have experience of what has worked, what hasn't and may have ideas to fill gaps in the practice's current offerings. Accept all suggestions and acknowledge and appreciate their input but evaluate everything they say against your own plans and make your own decision. Communicate the reasoning for your plans to team members to give them understanding and keep them onside.

Getting a new boss can be an unsettling time for anyone, but a happy team is a successful team and the best advert for your new ownership. Therefore, keep everyone informed on what's happening within the practice and what you have planned. Going forward, coach the team to be able to communicate all this positively with patients too.

If they are not already au fait with habitually asking for patient reviews, get them up-to-speed on recognising happy patients and capitalise on that 'post-treatment glow' by asking them to leave a review or a short video testimonial. If the patient can mention you by name and the improvement your ownership has made to the practice – even better!

#### INVEST IN GROWTH

Whichever way you choose to become a practice owner, effective marketing and communication with everyone is key.

Getting involved with your community and keeping your team and patients openly informed every step of the way will get them, and keep them, on-board. See patient incentive offers and discounts, as well as any community sponsorship and support, as a marketing investment that will help promote and grow your practice and ensure your new practice thrives in a competitive market.

Get in touch with Faye by emailing faye.mear@coronadc.co.uk.

34 PRIVATE DENTISTRY MARCH 2025





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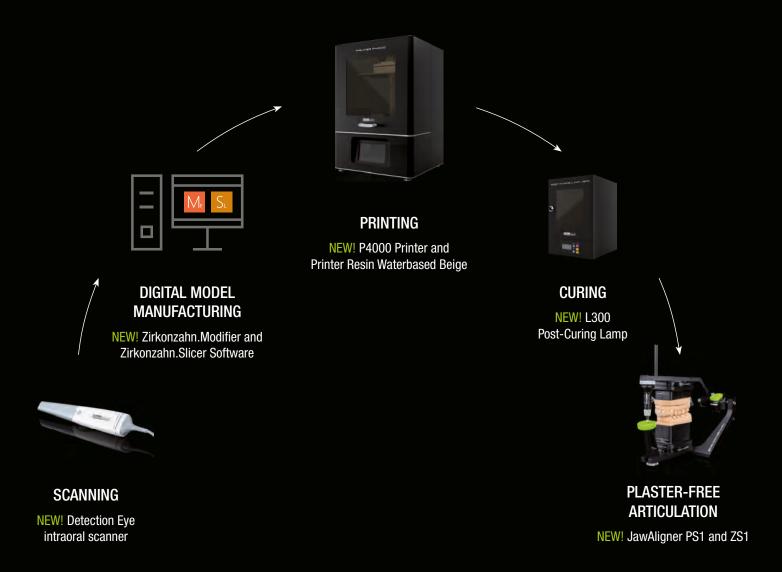
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# Choosing and using an accountant

An accountant is an essential adviser for any business. **Adam Bernstein** offers nine tips to help you choose the right person for you to gain maximum value

electing an accountant can appear a daunting task, but if you choose correctly, they can become an asset to your practice. Not only because they can handle your financial and operational affairs, but also because

they can offer professional business

advice on a number of other topics.

As you will need to give an accountant detailed access to business information, it is crucial that you choose well.

Remarkably, anyone can set themselves up in business and style themselves as an 'accountant' or 'tax adviser', but only those that are professionally qualified and belong to the appropriate body can use the terms 'certified' or 'chartered'.

Choosing badly could be worse than having no adviser at all and, importantly, practices need someone who can help find fraud. Indeed, there have been numerous stories in the national press over recent years of dental professionals stealing funds from the practice.

Here are nine tips to help you find and use an accountant that suits your needs.

#### HELP YOU NEED

The first step is to identify the areas where you need support and what you need an accountant to do. Consider the complexity of your accounting needs. Evaluate whether it is just end-of-year financial statements and tax returns, or if you require support throughout the year with matters such as PAYE, corporation tax. VAT. or income tax and IR35.

It would also be beneficial to try and foresee any future requirements you



**Adam Bernstein** 

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

might have, especially with regards to raising external finance, and consider whether your accountant is equipped to deal with these.

#### SIZE IS IMPORTANT

Bigger is not always better. Smaller accountancy firms can often be better suited to smaller businesses. An accountant running a small practice is a business owner just like you and will know what it's like.

Also consider your personal needs and preferences. Would you prefer to work with one person on a day-to-day basis or would you feel more comfortable knowing that there is a larger team dedicated to your business?

#### EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Make sure that the accountant has previous experience working in dental or at least healthcare. It is not essential, but experience of working in the profession or similar will be a good indicator of an accountant's suitability and suggests that they have some good business insight into the dental market.

#### ▲ LOOKAROUND

Arrange to meet with a few accountants so you can compare services and fees. As with any business or financial decision, value for money should be a key consideration when deciding.

Agree fees and charges upfront, along with how and when you will pay. It is vital that you understand what this fee includes. For example, is advice included, or will you be charged at an hourly rate for any one-off questions you may have?

Many businesses are facing cashflow pressures and an accountant may be able to adapt their fee and charging schedules to help.

#### ADDED VALUE

Consider how the accountant will add value besides bookkeeping. Your primary consideration when choosing an accountant should be the value they can bring to the practice.

While their primary task is ensuring all your accounts are in order, it is their ability to deliver specialised expertise and resources that should lead to a successful business relationship. Try to gauge whether they are able to provide services above and beyond your bookkeeping needs.

#### SEEK OUT THE QUALIFIED

Ensure that the accountant you choose has a professional qualification and belongs to a professional body. You may come across people offering 'accounting services' that are unqualified. These 'accountants' are unlikely to carry liability insurance and any apparent fee savings may turn out to be costly in the long run.

A professional qualification also means the accountant will be required to learn continuously – and can be disciplined by their professional body if they fail to act professionally. Professional bodies will usually have member directories available, allowing you to search for a qualified accountant near you. Look for a qualification from a professional body such as ACCA, ICAEW or CIMA. The six professional bodies are overseen by the Financial Reporting Council (for more details, visit tinyurl.com/yw2brc95).

#### PERSONAL CHEMISTRY

Ensure the accountant is somebody you can work with, as they will be a key business adviser. It is of utmost importance that you trust the person who will be handling your finances and feel comfortable to ask them any questions you may have.

Most accountants will offer a free initial consultation, allowing you to assess how successful your working relationship might be.

A breakdown in communications between you and your accountant may lead to financial confusion, hassle, and ultimately expense, to you and the practice.

#### BE ORGANISED

If an accountant has to spend time wading through invoices or compiling the books you should expect to pay handsomely for this. That said, the direction of travel from HMRC is toward digital record keeping and submissions of returns via what it calls 'making tax digital' is forcing the matter.

Any accountant you engage should be able to brief you on how best to keep records – given the size and nature of the practice and its structure... sole trader, partnership, or company – and software that can take the sting out of the process. Check if any software recommended can deal with deposits and products you may offer on the side as well as the normal reporting obligations.

Many accountants have 'preferred' packages that come with discounts on the monthly subscription, and if the accountant is more skilled/familiar with a package then they will be able to help you much more easily than if you have opted to use software they are not familiar with

#### MEEP GOOD RECORDS

HMRC levies penalties for not keeping proper records. The self-employed and partnerships should keep records for five years after the filing date of 31 January. For companies, it's six years after the end of the accounting period. In both cases, records should be kept for longer if HMRC is investigating.

Accounts for companies are a legal requirement and need to be in a

defined format. But for sole traders and partnerships, whatever is produced tends to be written for the selfassessment return.

#### PEOPLE OVER PRICE

An accountant is an essential adviser for any business, so investing time in choosing the right person is imperative in order to gain maximum value.

Consider the person not just the price; low cost doesn't always translate into a good working relationship.

## Six chartered accountancy bodies

- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW)
- Chartered Accountants Ireland (CAI)
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# Leading with wisdom

**Sarika Shah** shares her six strategies to be a wise leader in dentistry



leadership is not limited to those in formal positions of authority. In dentistry, leadership means fostering a culture of respect, communication and innovation, where everyone plays a part in delivering excellent patient care

A wise leader in dentistry recognises the balance between outstanding clinical practice and creating an environment that motivates and supports team members.

Here are six strategies to become a wise leader in dental practice.

## LEAD BY EXAMPLE WITH COMPASSION AND INTEGRITY

Leadership starts with setting a personal example. In dentistry, your actions define the culture in your surgery or your practice. Compassion toward patients and team members is crucial to building trust.

Dentistry can be stressful for patients, so as a leader, it's essential to maintain a calm and empathetic demeanour. When you show kindness, respect and understanding, you foster a supportive environment where both patients and staff feel valued.

Integrity is equally vital. A wise leader upholds ethical standards in all areas – whether in treatment



#### 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.

planning, patient communication or billing. By ensuring transparency and honesty, you create a culture where ethical practices are the norm.

