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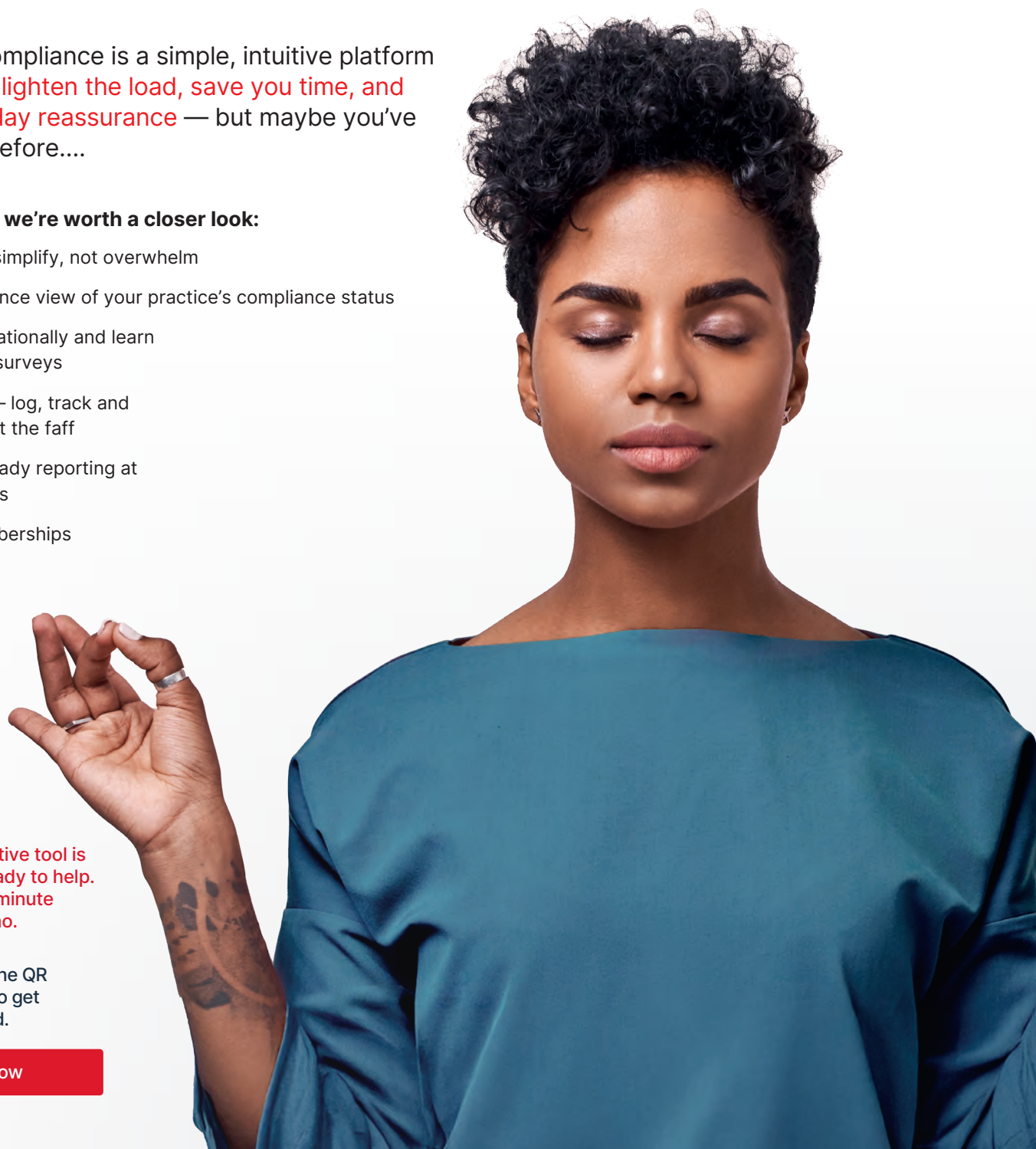
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Practice protection

Could your practice withstand a cyberattack?