When you lead with integrity, it encourages your team to do the same, building trust within the practice.

## 2 CULTIVATE A POSITIVE AND COLLABORATIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

A wise leader understands that a dental practice's strength lies in its team. Fostering an environment of open communication, collaboration and mutual respect is key to a thriving practice.

Regular team meetings provide an opportunity for staff to discuss challenges, successes and ideas for improvement. When team members feel heard and valued, it increases job satisfaction and productivity.

Promote a culture of teamwork where everyone contributes to the success of the practice. By empowering team members and promoting collaboration, you enhance performance and reduce the risk of burnout.

A positive, supportive work environment leads to better patient care and a happier, more engaged team.

#### 3 EMBRACE CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND INNOVATION

Dentistry is constantly evolving, with new technologies, treatments and patient care strategies emerging regularly. A wise leader stays informed



#### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IS AT THE HEART OF WISE LEADERSHIP

about these changes and embraces innovation and learning, ensuring the practice remains at the forefront of the dental field and delivers the best care to patients. This commitment to growth allows you to stay competitive and demonstrate a dedication to excellence

Investing in training and education for yourself and your team is essential. This can include attending conferences, taking advanced courses, or encouraging staff to share new ideas. Implementing the latest technologies can improve patient care and streamline the patient journey.

## 4 DEVELOP STRONG COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Effective communication is at the heart of wise leadership. In dentistry, clear communication is essential – both with patients and within the team. A wise leader fosters open communication channels, making it easy for team members to voice concerns, ask questions and provide input. This strengthens relationships and ensures everyone is on the same page, which is crucial for smooth operations.

With patients, communication is equally important. A wise leader ensures patients fully understand their treatment options, procedures and potential risks. By taking the time to listen to patients' concerns and explaining treatment plans in a clear, empathetic manner, you build trust and help patients feel more comfortable with their decisions.

## 5 FOCUS ON MENTORSHIP AND EMPOWERING OTHERS

Leadership is about lifting others up. A wise leader invests time in mentoring their team, helping them grow both professionally and personally. Whether it's guiding staff through new responsibilities, offering constructive feedback or encouraging further education, mentorship empowers team members to develop their skills and feel valued.

By giving team members the opportunity to take on leadership roles and encouraging them to pursue their interests, you foster a sense of ownership and pride in their work. This increases job satisfaction

and motivates staff to give their best effort. A wise leader ensures that everyone on the team has the support they need to succeed, which in turn strengthens the practice as a whole.

## PRIORITISE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

A key element of wise leadership is recognising the importance of work-life balance

Dentistry is a demanding profession, and burnout can quickly become a problem if not addressed. A wise leader takes steps to prevent burnout by encouraging breaks, setting boundaries and promoting healthy habits among the team.

Recognising the signs of stress in yourself and your team, and

MODEL HEALTHY
HABITS AND
ENCOURAGE YOUR
TEAM MEMBERS TO
PRIORITISE THEIR
WELLBEING

proactively addressing them, helps ensure long-term success.

A practice where staff members are well-rested and supported is more likely to have high morale and maintain excellent patient care. As a leader, model healthy habits and encourage your team members to prioritise their wellbeing.

By promoting a healthy work-life balance, you reduce stress and create an environment where staff can perform at their best without sacrificing their personal lives.

#### EMPOWERED TO THRIVE

Wise leadership in dentistry involves more than just clinical expertise – it requires compassion, integrity and the ability to foster a positive, supportive environment. By implementing these six strategies, you can lead your team to greater success and satisfaction.

Ultimately, a wise leader in dentistry creates a practice where both patients and staff feel valued, supported and empowered to thrive.

Follow Sarika on Instagram @drsarikashah.





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# Handling complaints: emerging trends

Jennie Jones explores what the future looks like for complaint resolution across different healthcare sectors

will be presenting at this year's
North of England Dentistry Show
on topic of complaint handling,
and I am looking forward to
meeting delegates and peers to
share perspectives from other sectors
for an informative and thoughtprovoking event.

Last year marked the 10-year anniversary of Nockolds Resolution delivering the Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS), which is funded by the General Optical Council (GOC). Reaching this anniversary has prompted me to reflect on the progress over the last 10 years and to ponder the evolution of patient relationships, communication and complaint resolution in the next 10 years.

The last decade has seen greater recognition of the importance of effective local resolution, an increased escalation of complaints and the development of complaint handling as a profession and expertise within the NHS frameworks.

## COMPLAINT RESOLUTION: RECOGNISING THE VALUE

In optics, we have seen the positive impact of an effective resolution service in reducing matters escalating to the regulator and concerns being kept proportionate, so then not requiring a regulatory investigation. The number of investigations opened by the GOC was reduced by 63%, while the OCCS saw an increase in



Jennie Jones

Jennie is a qualified solicitor and head of Nockolds Resolution.

activity as consumers and practices were supported to find an acceptable resolution through a mediation-based process.

With more than 85% of the concerns referred to the OCCS being concluded in the process, this has benefited all involved, as consumers receive a satisfactory resolution that usually involves their needs being met, the practice brings the complaint to a close without healthcare professionals being distressed by an unnecessary regulatory investigation, and the regulator is able to focus resources on the most serious concerns which pose a risk to patient safety.

We have also seen practices, healthcare providers and professional bodies recognising the value in supporting teams to develop confidence and open approaches to gathering feedback and complaint handling.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman has highlighted the vital contribution made to healthcare provision by those in patient liaison, feedback and complaint resolution roles. There is now a greater emphasis on honing patient communication and complaint resolution as part of the required skill set for an effective and sustainable career in healthcare.

It's great to see healthcare professionals leaning into our CPD sessions, which are now running more than once a week, across the UK for those working in primary, secondary, community and domiciliary care. This may also reflect the feeling reported in nearly every survey of healthcare professionals, which is that

interactions and behaviours are more emotive and challenging than ever before.

#### **UPSTREAMING**

Public perception research in optics revealed that between 2016 and 2023, the number of patients who attended a practice and then complained or felt they had need to complain increased by 166%.

Over the last 10 years, we have seen the issues in complaints shift to more 'service' and expectation related concerns, rather than clinical concerns. The NHS dental complaint data illustrates this with the number of clinical treatment complaints actually falling by 15% between 2017 and 2024 and an increase in complaints relating to communication (up by 10%) and access to care (appointment availability and removal from lists), which in 2023-24 was the second most common issue raised in NHS complaints relating to dental care (NHS England, 2024). This is reflected in optics and other complaint insight and analysis from other sectors.

Despite the challenges, leaders in successful practices recognise the value of investing in a strong, compassionate and effective communication skills, which help to retain colleagues and often see fewer complaints.

Over the last five years, our team has been involved in more than 30,000 complaints across a range of sectors. In all sectors, the push for continual quality improvement is now being seen in communication and engagement as well as clinical areas.

#### BEST PRACTICE

#### WHAT NEXT?

We do not need reminding of the challenges faced over the past five years. As we look to the future, we see the landscape of complaint resolution evolving rapidly. This is partly driven by technological advancements as well as ever-shifting customer expectations. Providers that stay ahead of these trends stand to enhance their complaint resolution processes, leading to improved patient satisfaction and staff retention. Here are key trends tipped to shape

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND AUTOMATION

the future of complaint resolution.

Al and automation are revolutionising complaint resolution by streamlining processes and improving efficiency. We are seeing chatbots and technologies like virtual assistants handling routine enquiries, allowing teams to focus on more complex issues.

Al, for example, can analyse patient data to predict potential complaints and address them proactively.

Machine learning algorithms, on the other hand, can provide personalised solutions based on historical interactions, enhancing the overall customer experience.

#### OMNI-CHANNEL SUPPORT

Clients now expect seamless support across multiple channels, including phone, email, social media, and live chat. Omni-channel support ensures that clients can effortlessly switch between channels without repeating their issues, providing a more connected experience.

Integration of these channels also allows for a unified view of customer interactions, enabling quicker and more efficient resolution rates.

## PERSONALISATION AND PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS

Personalisation is becoming increasingly important in complaint resolution. Predictive analytics have been used in retail settings to anticipate customer needs and issues before they arise, allowing businesses to address problems proactively.

By analysing patient behaviour and preferences, providers can harness insights around expectations and



satisfaction to improve their responses and solutions, making patients feel valued, heard and understood.

#### REAL-TIME RESOLUTION

Speed is crucial in complaint resolution. As consumers, we expect quick and efficient responses to issues. Real-time resolution through live chat, social media, or instant messaging platforms can significantly enhance client satisfaction.

Technologies like co-browsing and remote support tools enable agents to resolve issues immediately, reducing frustration and improving the overall experience. This flows into healthcare complaints and interactions.