Relight your fire

Andrea Ogden on crafting a joyful career in dentistry

Rustic luxe

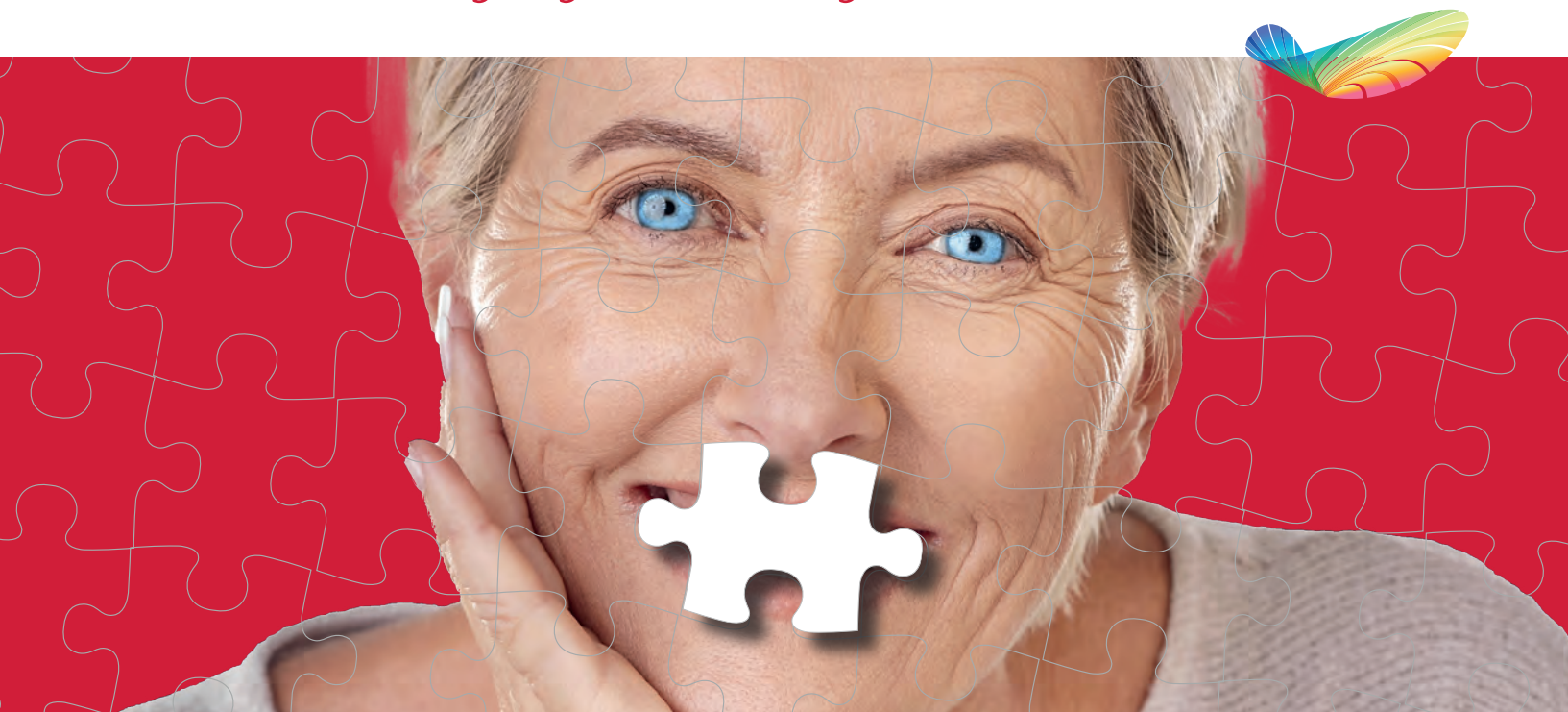
How I Did It: The Dental Barns

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Under attack

Siobhan Hiscott

Group managing editor

Owniing a dental practice in today's rapidly evolving world means navigating a far more complex landscape than ever before. Delivering excellent patient care sits at the core of dentistry, of course, and that remains unchanged – but the business environment around that has shifted dramatically.

Now, clinicians are expected to be entrepreneurs, visionary leaders, technology gurus, and risk managers all at once.

One of the most pressing issues facing businesses today is cybersecurity, with tech criminals claiming some very high-profile scalps of late. But it's not only not only the nation's beloved Marks and Sparks at risk: dental practices are far from immune to threats from the web.

Indeed, as Arun Mehra points out in his article on page 26, the NHS and wider healthcare sector have become prime targets for cyberattacks, and dental practices – often viewed as 'soft targets' – are in the firing line as much as anyone else.

From ransomware attacks that lock down your patient records to phishing emails impersonating suppliers, the threats are real and growing. It's vital that practices invest in robust security systems, ensure regular data backups, and train staff to recognise cyber threats. Ignoring them could lead not just to financial loss, but to damaged reputations and lost patient trust.