## ENHANCED SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS

Empowering patients to resolve their issues independently is a growing trend. Advanced self-service portals, knowledge bases, and Al-driven FAQs combine to allow patients to find solutions quickly without waiting for an agent. This not only improves satisfaction but also reduces the workload on support teams.

#### FEEDBACK LOOPS

Creating effective feedback loops is essential for continuous improvement. Advanced analytics can process patient feedback in real-time, providing actionable insights to enhance care and services. By actively seeking and acting on feedback, providers can demonstrate their commitment to satisfaction.

### SUSTAINABILITY AND ETHICAL PRACTICES

Consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about sustainability and ethical practices. Organisations that demonstrate a commitment to these values in their complaint resolution processes can build stronger relationships with complainants. Transparent communication about ethical practices and sustainability efforts can enhance reputation and loyalty.

#### REGULATORY REFORM

We also have yet to see how the expansion of regulation into healthcare management may influence or change the duties and priorities of leaders and managers. Transparency and holistic oversight, which puts patients at the centre while also delivering satisfying and engaging work environments, would lead to changes in the complaint landscape – to what extent and how remains to be seen.

#### CONCLUSION

The future of complaint resolution may be shaped by technological advancements and evolving expectations, but effective resolution will continue to require human interaction.

Al and automation, omni-channel support, personalisation, real-time resolution, enhanced self-service options, feedback loops, and a focus on sustainability and ethical practices are key trends to watch. By embracing these trends, dental practices may seek to increase direct contact between colleagues and patients as delegable activities are handled more efficiently. allowing their teams to interact with complainants, leading to higher satisfaction (for patients and staff) with open, learning cultures fostering Al at their core.

Primary healthcare, particularly in dental and optics, are at the forefront of trialling and adapting practices to shape the future delivery of healthcare in both in terms of clinical and service needs and expectations. The underlying cause of most complaints and the key to resolving them continues to be communication and understanding the other perspective and I cannot see this changing in the next 10 years.

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

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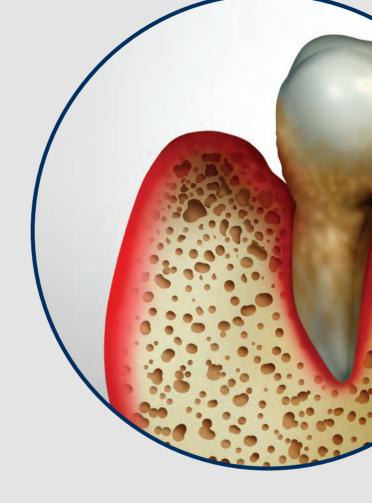
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# Three pillars of leadership

**Barry Oulton** shares how to build a unified and empowered team by focusing on vision, communication and culture

dental practice isn't just
a place where patients
receive care; it's a
collaborative ecosystem
where every team member
contributes to the overall experience.
For this system to thrive, strong
leadership is essential.

As a dental leader, your ability to inspire, align, and empower your team directly impacts your practice's success and your patients' satisfaction.

Let's explore how to create a unified and empowered team by focusing on vision, communication and culture – the three pillars of exceptional leadership.

#### THE LEADERSHIP MINDSET

In dentistry, it's easy to get caught up in the technical side of care, but your team is the backbone of your practice. When team members feel valued, supported and aligned with a shared purpose, they perform at their best. This not only improves patient experiences but also reduces workplace stress and staff turnover.

Leadership isn't about managing tasks; it's about creating an environment where your team can thrive. By fostering trust, clarity and motivation, you empower your team members to excel in their roles.

#### OVERCOMING COMMON LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

Even the best leaders face challenges. Here's how to navigate some common obstacles:

> Resistance to change.
>  Change can be difficult for teams. Address



#### 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).



#### **VISION**

A strong team starts with a clear and inspiring vision. Your vision defines your practice's purpose and sets the direction for your team.

Create a shared purpose by:

- Defining your vision: what do you want your practice to stand for? Share this vision with your team
- Connecting their roles to the vision: help each team member understand how their role contributes to the bigger picture
- Celebrating milestones: highlight achievements that align with your vision. Recognising progress reinforces a sense of purpose and keeps the team motivated.



#### COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is the foundation of strong leadership. Without it, misunderstandings and frustration can undermine team morale.

To build trust and clarity:

- Foster open dialogue: create a culture where team members feel comfortable sharing ideas, feedback, and concerns. Regular one-on-one check-ins can help
- Be transparent: share your goals, challenges, and decisions with the team. Transparency builds trust and fosters a sense of collaboration
- Clarify expectations: ensure everyone knows what's expected of them. Clear expectations reduce confusion and provide a framework for accountability



#### **CULTURE**

A positive culture doesn't happen by chance; it's cultivated intentionally. Culture influences how your team interacts, supports each other, and delivers patient care.

o create an empowering environment:

- Lead by example. Your actions set the tone for the entire practice. Model the behaviours you want to see, such as respect empoting and adaptability.
- Promote collaboration. Encourage teamwork by creating opportunities for team members to work together or projects or problem-solving
- Invest in growth. Provide training and development opportunities to help your team build skills and confidence. When team members feel supported, they're more likely to stay engaged and

## Building an empowered team: key points

- Define your vision: create a shared purpose that inspires and guides your team
- 2. Communicate effectively: build trust and clarity through open and transparent communication
- 3. Foster positive culture: promote collaboration, respect and growth within your team
- 4. Overcome challenges: address resistance and conflict with empathy and solution-focused strategies
- 5. Empower your team: invest in team members' development and celebrate their contributions.

resistance by clearly explaining the 'why' behind changes and involving the team in the process

- Conflict resolution. Conflicts are inevitable, but how you handle them matters. Approach conflicts with empathy and focus on finding solutions that benefit everyone
- Maintaining consistency. Consistency in leadership builds trust. Ensure your actions align with your words and follow through on commitments.

#### THE RIPPLE EFFECT

When you invest in your team, the benefits extend beyond the practice. A motivated, unified team creates a positive atmosphere that patients can feel. This improves patient satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth referrals.

Additionally, a strong team reduces the pressure on you as a leader. When everyone takes ownership of their roles, you can focus on strategic growth and delivering exceptional care.

#### PRACTICAL STEPS TO BUILD A UNIFIED TEAM

Ready to strengthen your leadership? Here are actionable steps to get started:

- Define and share your vision: clearly articulate your practice's purpose and goals. Regularly revisit this vision with your team
- · Encourage open communication: create a safe space for honest discussions and feedback
- Recognise and reward contributions: celebrate individual and team achievements to reinforce positive behaviours
- Invest in development: provide training and learning opportunities to help your team grow
- · Model the culture you want: be the example of professionalism, empathy and dedication that you expect from your team.

#### COACHING TO ENHANCE LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a skill that evolves with practice and guidance. Through my coaching programmes, I help dental leaders refine their strategies, align their teams and create a culture of excellence. Whether it's improving communication or navigating change, the right tools and insights can elevate your leadership and transform your practice.

By focusing on these pillars of leadership, you can build a unified, high-performing team that delivers exceptional care and strengthens your practice's success.



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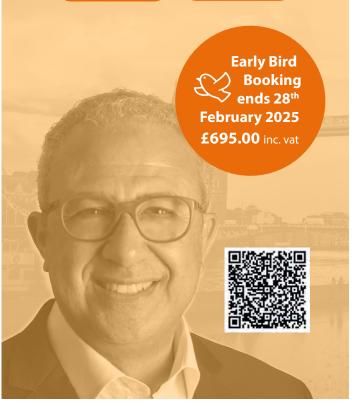
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# Reducing waste in dentistry

**John Timson** explores the five Rs of waste management and shares a framework for sustainable dentistry

ustainability and
environmental responsibility
have become essential
in modern dentistry.
With growing concerns
surrounding waste management,
resource consumption and carbon
emissions, it is key for dental
professionals to explore ways to
enhance sustainability in practices.

The dental industry generates significant waste, from single-use plastics to packaging materials, many of which contribute to environmental degradation. The NHS alone contributes to around 4% of the country's carbon emissions. However, by following the five Rs of waste management (refuse, reduce, reuse, renewable and recycle) dental professionals can minimise their environmental impact while maintaining high standards of patient care

#### WHAT IS DENTAL WASTE?

Dental practices produce several types of waste, including single-use plastics like gloves and packaging. A large portion of this waste requires specialised handling due to its clinical, hazardous, or confidential nature.

Key categories of dental waste include clinical dentistry waste, dental amalgam, discarded or faulty instruments, and confidential waste



#### **John Timson**

John is A-dec territory manager for central and northern England, and north Wales. Visit www.unitedkingdom.a-dec. com to find out more. such as outdated patient records.
Additionally, hazardous materials
such as dental radiography waste,
used sterilisation pouches, outdated
or broken dental equipment,
and chemical waste from dental
laboratory processes must be properly
managed and disposed of.

#### FIVE RS OF WASTE MANAGEMENT

The five Rs framework originated from the humble recycling symbol, a triangle made of three arrows that turn in on themselves. Designed by Gary Anderson, a 23-year-old architecture student at the University of Southern California, the image has become an iconic representation of sustainability worldwide and seen in many walks of life.

Originally structured around reuse, recycling, and disposal, the model has expanded to waste reduction and resource efficiency. Today, the five Rs serve as a valuable guide for businesses, including dental practices, in adopting more sustainable operations.

#### 1. Refuse

Refusing waste is the best way to manage waste in your dental practices. By refusing unnecessary products and packaging you can significantly reduce the quantity of waste your practice generates. Work with suppliers who offer eco-friendly alternatives to traditional single-use items. Avoid purchasing products that are non-recyclable or come with excessive packaging.

For example, when selecting dental materials or instruments, ask your suppliers for products with minimal packaging or ones that are reusable or returnable. A-dec always recommends using reusable syringes tips, which helps to reduce waste.

#### 2. Reduce

Once you've refused unnecessary waste, the next step is to reduce the quantity of waste generated in your practice. This includes being mindful of how much material you use and trying to find a way to minimise consumption without compromising the quality of care provided to your patients.

Reducing waste can be as simple as using fewer materials when performing procedures or switching to more efficient technologies. The A-dec 500 and 300 LED dental lights are significantly more energy-efficient than traditional bulb-style lights. While a typical bulb-style dental light operates at around 100W to deliver approximately 24,000 lux, an LED-based light can provide 25% more light while consuming only one-fifth of the power. This advancement in LED technology offers substantial energy savings and sustainability benefits.

Investing in durable, high-quality dental equipment with a longer lifespan can help reduce both environmental impact and overhead costs. The total cost of ownership (TCO) model – which factors in the purchase price, maintenance costs and product life of your dental equipment – highlights the long-

#### BEST PRACTICE

term savinas of choosina reliable equipment. Brands such as A-dec, that manufacture most of their parts in-house ensure better control over product quality, resulting in equipment that can withstand daily use and perform consistently. This high-quality approach leads to longer-lasting equipment, with A-dec products often remaining in service for 20 years and a 10-year warranty package for all core dental chairs.

#### 3 Reuse

The throwaway culture of single-use plastics has contributed significantly to waste. Instead of constantly discarding materials after one use, dental practices can benefit from reusing items wherever possible. Reusing materials not only extends their lifespan but also reduces the need for constant replacement.

In a dental practice, many items can be safely cleaned, sterilised and reused. Metal instruments or refillable dispensers can replace disposable alternatives. When considering reusability, ensure that items can be properly cleaned and meet safety standards before reuse.

#### 4. Repurpose

When it's not possible to refuse, reduce or reuse an item, consider repurposing it. Repurposing, or upcycling, is the process of finding new uses for materials that might otherwise be thrown away. Many items in your dental practice can be repurposed, helping extend their life.

For example, old X-ray films can be used for educational demonstrations or patient awareness during consultations. Discarded dental tools might find new life in non-clinical applications, such as community outreach programmes or laboratory projects. Even common office materials, like cardboard boxes or old jars, can be repurposed for storing supplies or holding small tools.

#### 5. Recycle

Recycling is often the last resort in the waste hierarchy, but it's still a vital part of an effective waste management system. Once an item has reached the end of its life and cannot be refused, reduced, reused or repurposed, recycling is the next best option.

# Adopting the five Rs in dentistry:

- Environmental benefits: reduced carbon footprint, less landfill waste, and lower pollution levels
- Cost savings: less reliance on disposable materials and improved efficiency in supply usage
- Compliance and reputation: many areas enforce waste management regulations, and sustainable practices can enhance a clinic's reputation
- Patient trust: dental patients are increasingly aware of sustainability issues and may choose eco-conscious dental providers over others.

Recycling helps avoid materials going to landfill

While not all dental materials can be recycled, many common practice materials, such as paper, cardboard and certain plastics, can be processed through proper recycling programmes. For specialised materials like amalgam waste, it's essential to partner with a waste management provider that can properly dispose of such materials to prevent contamination.

Consider your supplier of dental equipment's sustainability standpoint. Does your supplier recycle scrap metals, paper, bottles and cans, batteries, cardboard, and other packaging materials? Does it use sustainably produced paper for printed materials? Does your dental manufacturer use computer technology to minimise waste of upholstery, wood, and sheet metal? If you purchase an A-dec dental chair, then the answer to all the above is yes.

#### NO PLANET B

Sustainability in dentistry is no longer an option; it is a necessity. By adopting the five Rs, dental professionals can take meaningful steps toward reducing waste and creating an eco-friendly practice.

From refusing unnecessary packaging to recycling responsibly, every small action contributes to a larger positive impact on the environment





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# Why sustainable dentistry is the future

Ahead of his talk at the North of England Dentistry Show, Mark Topley explains why sustainable dentistry is becoming a necessity



hen you think about the future of dentistry, what comes to mind? Maybe advanced technology, smarter Al,

or even fully digital workflows? But what if I told you that the real game-changer is something far more impactful, rooted not just in innovation but in responsibility – sustainability. Surprised? Let me explain.

Dentistry is not isolated from the broader challenges our planet faces. Every decision we make, from the materials we use to how we manage waste, impacts the environment. What's exciting – and a bit confronting – is that sustainable dentistry isn't just an ethical choice; it's becoming a necessity. Whether driven by global efforts to combat environmental impact, changing consumer expectations, team demands, or even cost-saving opportunities, sustainability is the way forward. Here's why.

## SUSTAINABLE DENTISTRY DRIVERS 1. Global action on environmental impact

Climate change and environmental degradation are pressing issues globally. Governments and industries are stepping up, introducing tighter regulations and initiatives to cut carbon emissions and reduce waste. The healthcare sector, including dentistry, plays a crucial role in these efforts. Ignoring sustainability is no longer an option – it's about keeping pace with global progress and being on the right side of change.



Mark is the founder of responsibledentistry.com and the Great Boss Academy.

#### 2. Consumer demand

Today's patients are savvier than ever. They're looking for businesses that align with their values, and sustainability is high on the list. People want to know their dentist cares about more than just teeth. Being environmentally conscious can set your practice apart, building loyalty and attracting valuedriven patients who appreciate your commitment to doing what's right.

#### 3. Team expectations

Your team is your most valuable asset, and each member cares about the world they live in. Studies show that employees, particularly younger generations, are drawn to workplaces that align with their values, including sustainability. By embedding environmentally friendly practices into your culture, you foster a sense of purpose and pride in your team, which translates to better engagement and retention.

#### 4. Cost savings

Sustainability isn't just good for the planet, it's good for your bottom line. From reducing energy bills with efficient lighting to cutting costs through better waste management, even small changes can make a significant financial impact. It's not about spending more; it's about spending smarter.

#### 5. The right thing to do

Let's face it: we have a responsibility to do better. Dentistry generates waste – plastic barriers, single-use items, chemicals. Taking steps to minimise this isn't just about regulations or reputation; it's about leaving the world better than we found it. That's a legacy worth building.

## ADOPTING SUSTAINABILITY: PRACTICAL STEPS

Making your practice greener doesn't have to be overwhelming. Here are a few practical steps to get started:

- Audit your practice: identify where you're using resources inefficiently – energy, water, or single-use plastics.
   Knowing where you stand is the first step towards improvement
- Focus on small wins: change doesn't have to be big to be impactful.
   Switching to energy-efficient bulbs or introducing a recycling programme can make a noticeable difference
- Engage your team: get your team involved in brainstorming and implementing sustainable practices.
   Ownership creates momentum
- Communicate with patients: let your patients know about the steps you're taking. Use social media, in-practice displays and newsletters to share your journey
- Partner with experts: collaborating with organisations like Go Practice Green can provide guidance, tools, and resources to embed sustainability into your practice seamlessly.

#### A FUTURE WORTH SMILING ABOUT

The transition to sustainable dentistry isn't about perfection; it's about progress. Every small step you take makes a difference – for your patients, your team, and the planet. The future of dentistry is responsible, forward-thinking, and yes, sustainable. The question is: will you lead the way?

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-englanddentistry-show.

## **OIL-LESS COMPRESSORS** HIGH QUALITY, CLEAN, DRY AIR

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BioCote® Silver Ion Technology





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ave you ever felt knocked down by a patient complaint, a treatment that didn't go as planned or a difficult conversation with a team member? It happens to all of us. The real question is: how quickly do you get back up?

#### WHAT IS BOUNCEBACKABILITY?

Bouncebackability – the ability to recover quickly from setbacks – is a skill every dental professional needs.