At the same time, artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming healthcare.

From diagnostics and radiograph analysis to patient communication and automated appointment scheduling, AI is no longer a distant concept – it's here. And while this presents exciting opportunities to streamline workflows and enhance patient care, it also brings challenges.

There are legitimate concerns about data protection, clinical oversight, and ensuring AI is used ethically and transparently. Practice owners must critically assess new technologies, prioritising those that support – not replace – clinical judgement.

So how do you protect the business from these modern challenges while continuing to grow and innovate? The answer lies in resilience. Resilience in systems, through regular audits and updates. Resilience in leadership, by staying informed and agile. And resilience in teams, by fostering a culture of ongoing training and open communication.

Staying protected in today's business climate requires a proactive mindset. Schedule regular cyber security reviews, consult with IT professionals who understand the specific needs of healthcare settings, and ensure your data protection policies are watertight.

When considering AI tools, do your due diligence – ask how data is handled, who is responsible for decisions, and whether the technology has been validated for dental use.

But don't fret – *Private Dentistry* is here to guide you through these challenges! In every issue you'll find articles to help you lead with confidence and navigate the latest developments in this modern era.



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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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Sexual misconduct experienced 'by up to half of dental professionals'

Up to 48% of dental professionals could have experienced sexual misconduct first-hand, amid warnings from the General Dental Council (GDC) about its under-reporting in dentistry.

A GDC commissioned review of studies exploring sexual misconduct in the dental environment found that the number of professionals who report experiencing sexual misconduct sits between 5% and 48%. The number that said they had witnessed misconduct ranged between 25% and 40%.

Researchers from the University of Manchester looked at 23 studies for the review, which produced varying results 'depending on population and study context'.

The regulator added that the findings show sexual misconduct in dentistry is 'widespread and under-reported' due to several factors, including:

- Hierarchical power dynamics
- Informal workplace gatherings that involve alcohol

- A lack of clear reporting mechanisms
- Lack of trust in outcomes
- Fear of retaliation for reporting.

Stefan Czerniawski, executive director of strategy at the GDC, said: 'Everyone should feel safe and respected in dentistry, but reports of sexual misconduct tell us that this is not always the case.'

'The findings of this review indicate that sexual misconduct is both widespread and under-reported, with victims often reluctant to come forward. That should be a concern for everybody who works in dentistry.'

'People with responsibility for dental workplaces should ensure that patients and staff feel themselves to be in a safe and supportive environment and that they have policies and procedures to support that. It is critical that those who come forward feel supported and protected.'

'For our part, we will use the findings to underpin further work to address

sexual misconduct in the context of professionalism in dentistry.'

ADDRESSING MISCONDUCT

The report provided several recommendations on addressing misconduct in dentistry, including:

- Developing training for dental professionals in setting boundaries, identifying sexual misconduct and managing instances
- Creation of safe dental working environments that minimise risk
- Implementation of robust policies relating to sexual misconduct
- Promotion of supportive organisational culture
- Implementation of restorative justice measures to rebuild trust between dental professionals and patients and improve workplace dynamics
- Advocating for balanced media reporting to prevent sensationalism and protect the reputation of the profession.



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‘Confusion and complacency around sugar’ – call for urgent labelling reform to protect oral health

New research from the Oral Health Foundation reveals that just one-in-five (19%) adults in the UK always check food labels for sugar content, prompting urgent calls for clearer labelling and stronger regulation.

The charity says current food labels are too complex and inconsistent, making it difficult for consumers to make informed choices. It is calling on the government to introduce mandatory front-of-pack sugar warnings, enforce consistent naming for added sugars across all products, and lead a public education campaign to help people recognise and reduce their sugar intake.

The findings show a trend of confusion and complacency around sugar. While many people keep an eye on calories or fat, fewer than one-in-three (29%) regularly check how much sugar is in their food. Alarming, around one-in-six (17%) never check sugar content at all.

Dr Nigel Carter, chief executive of the Oral Health Foundation, says the public is being ‘caught off guard by sugar in everyday foods’, and that industry and government have failed to provide the tools people need to make informed choices.

Current food labelling rules allow manufacturers to obscure added sugars under technical or unfamiliar names like glucose, dextrose and maltose. Traffic light labelling, portion sizes and daily intake guidance remain underused – partly because the systems are inconsistent and overly complex.

Despite being designed to support healthier choices, only 29% of people use traffic light labels to assess sugar content. Fewer than half (46%) check the ingredients list, one-in-four (26%) look at the grams of sugar per portion, while 13% pay attention to the recommended daily intake.

COMPLETE RETHINK

According to Nigel, the system ‘favours manufacturers over public health’ and is helping to fuel preventable conditions like tooth decay, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.

The Oral Health Foundation states the UK needs a ‘complete rethink’ on how food and drink products are labelled, with sugar given the same level of visibility and concern as fat or calories.

‘We’re calling for a national effort – from government, food companies, and educators – to empower people with clearer information,’ said Nigel. ‘We must stop treating sugar like a harmless treat and start recognising it as a serious health threat. Labelling reform is just the beginning.’





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Algorithms to predict mouth cancer could offer ‘earlier diagnoses’

Two new advanced predictive algorithms have been developed, marking the first time oral cancer has been included in predictive modelling. According to researchers, the algorithms are ‘much more sensitive than existing models’ and could potentially lead to earlier diagnosis of cancer.

In addition to information about patient age, family history, medical diagnoses, symptoms and general health, the new algorithms incorporate results from seven routine blood tests (measuring full blood count and testing liver function) as biomarkers to improve early cancer diagnosis.

Professor Julia Hippisley-Cox, lead author of the study, said: ‘These algorithms are designed to be embedded into clinical systems and used during routine GP consultations. They offer a substantial improvement over current models, with higher accuracy in identifying cancers – especially at early, more treatable stages.’

Co-author Dr Carol Coupland said: ‘These new algorithms for assessing individuals’ risks of having currently undiagnosed cancer show improved capability of identifying people most at risk of having one of 15 types of cancer based on their symptoms, blood test results, lifestyle factors and other information recorded in their medical records.’

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Defining success

Chris Barrow reveals why marketing, hospitality and CRM must dance together to fill the practice diary



CHRIS
BARROW

I have had the pleasure recently of getting stuck into three business books that have each, in their own way, challenged and sharpened how I think about the patient journey in modern dental practice.

The books – *Unreasonable Hospitality* by Will Guidara, *The AI-Driven Leader* by Geoff Woods, and *Endless Customers* by Marcus Sheridan – may have different authors, with different lenses, but a shared principle that sits right at the heart of them all: when it comes to building a business that's not just busy but booked solid, it's not your pricing strategy that determines success. It's experience.

PERFECT HARMONY

Let me say it plainly: price is not the problem. It's not what fills diaries. It's not what stops patients saying yes. The practices I work with that are running three months ahead in bookings – and charging fees that reflect their clinical standards – aren't doing it by discounting. They're doing it by orchestrating a seamless relationship between their marketing, their hospitality, and their CRM systems.

When those three elements dance together, you're not running a dental practice. You're running a brand experience. This isn't theory. It's what I've seen in action.

BE SMART

I've worked with plenty of practices where money is poured into shiny campaigns, digital ads and fit-outs, and yet they still struggle to create consistent growth. Why? Because they treat marketing as something that happens outside the practice, and hospitality as something vaguely 'nice to have'.

The smart practices – those creating emotional loyalty, not just transaction – understand that every single patient touchpoint, from first click to final review, is part of the same performance.

Inbound marketing sets the tone. Reels, blog posts, Google reviews, before and after galleries – these attract attention. But it's what happens next that makes it stick.

Internal marketing happens when your team treats every interaction as an opportunity to build trust. When your associate picks up on a story the patient shared three months ago. When the TCO anticipates a worry before the patient voices it.

External marketing is simply your reputation, projected into your community, your network, and your partnerships.

But none of this works if it's not backed by systems. This is where CRM earns its seat at the leadership table. Not as a diary. Not as a database for emails. But as a behavioural insight engine.

GOOD VIBES

A good CRM system nudges your team, gently and smartly: who's not rebooked? Who's overdue a call? Who needs a tailored check-in message to keep the momentum alive? It shifts your whole culture from reactive to

proactive. From chasing patients to attracting them.

And that's when it clicks. Your diary isn't a battlefield anymore. Your front-of-house team isn't firefighting. Your clinicians don't worry where the next patient's coming from. Instead, it flows. Because when marketing, service and CRM are aligned, the

patient doesn't just book. They belong. They refer, return and trust.

The greatest insight from those three books? It's not about systems or slogans. It's about feeling.