Dentistry is full of pressure: patient expectations, clinical perfection, business demands, and the ever-present fear of a complaint landing on your desk from the General Dental Council (GDC). The difference between feeling crushed by these pressures and thriving in practice comes down to one thing: resilience.

#### WHY DOES RESILIENCE MATTER IN DENTISTRY?

Resilience isn't just about mental toughness; it has tangible benefits for individuals, teams, and the business as a whole:

- For you: studies show that dentists with high resilience experience lower stress levels, reduced burnout and better job satisfaction. In a 2023 survey, 67% of dentists admitted to feeling stressed at work, but those who had undergone resilience training reported significantly lower anxiety levels
- For your team: resilient teams communicate better, handle change more effectively, and experience fewer conflicts. Research in dental practices found that workplaces with strong resilience training had 40% fewer staff resignations



#### 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 groundbreaking NAIL-IT system to transform lives. For more details, visit www. meddent.co.uk.

#### WHO YOU ARE IS NOT THE CHALLENGES YOU OVERCOME... IT'S HOW TO OVERCOME THEM THAT COUNTS

 For the business: a thriving, engaged team directly impacts patient satisfaction, retention, and profitability.
 Studies show that dental practices with strong leadership and resilience training see a 20% increase in revenue due to improved team performance and patient loyalty.

## A STORY OF BOUNCEBACKABILITY: DR AS'S JOURNEY

Let me tell you about Dr AS, a respected practice owner and truly good dentist who would go out of his way to help his patients and his team. But when I met him at a Meddent NAIL-IT Experience event, he was a shadow of his former self.

He explained that he had withdrawn from his team, no longer made suggestions for improvements, and had stopped taking risks, playing it safe with both his dentistry and practice growth, which had of course become stagnant. He didn't know how to get back to himself and all attempts to 'snap out of it' had failed to date.

That disconnect – between who he was deep down and how he was acting – was eating away at him. His confidence was shot, and it was affecting his patient care, his relationships at work, and even his family life.

The cause? A long-standing and loyal patient had gone to the GDC with a complaint. No warning, no chance to resolve it first. For Dr AS, the worst part was that the entire practice knew about it.

PRIVATE DENTISTRY MARCH 2025 55

'When everyone knows, they make judgments about you, even when they weren't there and don't actually know the truth. You can't help but feel every look they give you is disapproving or questioning your decisions,' he told me. 'I feel auilty, even when I know I'm not.'

He was paralysed by false narratives: that those in authority had all the power, that he wasn't worthy of respect anymore, that he couldn't trust anyone.

#### THE BREAKTHROUGH

I introduced him to my write, read, tell (WRT) storytelling system, designed to help reframe and release emotional weight. These are the steps I took him through:

- Write. He wrote out the entire story from start to finish: his
  emotions, frustrations and anger. Exactly what happened
  from his perspective, what he would have wished had
  been different, what he would love to be able to say out
  loud in retaliation. As much of a proclamation of 'it isn't
  fair!' as he felt justified to do. No filters, no holding back
- Read. Someone else, another dentist, read his story back
  to him, word for word. Hearing his own words aloud gave
  him a new perspective. It allowed him to detach from
  the raw emotion and see his beliefs for what they were –
  stories, not truths. Yet it had been a story he was stuck in.
  It allowed him to feel all the compassion for himself that
  he rightly deserved instead of the berating he had been
  giving himself and others, and he witnessed first-hand
  compassion from the partner reading the story to him –
  realising how he did indeed have people who cared and
  were on his side; not everyone was out to get him
- Tell. I helped him to craft a three-minute version of his story, this time with a different lens: one of what he experienced in a relatable way to others and demonstrating what he learned and turning it into an opportunity for growth. Exposing the strength he had, his determination to move forward and how he could also use his story to now not only connect with others, but also inspire them with his journey. He performed it in front of the group, turning his vulnerability into a tool for powerful leadership, connection, trust, authenticity and growth.

That was the moment things changed. He let go of the belief that he was powerless. He saw the situation for what it was – a challenge, not a life sentence – and he found the freedom to engage again, to take risks, to lead.

#### THE NEXT STEP

After that breakthrough, I worked with Dr AS and his team using NAIL-IT's 'famfam' framework – practical strategies to embed resilience long-term:

- Focus to create foundation getting clarity on what really matters and where energy should be directed
- Affirm to embed using affirmations to reinforce selfbelief and confidence
- Make use of the past extracting lessons from experiences without dwelling in them and turning them into opportunities
- Failing is not failure understanding that setbacks are part of progress, not a reason to stop. If a failure occurs, it doesn't mean you are a failure
- Anticipate to acquire knowledge preparing for challenges instead of fearing them. Using past

- experiences to grow and mitigate repetitions of mishaps
- Model through a mentor we mentored and coached Dr AS and his team, and he attended mastermind groups and live experiences as part of Meddent's platinum membership, giving him the chance to learn from others with relatable experiences in all things dentistry and life.

#### BUILDING A RESILIENT PRACTICE

Resilience isn't just about 'getting over it' – it's a set of skills you can develop and benefits both individuals and teams. A resilient practice is one where:

- Team members feel safe to make mistakes and learn from them
- Stress is managed effectively, reducing burnout and improving job satisfaction
- Leadership encourages adaptability, innovation, and continuous improvement.

We worked with Dr AS's team on the developing these seven core competencies of resilience:

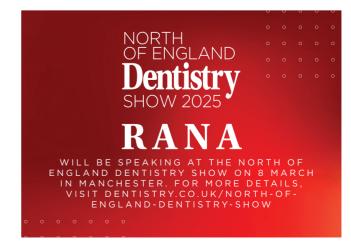
- Emotional regulation managing your emotions rather than letting them overwhelm
- 2. Impulse control responding thoughtfully instead of reacting in stressful situations
- 3. Optimism maintaining a positive outlook, even when facing adversity
- 4. Causal analysis learning from mistakes without blaming yourself or others
- 5. Empathy understanding how others feel and responding appropriately
- 6. Self-efficacy believing in your ability to handle difficulties and overcome challenges
- 7. Reaching out seeking support and turning difficulties into opportunities.

#### STRENGTH THROUGH RESILIENCE TRAINING

Resilience isn't about avoiding difficulties, it's about handling them differently. Whether it's a GDC complaint, a challenging patient or a difficult period in business or your personal life, setbacks don't have to define you. What defines you is how you bounce back.

Dr AS rediscovered his confidence, his passion for dentistry, and his ability to lead. And the same is possible for you.

If you want to develop true bouncebackability for yourself and your team, start with the strategies here and if you are ready to go deeper, let's talk about how you and your team can truly NAIL-IT!



56 PRIVATE DENTISTRY MARCH 2025

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## Practice philosophy

Mervyn Druian and Bernita Shelley delve into philosophy, and explain the role it plays in practice culture

hilosophy is a thought-provoking topic that explores the deeper questions about life, existence and knowledge. It can help us gain new perspectives and contemplate the meaning of our experiences.

This says everything about how you practise dentistry. It's the hand on the shoulder when receiving a local anaesthetic, it's the phone call following a dental procedure to check how you are doing. The philosophy of the practice feeds into the culture of the practice, which in turn will hopefully provide an uplifting atmosphere for people coming for care and for the people who are working in the practice.

In a way, the practice philosophy feeds into the team's attitude to patients and to each other.



#### 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*. For more de



#### Bernita Shelley

Bernital is a dental hygienist, coach and artist who blends her love for oral health, personal development, and creativity to positively influence others. She is coauthor of *Dream Believe Achieve*.

#### THE POWER OF CHOICE

In his 1946 book, Man's Search For Meaning, psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, who was a Holocaust survivor who went through three concentration camps in four years, wrote: 'We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be

PRIVATE DENTISTRY

taken away from a man but one thing; the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.'

So, we must remember that we have the power to choose our attitude and response to any situation. It means that even when faced with difficult circumstances, we still have the ability to decide how we want to perceive and react to them.

We can choose to find meaning and purpose, and to take control of our own path in life. It's a reminder that we have the freedom to shape our own destiny through our attitude and choices.

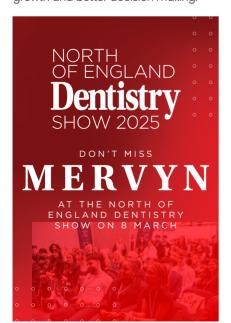
As a practitioner seeking to be better, feel better, and be successful, it is important to spend more time and build closer relationships with your patients and your team.

Providing the best patient care must be based on a foundation of mutual trust and respect. To have clear and timely communication and collaboration. To have enthusiasm.

#### FOUR OUESTIONS

Philosophical questions can help us gain a deeper understanding of ourselves, our values, and the world around us.

In personal life, they can guide us in making important decisions and finding meanings in our experiences. In business, they can help us shape our values, ethics, and long-term goals. They encourage critical thinking and reflection, which can lead to personal growth and better decision making.