Create a patient experience that feels exceptional, consistent and genuinely caring – and the question of price becomes secondary. Value becomes emotional, not just financial.

I'm excited to share this message with my clients – and with you – start reading!

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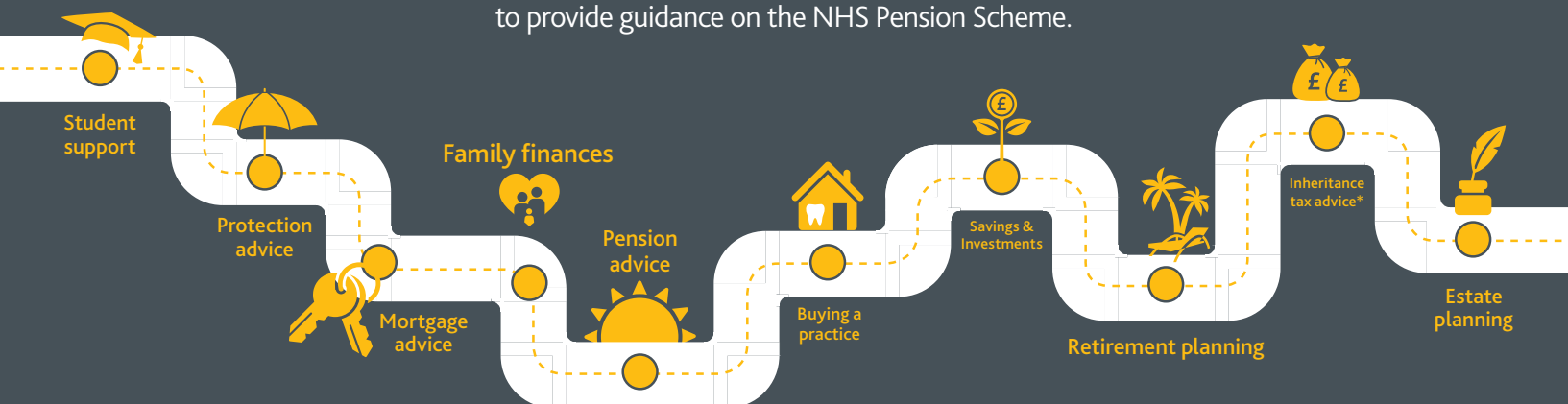
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The Dental Barns

David Drew and Keely Thorne view their dental clinic as a ‘celebratory destination’. Located next to an exclusive wedding venue, it sits comfortably alongside the other wellness and lifestyle businesses within this private courtyard setting

Two factors inspired us to create The Dental Barns. My wife, dentist Keely Thorne, felt frustrated in her associate positions because she could not provide what she believed to be the best possible care for her patients. I was made redundant as general manager at Dental Monitoring. Both experiences served as catalysts for change. I enjoy challenging the status quo and have always been passionate about delivering exceptional customer service. With The Dental Barns, we aimed to combine both.

FITTING IN

Location is key. Blackbrook Barns is an exclusive, luxury wedding venue set in the picturesque surroundings of Lichfield, Staffordshire.

The barns blend historical charm with modern elegance and wellness- and lifestyle-focused studios and shops complement the setting. There’s a bridal shop, florist, coffee bar, yoga space, hair and beauty lounge, a nail salon, and family photographer.

We believe our vision for a luxury cosmetic dental clinic fits perfectly.

We want to create effortless, personal moments that elevate the everyday. For instance, the practice’s waiting room provides views of the

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Blackbrook stream, making each appointment feel unique.

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People are here only as visitors to our practice or other businesses, so patients feel at ease from the beginning – even before entering the building.

DESIGN FREEDOM

The interior design was a joint effort; we had an empty shell, a stone floor, exposed brick and rafters supporting the pitched roof. There were no partitions, so it allowed us free rein.

I designed the structural elements, including the feature designs, the flow for patients and staff, and surgery layouts. Keely meticulously crafted every décor aspect, from paint colours and cabinetry to light fixtures. Our skill sets complemented each other perfectly.

Our inspiration came from interior designers – a passion of Keely’s – and the aim was to replicate high-end home interior design. We devoted considerable time to exploring boutique hotels, spas and various interior designers online.