Dr Omer Reed distilled a myriad number of the concerns that we face down to these four questions:

- 1. To whom do we owe what?
- 2. Compared to what?
- 3. How much is enough?
- 4. Who owns the problem?

Each of these questions is profound in its own way, but they are also subject to your own interpretation.

'To whom do we owe what?' could be a financial question or even one concerning moral debts, both of which can obviously influence how you practise. One is under enormous pressure if debts are proving difficult to resolve.

Once you have your finances in order and you can start to look towards saving or investing, then the question, 'Compared to what?' comes into play. What system suits you or what advisers are best for you?

At this stage you can also ask: 'How much is enough?' How much do you really need for your future (such as retirement)? This can also have an impact on the fees you charge and how you present treatment to your patient.

Our favourite question is: 'Who owns the problem?'.

To illustrate, let us tell you of a case that happened in our practice. We were treating a patient who was always arriving late or would be inclined to cancel her appointments at the last minute. In our practice, it's three strikes and you are out. In other words, you are invited to leave the practice when you fail to show for three separate appointments.

This particular patient was incensed and offered a whole range of excuses, from car trouble to baby care to needing to prioritise other appointments. So, the question is, who owns the problem?

If your communication is clear, patients will eventually understand your message. This patient accepted responsibility and ended up staying at our practice, becoming one of our most loyal patients.

In another case, there was a person coming for treatment with a broken tooth. The treatment was for a full coverage crown. The fee wasn't the issue here, but committing to the time required for the treatment. We offered the patient early appointments and

late ones, even on the day of their choosing, but the patient just had a list of excuses as to why they could not make those times. Despite having a broken tooth and uncomfortable, the patient was putting obstacles in the way of not being able to make the appointment. Again, who owns the problem? In the end, the patient's discomfort became too much, and they left themselves no choice but to commit to the appointment and complete treatment with us.

#### CONSTRUCTIVE ADVICE

Something else to consider within your philosophy is the matter of criticism – both the receiving and giving. It can be a delicate area to navigate in the workplace. It is essential to approach it with empathy, respect and a constructive mindset.

Criticism or feedback can help you and your team grow, personally and professionally, to improve and to refine ideas. Criticism needs to be given in a positive and supportive environment.

Receiving criticism must not be thought of as a personal attack, but rather an opportunity for learning. View it as constructive feedback and use it to make adjustments. Providing criticism can be helpful but be sure to highlight what you appreciate about a person's work first before addressing the areas that they need to improve.

When giving feedback, consider the timing, the setting and the delivery. Being respectful and being positive will have a significant impact on how criticism is received and ensure that improvement remains the goal.

Consider and set boundaries within your philosophy of professional and personal life, in order to maintain a healthy balance.

It is important to define what is acceptable with regards to workload, personal time and relationships, both at work and in your personal life. By establishing clear boundaries that are adaptable, you can protect your wellbeing, prevent burnout and enjoy life, leading to a more fulfilling and sustainable work-life balance.

This article is taken from Dream Believe Achieve, a book on how to grow, progress and succeed in dentistry. Buy your copy at dreambelieveachievesuccess.com.

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# A new era for dentistry

**Gary Chapman** unveils how PortmanDentex is doing things differently for its patients, practices and clinicians

aving worked in dentistry for over 40 years, I've seen first-hand how the profession has evolved – bringing both challenges

and opportunities. The merger of Portman Dental Care and Dentex marks a pivotal moment, creating a stronger, united organisation built on shared values, excellence, and the ability to leverage our scale for the benefit of patients, practices, and colleagues alike.

At the heart of PortmanDentex is a dedication to collaboration, consultation, cooperation, and communication – four fundamental pillars that define our success. Together, we are creating a business that supports our practices and provides exceptional growth opportunities for dental professionals across the UK and Ireland.

#### COLLABORATION: STRENGTH IN UNITY

PortmanDentex is more than just a dental group – it is a dynamic network of practices, clinicians, and support teams working together to achieve the best outcomes for our patients and colleagues. Our scale allows us to share knowledge, resources, and expertise across our network, ensuring every practice benefits from the wider group's experience.

By working closely with our practices, we support them in navigating the challenges and opportunities of modern dentistry. Whether through investment in technology, clinical training, or operational efficiencies, we ensure our practices are well-equipped to thrive in an evolving industry.



#### **Gary Chapman**

Gary is Director of Mergers and Acquisitions, UK and Europe at PortmanDentex.

#### CONSULTATION: A PEOPLE-FIRST APPROACH

Success at PortmanDentex is built on understanding the needs of our clinicians and support teams. Transitions – especially for practice teams – can be emotional and uncertain. That's why our integration process is designed with people at its core

From pre-acquisition discussions to ongoing support, we ensure our teams feel heard and valued. Our experienced integration specialists, many from practice backgrounds, guide new practices through this journey, helping them adapt while preserving their unique qualities.

## COOPERATION: DRIVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

A key advantage of our merger is the ability to harness the collective expertise of two industry-leading organisations. Our practices join a group committed to continuous improvement and excellence in patient care. The ability to collaborate and learn from one another sets PortmanDentex apart.

Our practices are not just partners in name – they are integral to our success. We respect and nurture each practice's identity and strengths. By working collaboratively, we help practices elevate their standards, streamline operations, and unlock new growth opportunities.

We also provide career and clinical growth opportunities for dental professionals. Through roles such as Clinician Engagement Lead and Practice Clinical Lead, we offer pathways for leadership development, enabling clinicians to mentor and manage while continuing to deliver outstanding patient care.

## COMMUNICATION: THE FOUNDATION OF OUR SUCCESS

Effective communication is essential. With a growing network, maintaining transparency and clarity across all levels of the business is more important than ever. We prioritise engagement with our practice teams, ensuring key messages, updates and strategic developments are communicated effectively.

From leadership calls and businesswide team meetings to local discussions, we actively seek feedback and listen to our colleagues and practice partners. Their insights drive our decision-making, ensuring we remain agile, responsive and true to our values.

#### A FUTURE OF GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY

The merger of Portman and Dentex is more than a coming together of two organisations – it is the start of a new era in dentistry. As PortmanDentex, we are uniquely positioned to shape the future of patient care, provide greater opportunities for dental professionals, and continue our journey of excellence.

By staying true to our core pillars – collaboration, consultation, cooperation, and communication – we are building a stronger, more resilient organisation that benefits everyone within our network.

Together, we are not just creating a dental group; we are reimagining the future of dentistry – one practice, one patient, and one colleague at a time.

Ready for a new chapter or seeking growth opportunities? For careers: recruitment@portmandentex.com, clinical opportunities: clinicalevents@portmandentex.com or for selling or growing your practice: acquisitions@portmandentex.com. Visit portmandentex.com for more.

62 PRIVATE DENTISTRY MARCH 2025

# 

DENTISTRY AWARDS 2025

GROSVENOR HOUSE HOTEL, LONDON

## ENTRY

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE PRIVATE DENTISTRY AWARDS 2025

ENTRY DEADLINE

12 SEPTEMBER 2025

CEREMONY

21 NOVEMBER 2025

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## THE AWARDS

THE PRIVATE DENTISTRY AWARDS IS A PRESTIGIOUS AND WELL-RESPECTED DENTAL AWARDS CEREMONY. CHAIRED BY DR JAMES GOOLNIK, THE AWARDS RECOGNISE OUTSTANDING DENTISTRY CARRIED OUT BY TEAMS AND INDIVIDUALS IN THE UK AND IRELAND.

## REASONS TO ENTER

ATTRACT NEW PATIENTS

BUILD TRUST WITH YOUR CURRENT PATIENTS

ENJOY AN AMAZING NIGHT WITH YOUR TEAM

## HOW TO REGISTER

GO TO DENTISTRY.CO.UK/AWARDS/PRIVATE-DENTISTRY-AWARDS AND CLICK 'REGISTER NOW'.

ADD YOUR DETAILS AND SELECT YOUR CATEGORIES.

ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 12 SEPTEMBER 2025 TO BE ACCEPTED BY THE JUDGES.

#### TO COMPILE A GREAT ENTRY, MAKE SURE TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. WRITE BETWEEN 750-1000 WORDS ON WHY YOU ARE A CONTENDER FOR THE AWARD
- 2. PLEASE DO NOT GO ABOVE THE WORD COUNT
- 3. PLEASE FOLLOW THE JUDGES' GUIDELINES UNDER EACH CATEGORY
- 4. ADD RELEVANT SUPPORTING EVIDENCE, INCLUDING PHOTOS, MARKETING MATERIAL, TESTIMONIALS ETC
- 5. SUBMIT YOUR ENTRIES BY THE DEADLINE OF 12 SEPTEMBER 2025.