The ethos

The Dental Barns is a destination where luxury, comfort and innovation redefine the traditional patient journey. Its ethos is grounded in three ideals: wellness, bespoke service/care, and exceptional quality. Designed to transform the dental experience into an enjoyable and calming journey, it aligns with self-care and integrates with surrounding high-end wellness and lifestyle businesses. Ultimately, the message is that dentistry can be both a positive and luxurious experience. Committed to remaining at the forefront of technology and patient experience, The Dental Barns continually refines its approach to ensure that every patient feels valued.

HOW I DID IT



The lifestyle businesses reinforce the message that you can look forward to a dentist appointment just as much as getting your nails done or attending a yoga session.

We all acquired units at the same time and have built a friendly community here. The relationships we've formed have significantly impacted our business, helping us move forward. For example, the family photographer captured images and advised us on how best to light the practice when taking patient photos. The collaborative marketing approach broadens our reach.

A CHANGE IN PLAN

We signed the lease a few days before discovering we were expecting Delilah, our second daughter. Our first, Evelyn, was just 15 months old when Delilah was born. We had to take time out to make it work, so this was built into our plans. We had a run at establishing ourselves for four months before Keely needed to take three months off for a short maternity leave.

Since we had barely laid the foundations, we chose not to bring in support from another dentist. This carried too much risk of diverting



us from our vision, which was more important than finances then, but we managed to keep hygiene running smoothly. It's pretty exhausting, but you get through it.

Setting aside time is essential, and my best advice is to 'design' a sustainable working week that accommodates ample time for the business, family and self. Then, revisit this plan as needed. For example, we adjusted our schedule to accommodate nursery runs, starting each day at 10am for the first patient.

My other advice is to include small treats in your workplace – simple pleasures are crucial, especially when a day proves challenging.

EQUIPPING THE PRACTICE

One of our best achievements is our bespoke dentist and patient station. This system integrates all our diagnostic tools on a single platform, including digital X-ray sensors, intraoral cameras, and a 3D scanner, allowing us to share everything with patients in real-time on two 55-inch 4K screens.

When treatment begins, it transforms into a fully equipped entertainment system for the patient. Why am I so proud? Patient feedback has been exceptional, and it is the most utilised piece of dental equipment in the practice, which is the clearest sign of a successful implementation. We have invested significantly in technology

and compromised on very little. We either did things right or chose to delay implementation. This has added weight and credibility to our efforts; not only are we offering a tranquil experience, which can be very difficult to find in a healthcare setting, but we are also providing the absolute best care. To achieve this, we need the latest technology (not always, but most of the time).

The technology enhances the patient experience in many areas – smoother workflows, better transparency and improved communication.

Selecting suppliers and technology was a meticulous process driven by our commitment to excellence. Reliability was paramount, but so was the service – our suppliers had to meet our own high standards for care and responsiveness. In some cases, having direct access to engineers and software experts played a crucial role in bringing parts of our vision to life, allowing us to push boundaries and refine our approach.

SENSE DRIVEN

We were highly commended for treating nervous patients at the Private Dentistry Awards. The priority here is not feeling like a traditional dental practice. Most nervous patients have had a negative experience at some point and are easily reminded/triggered.

We challenged ourselves on the senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. We looked at each sense and drilled down to how we could move away from traditions. For example, we opted to locate our lounge (waiting room) as far away as possible from reception and the noise of the surgeries and decorate it as though it were a snug living room.

Pop a freshly ground cappuccino in the patient's hand, and you've tackled all the senses right there!

To create a comfortable patient experience, we chose a Belmont treatment centre. It resonated with our core values, which when simplified, centre on three ideals: wellness, bespoke service/care and exceptional quality. Belmont embodies all three features. A folding leg-rest avoids appearing overly 'dental' – patients initially sit comfortably for a chat rather than immediately propping their legs up for treatment. The design allows for



HOW I DID IT



instruments to be concealed from view so patients aren't confronted with them as soon as they walk in. We also appreciated the luxurious fabric options and plush feel. It was the most comfortable chair we tried, and we sat in a fair few!

The most rewarding part of our journey has been making a real difference in people's lives. It has been incredibly fulfilling to witness patients transform from arriving in tears due to dental phobia during their first visit to eagerly anticipating their appointments after just a few sessions.

The Dental Barns focuses on helping patients manage anxiety associated with dental procedures, using techniques such as aromatherapy, noise-cancelling headphones, and ceiling-mounted TV screens. We feel fortunate to have a career that creates such a meaningful impact!

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

I like that our practice will become an ever-evolving business and never really be 'complete' or 'perfect', which will keep me much more entertained and enjoy business ownership!

The first (and most important) goal is to maintain our edge and continuously stay in the lead regarding technology and patient experience, which will be an ever-growing challenge.

Secondly, we want to add more value to the 'routine dental visit' to see it as a true wellness treat rather than an unpleasant rushed tick box. For example, we recently held a hygiene and reflexology session for VIP patients, which was exceptionally well received.

I envision the practice becoming a 'destination practice', where patients will be willing to travel to receive the



treatments and outcomes they want in a relaxing, tranquil location.

Our VIP list emerged from necessity more than anything else. Our priority is to deliver the highest possible standard of patient care, but due to our limited capacity, we had to be strategic.

The VIP list lets us prioritise our existing patients; the service is exceptional once you're with us. To maintain this level of care, we must limit the number of new patients we accept.

We only open up appointments to our waitlist members when we're confident that all existing treatments are booked and have 'white space' available. This sometimes means new patients may have to wait a few months for an appointment.

This approach isn't for everyone; however, it's worth the wait for those who value our bespoke, patient-first experience.

Who was involved?

Builder and cabinets
Pomec Dental

Marketing partners
Dengro

Decontamination and plant
NSK, Ultrawave, Cattani

Treatment centre
Belmont

Digital imaging
Dürr Dental

Suppliers
Align Technology, EMS, Enlighten, Ormco Spark, Trycare, 3shape

Eurus S6

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Get the look

From soothing mint to modern matcha, this month's *Private Dentistry* vision board is all about incorporating the green dream into your practice décor



1 Large Petal Ceramic Vase
M&S, £30

2 Yeabridge Green 287 2.5l
Farrow & Ball, £63

3 Studio Side Table
Habitat, £50

4 Jesper Fabric Accent Chair
Habitat, £200

5 Halo Marble Effect Coffee Table
Lime Lace, £310

6 HM Home Stoneware Vase
H&M, £24.99

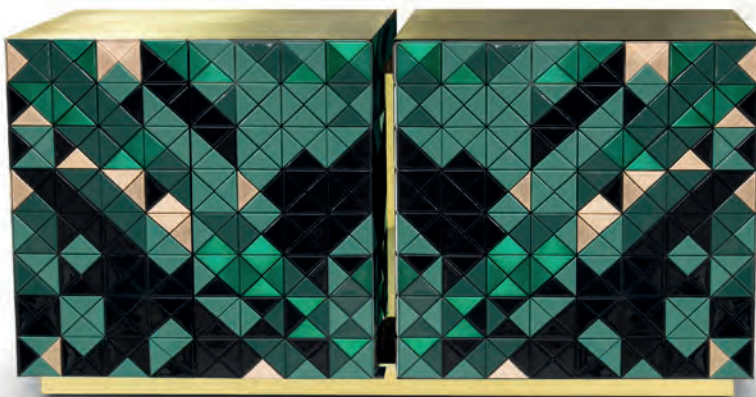


7

8



9



10



11



12

7 HM Home Wavy Mirror
H&M, £49.99

8 Feel Small Green Table Lamp
Boca Do Lobo, £2,250

9 Pixel II Green sideboard
Boca Do Lobo, £POA

10 Hamilton Leather Vintage Style Lounge Chair
Peppermill Interiors, £575

11 Pickett Bevelled Mint Tiles
Walls and Floors, £34.95

12 Hetti Cabinet Green
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Cyberattacks: plan for the worst

Arun Mehra explains why it is essential for dental practice owners to have a strategy to protect their digital information

As reports emerge that 'national treasure' Marks & Spencer could take months to recover from a cyberattack, it's an opportune moment for the dental profession to evaluate its own data security measures.

Cyberhacking is not restricted to big names on the high street (the Co-op and Harrods both fell victim shortly after the M&S hack). It occurs daily, and dentistry is as vulnerable as any other sector.

In July 2020, the British Dental Association (BDA) was the victim of a cyberattack that resulted in a data breach, with hackers accessing its systems.

In 2024, Facebook scammers fraudulently used the identity of a real dentist to elicit upfront payments for treatment before disappearing with the cash. Dentistry.co.uk reported last year on stark warnings about an impending crisis: British healthcare is perilously vulnerable to cyberattacks from Russian hackers. The analysis revealed that the outdated technology and legacy systems of our healthcare infrastructure could lead to disastrous outcomes.