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR AN AWARD, YOU SHOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO ANY ONGOING FTP INVESTIGATION BY THE GDC, OR BE PRACTISING UNDER ANY CONDITIONS IMPOSED AS A RESULT OF SUCH AN INVESTIGATION.

THE JUDGES' DECISION IS FINAL AND NO CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING THE OUTCOMES WILL BE ENTERED INTO. FEEDBACK WILL BE PROVIDED UPON REQUEST WITH ONE TIP TO IMPROVE

#### YOUNG DENTIST

## This category is open to those born on or after 31 October 1988

- Detail your professional credentials, achievements, training, and any accolades you have received
- Explain how you are different to other young dentists
- Share your biggest achievement in your dental career to date
- Share any hurdles you have overcome in your life/ career
- Provide evidence of how you go beyond the regular duty of care: pay specific attention to the fundamentals of dentistry such as caries management, periodontal care, tooth wear and oral cancer
- Explain your approach to diagnosis and patient communication, both in-surgery and on a wider scale if relevant
- Describe any work you do with charity or in your local communities
- Share examples (three to five cases) of your clinical work to showcase the breadth of your practice
- Supply any relevant patient and colleague testimonials
- Please include a high-resolution image of the dentist.

#### TEAM OF THE YEAR

- Demonstrate a great team approach and focus on patient care
- Discuss how your practice invests in team development and training
- Show how you are different to the competition
- Give evidence on how your team goes above and beyond the regular duty of care
- Include evidence of any work within the local community or a charity
- Include relevant testimonials and photos
- Teams from practices part of a group must enter each practice team separately.



#### PRACTICE PRINCIPAL

For principal dentists (or the 'lead' dentist in a corporately owned practice). This category is looking to recognise achievements of a dentist over the last 12 months. This category is open to those over 35 years of age.

- Demonstrate hard work and drive; how did you get to this point?
- Explain your leadership approach with your team and your patients; what defines you?
- Highlight any postgraduate training/development done in the year
- Provide any other supporting evidence/pictures you feel relevant
- Provide one or two patient testimonials received through the year
- Include a photo of the practice principal.

#### TREATMENT OF NERVOUS PATIENTS

- Demonstrate an excellent approach to welcoming and treating nervous patients
- Show how you are different in treating nervous patients
- Include marketing literature
- Provide evidence of patient satisfaction
- Include images and relevant testimonials.

#### CHILD-FRIENDLY PRACTICE

- Demonstrate your approach to child dental health
- Show us how you are different in treating young patients
- Include marketing literature
- Provide evidence of patient satisfaction
- Include images and relevant testimonials.

#### CHARITY OR COMMUNITY PROJECT

- Describe your charitable project and the benefits derived from it
- Explain why and how you support your chosen cause
- Describe the support you have provided and fundraising achievements over the year
- Give evidence showing how you have helped raise awareness for your chosen cause
- · Include supporting evidence and pictures.

#### **NEW PRACTICE**

Entrants for this category can only enter New Practice or Most Improved Practice. You cannot enter both. Your practice must have opened after 1 January 2024

- Provide images/videos of the practice, including before and after
- Show evidence of uniqueness in your practice and how you go beyond the regular duty of care
- Explain how the business has grown since it either opened or changed hands
- · Discuss team training and development
- Include examples of clinical excellence (eg before and after pictures)
- Include marketing literature
- Tell us if you work with charities or the local community
- Include relevant testimonials and photos.



#### MOST IMPROVED PRACTICE

Entrants for this category can only enter New Practice or Most Improved Practice. You cannot enter both.

- Include before and after pictures and videos, if appropriate
- Discuss the changes you have made and how the business has grown
- Examples of clinical excellence should be an essential in your submission
- Demonstrate team training and development
- Explain how your website or social media platforms have been used to show off your practice and include examples of marketing literature
- Show any unique features or design excellence that have been put in place to improve the patient experience and explain your objectives behind them
- Include evidence of patient satisfaction and relevant testimonials.

#### REFERRAL PRACTICE

- Examples of clinical excellence should be an essential in your submission
- Include marketing literature
- Explain the specialist services you provide
- Show us how the practice has been adapted to treat patients in specialist areas
- Discuss training/development information
- Provide evidence of patient satisfaction and relevant testimonials
- Include supporting evidence and pictures.

#### DIGITAL PRACTICE

- Explain what digital technology you have invested in and why
- Show how you have successfully integrated it into your dentistry and marketing strategy
- Explain the impact of technology on your efficiency and profitability
- Explain the benefits you are now seeing and how it has improved the patient experience
- Examples of clinical excellence using the technology should be an essential in your submission
- Include relevant supporting documentation and photos.

#### **WEBSITE OF THE YEAR**

- Show how content is supportive of the website's conversion rate
- Show excellent structure and navigation
- Demonstrate how the website design has been carefully put together to connect quickly with its target audience
- Explain what measures have been taken to reduce the website bounce rate
- Explain what measures have been taken to increase the website conversion rate
- Show the creative process that ensures the website doesn't look like a 'template' website
- Show website speed
- Explain what measures have been taken to make the mobile experience conducive to increased patient conversion
- Show SEO visibility and usage numbers
- Show website is GDC, CQC and GDPR compliant
- Explain anything that makes the website unique.

## HYGIENIST/THERAPIST, RECEPTIONIST, PRACTICE MANAGER, DENTAL NURSE AND TECHNICIAN

This category is open to all team members listed above — each award in the category will be presented separately

- Demonstrate their hard work and drive
- Tell the judges of anything outstanding they have done or been involved in
- Show why this person is special and explain any hurdles overcome
- Provide evidence of excellent patient care
- Give evidence of any connection with the local community or a charity
- Include relevant supporting evidence, patient and colleague testimonials and photos
- Include a photo of the team member
- You can only enter one team member category (ie hygienist or therapist)
- Include the name of the practice you currently work at/for.

#### PRACTICE DESIGN AND BRAND

- · Show evidence of investment in the design and branding of your practice
- Explain the idea and effect you are trying to achieve through the design of the brand
- Describe how you use your brand in all your marketing material and how this has benefited the practice
- Share the aims and objectives for the look
- Show any unique features, architecture, interior design excellence
- Present your website and how you use this to further communicate your brand
- Include examples of marketing literature such as promotional material and online campaigns.

#### PATIENT CARE

- Demonstrate your great team approach to patient care
- Include marketing literature such as a welcome pack or aftercare leaflets
- · Show how you are different to other practices
- Discuss how you provide continuity and consistency of care to establish trusting relationships with patients
- · Provide evidence of patient satisfaction and relevant testimonials
- Examples of clinical excellence should be an essential in your submission
- Include supporting evidence and pictures

#### PRACTICE OF THE YEAR

To enter this category you must enter at least one other category

- · Examples of clinical excellence should be an essential in your submission
- · Demonstrate your use of marketing through literature, social media and your website
- Give evidence of team training and development
- · Discuss your team's approach to patient care and how you establish trusting relationships with patients
- Explain how you go beyond the regular call of duty for your patients
- Show any unique features or design excellence that has been put in place to improve the patient experience and explain your objectives behind them
- Provide evidence of patient satisfaction
- Include supporting evidence and pictures
- Practices part of a group must enter each practice separately.



### HOW TO REGISTER

GO TO DENTISTRY.CO.UK/AWARDS/PRIVATE-DENTISTRY-AWARDS AND CLICK 'REGISTER NOW'.

ADD YOUR DETAILS AND SELECT YOUR CATEGORIES.

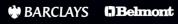
ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 12 SEPTEMBER 2025

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**WESLEYAN** 

# Minimally invasive tooth preparation course

A new course is being held 10-11 July 2025 at the Zirkonzahn Klinik DeMedici



new course has been launched within 'The Zirkonzahn School', the extensive educational programme for dentists and dental technicians developed by the Italian company Zirkonzahn (South Tyrol).

The new course focuses on the importance of a minimally invasive approach to dental treatments, combining digital and analogue workflow steps. It is conceived for all dentists willing to practice and improve skills on minimally invasive tooth preparation for different clinical situations.

#### COURSE PROGRAMME

#### Day one - from 9.00am to 6.00pm:

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

#### Day two - from 9.00am to 6.00pm:

- Finalisation of the preparations
- Digital scanning of the final models with the new Detection Eye intraoral scanner
- · Verifying the accuracy of the preparations in the software
- Introduction to the cementation technique and demonstration
- Crown cementation on the prepared models.
   The next edition of the course will be held on 10-11 July 2025 by a qualified dentist and allows a maximum of six participants. It takes place at Zirkonzahn Klinik DeMedici, one of Zirkonzahn's nine training centres located in South Tyrol (Italy), which was designed to host events focusing on interdisciplinary collaboration between clinics and



### Human Zirconium Technology

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







laboratories

# First VST course arrives in May

**Trycare** announces a new one-day hands-on workshop with Dr Abdelsalam Elaskary, founder of Vestibular Socket Therapy, on 10 May 2025

rycare are delighted to announce that Dr
Abdelsalam Elaskary, founder of Vestibular Socket Therapy (VST), will be bringing his internationally popular VST One Day Hands-on Workshop to the UK for the first time on Saturday 10 May 2025. But there are only 20 places available so early booking is recommended to ensure you secure your place!

An event not to be missed, Dr Elaskary's one-day programme of presentations and hands-on workshop focuses on the most recent and updated implant protocols, in particular VST which allows treatment of fresh extraction sites with immediate placement that reliably delivers optimised outcomes even in the absence of labial walls. Special emphasis will be on managing and optimising regenerative outcomes in the aesthetic zone.

ADVANTAGES OF VST AND THE 'SIX DAY PROTOCOL'

VST is an extensively scientifically validated surgical technique invented by Dr Elaskary and employed by many leading implantologists worldwide. It enables treatment of a wide range of socket varieties suffering from complete loss of their labial plates. This unique technique allows immediate placement in severely defective sockets and offers a protocol to place immediate implants in sockets with active infection via Dr Elaskary's 'Six Day Protocol'. Thanks to minimised intra-operative surgical trauma with less complicated surgical intervention, it saves treatment time and minimises the number of interventions. This innovative surgical approach reduces post-extraction socket collapse and the need for long-term provisional restoration, and provides predictable aesthetic outcomes.

#### VST ONE DAY HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

Hosted by Trycare at the Royal Leonardo Hotel, Tower Bridge, London, on 10 May 2025, successful

applicants will have the opportunity to learn

everything they need to know in order to place immediate implants in the absence of labial bone using Vestibular Socket Therapy. With 6.5 hours CPD with learning outcome C, the course fee is just £795 including VAT.

Places have already been

booked by international delegates eager to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about Dr Elaskary's Vestibular Socket Therapy.

#### DR ABDELSALAM ELASKARY

Dr Elaskary graduated in Dental Science at the University of Alexandria in 1986 and Implantology at the University of Frankfurt in 1993. In 1993 he also graduated from the Periodontics Department at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts, US.

Dr Elaskary subsequently obtained his Master in Dental Implantology at the Periodontics Department at the Health and Science Center of San Antonio, Texas, US, in 1994.

Founder of the Vestibular Socket Therapy treatment, he is the owner of the Elaskary & Associates clinic and educational institute located in Alexandria, Egypt.

Formerly Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Florida, Jacksonville, US, from 2000 to 2005, Dr Elaskary is currently Visiting Lecturer at the Dental School of the Implantology Department at the University of New York, US.

He is President of the Arab Society of Oral Implantology (ASOI) in Cairo, Egypt, and has authored three books and many articles in the field of dental implantology and oral reconstruction, which have been translated into several international languages.

For more information and to book your place, contact your local Trycare Representative, visit www.trycare. co.uk or email Denise Law on events@ trycare.co.uk.

## Complete add-on package for digital workflow

#### Zirkonzahn

With Zirkonzahn's new Detection Eye intraoral scanner, the patient's jaw can be easily digitised in less than 60 seconds. The scanner is easy to use and the choice of two different tips (standard and small) makes the impression taking more comfortable. The scanner is lightweight, compact and



Zirkon zahn

Human Zirconium Technology

ergonomic. Scanning areas don't need to be pretreated with powder and its art can be rotated to reach the most ergonomic posture.



Once the data has been captured, it can be auickly loaded into the Model Maker software module. The produced model is then transferred to the new Zirkonzahn.slicer software, where it is placed on the virtual printing platform. If needed, special supports can be also generated. The software is conceived for the dental workflow and pre-configured with settings for a seamless and well-calibrated printing process. At this point, the generated 3D printing data is transferred to Zirkonzahn's P4000 Printer either via USB, LAN or Wifi and the large printing volume (20x12.5x20cm) permits the simultaneous production of, for instance, up to 21 Geller models or 15 dental arches. The P4000 system for 3D printing works ideally in combination with the Printer Resins and the Printer Resins Waterbased by Zirkonzahn. The model can be cleaned in an ultrasonic bath and then cured in the L300 Post-Curing Lamp. It can be mounted into the PS1 articulator or ZS1 Mini-Arti to check the patient's jaw movements without using plaster thanks to the new Jawaligners PSI or ZSI

www.zirkonzahn.com

(magnetic spacer plates).

#### In a sphere of its own!

#### Trycare

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



Spherical particles are quicker and easier to pack into undercuts, reducing the risk of voids; easier to sculpt and carve, producing enhanced morphology of the final restoration; and a have a much smoother surface finish that has a natural high sheen that requires minimal, if any, polishing.

Tokuyama's development of spherical filler particles has culminated in Omnichroma, a colourless universal composite that matches every tooth colour no matter what the shade.

Omnichroma Flow Bulk is a low viscosity composite that can be placed in 3.5mm increments. Like the other Omnichroma materials, it delivers unprecedented colour matching, high polishability and stain resistance, and low polymerisation shrinkage.

01274 885544

www.trycare.co.uk

## **Visit A-dec at BDIA Dental Showcase** A-dec

For more than 60 years, A-dec has been synonymous with reliability, earning a reputation for exceptional quality and longevity in the dental equipment space. The A-dec difference mantra guides every detail, right down to the bolts and tubing used in its manufacturing



processes is thoughtfully designed for durability.

A-dec manufactures the majority of its equipment from raw materials, ensuring every component meets the highest standards and quality checks. While some of these details may be unseen to the dentist and patient, they enhance the comfort and functionality of every A-dec product.

It's only fitting that A-dec now sets a new industry standard with a 10-year warranty on all Core dental equipment, reinforcing its commitment to performance and reliability.

Visit stand C31 at the BDIA Dental Showcase to explore A-dec's award-winning dental chair packages, including the premium A-dec 500 and entry-level A-dec 300 Core, delivery systems, LED lights, dental stools and much more.

Can't attend? Book a private showroom appointment in any one of A-dec's three showrooms in the UK: Nuneaton, Bracknell or Warrington.

info@a-dec.co.uk unitedkingdom.a-dec.com/showrooms





## **Rana Al-Falaki** on skydiving, simple pleasures and being a sucker for sunrises and sunsets

### When and where was your last meal out?

To celebrate my daughter's 16th birthday, we went to a Japanese restaurant in Epping. It was lovely, and the food was delicious!

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

A If she was still alive, it would be Audrey Hepburn! So elegant, graceful, and suffered many hardships and traumas in her life, yet used them to contribute to humanity in later life.

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

Just as I was about to ascend 10,000ft to do a skydive, the instructor said: 'Don't waste time with your eyes shut or screaming in fear'. Life passes by so fast, so keep your eyes open, be present, enjoy every moment and don't allow fear to get in your way!

### $\mathbf{Q}$

## What was the last gift you received?

My daughter gave me the most heart-warming gift for my last birthday. She made me a box decorated with photographs of us together. Inside was a pop-up message that listed all the reasons she loves me. That really did it for me!

#### Describe your perfect holiday...

It has to be active – an active
body creates a restful mind! One
where I can shut my brain down
and enjoy the pleasures of nature, with a
comfy bed to sleep in by night. I draw a
line at tents! My best holidays are those
spent hiking all day, sunny weather,
the odd ice-cold plunge, the silence
of nature to allow my mind to rest and
intuition to come in, and good company
and conversation by night. Oh, and I
must have access to a decent cup of
tea – that is a deal breaker!

### Q

### What's your all-time favourite book?

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho.
This impactful book set me off on my journey of spirituality and personal development over 20 years ago.

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

I love to dance, so that isn't hard!
Put on some fast music, preferably
with lyrics, play it loud, and I am up! I
prefer the classic 80s and 90s – you
can never go wrong with a bit of Wham,
Whitney, or Lionel Ritchie!

#### What keeps you up at night?

I actually sleep very well. I have night-time rituals, such as avoiding electronics, eating, drinking and exercising too close to bedtime. Also, no blue light in the room, a temperature of 19 degrees, layered bedding, black-out blinds, and quiet.

#### How do you unwind?

I find the best way to unwind is through exercising. It is definitely my stress-relief! Even better if I can walk in nature to ground myself, no matter what the weather. I also enjoy the simple pleasures of relaxed, open and connected conversation with those I love, best enjoyed over dinner.

## Q

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

I am a sucker for a sunset or sunrise! I am very fortunate to have the most incredible view of fields behind my house and am treated to stunning sunrises on many occasions. Even after five years of living there, I still photograph every single one! This one was taken a few days ago.



Rana will be speaking at the North of England Dentistry Show on 8 March.

72 PRIVATE DENTISTRY MARCH 2025







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