HIGH IMPORTANCE

Cyber security within the profession is, therefore, crucial. Hackers often earmark smaller healthcare businesses because they believe these organisations lack the resources for sophisticated security measures.

This then makes dental practices prime targets for cybercriminals because they hold vast amounts of personal data, including confidential patient information, such as birthdates, addresses, names – and crucially, banking information.

In May, senior minister and cabinet office minister responsible for UK cyber security Pat McFadden warned: 'AI is going to increase not only the frequency but the intensity of cyberattacks in the coming years.'

With the growing dependence on cloud storage and processing, it is now essential for dentists to develop a strategy to safeguard their digital information.

In this article, Arun Mehra offers some vital tips for dental professionals looking to protect their business from cyberattacks.



1. STAFF TRAINING

Your staff are your first line of defence. Their training is just as necessary, if not more so, than any software solution. Well-informed employees are crucial to preventing data breaches and maintaining cyber security.

Most personal health information data breaches result from human error by healthcare employees. Training is, therefore, the number one prevention tactic. While computers should have antivirus software to block potential threats, educating team members on their responsibilities regarding dental records and patient data is vital.

Regular training sessions and written policy documents can help staff understand why security matters and how they can contribute. Encourage preventive measures, such as regular password changes. Most team members won't need to manage security, but they should be aware of the risks.

2. ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE

Using antivirus software is essential for preventing cyberattacks and significantly contributes to security.

An antivirus program scans files or code that pass through your network. It should then quarantine malicious files to ensure they cannot access and compromise the computer.

Depending on the company, these programs create an extensive database of known viruses and malware, match files against this database, and determine whether to quarantine them.

3. FIREWALL SECURITY

Installing a firewall secures your networks while potentially limiting internet usage for staff and patients.

A firewall serves as a virtual barrier that determines whether to allow or block network traffic. Similar to antivirus software,

firewalls scan for malicious code or known threats. If flagged as a security risk, the firewall prevents it from entering the network. You can configure the firewall to permit or restrict specific activities.

Several options are available; your internet service provider (ISP) may offer one, or you can purchase a software solution.

4. PHISHING EMAILS

According to the UK's National Cyber Security Centre: 'Phishing is when criminals use scam emails, text messages or phone calls to trick their victims. The aim is often to make you visit a website, which may download a virus onto your computer, or steal bank details or other personal information.'

As of March 2025, the number of reports received exceeds 40 million reported scams, resulting in 214k scams being removed across 387,536 URLs. So, how do phishing emails work? First, they can create a sense of urgency in their writing. This leads to pressure, distracting you from the overall message and forcing you to act quickly. It's a tactic often involving tight deadlines that can impact the reader's ability to critically evaluate the content.

Authority also plays a significant role in how messages are perceived. Senders may impersonate senior executives or trusted colleagues to lend credibility to their communication. This can convince recipients that the message is from a reliable source. Imitation is another strategy used to exploit familiar business communications and daily habits.

By mimicking normal processes, senders can trick you into reacting impulsively. It's essential to check the email's recipient; if it addresses you as 'friend' or 'valued customer', it might indicate that the sender lacks specific knowledge about you.

5. PASSWORD PROTECTION

It's an obvious point, but having a secure password can make the difference between having access and not.

Nowadays, websites require a secure password with at least one capital letter, six lowercase letters, and one number. People



Arun Mehra

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

often prefer to create passwords they can remember, typically using personal names and dates. Please don't! A helpful method is to use three entirely random words, ideally followed by a random number; however, any number would suffice, even a significant date.

Using three different words will greatly enhance protection against brute force attacks.

6. RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY

Regarding computer security, it is essential to identify the necessary actions and assign specific responsibilities to team members. This allocation of tasks is vital for effective management and the successful execution of security protocols.

A senior manager with a broad view of all risks and how to tackle them should have overall responsibility. Other individuals can handle particular aspects, such as installing security software.

Management should identify which information and technology are vital to the business; this is where the significant risks lie.

For example, damage to your dental

practice's financial or clinical system, or the loss of your dental patient list, could lead to the complete failure of the business.

Other information may be less important.

Similarly, some computers are likely more critical or more vulnerable than others. Identifying the risks and establishing what security measures already exist, whether they are effective, and what additional ones are needed will help you direct your security efforts to where they are most required in your dental practice.

Compile a list of all the cyber security measures that need to be implemented and create a spreadsheet assigning these tasks to specific staff members.

7. STAY UP-TO-DATE

Suppliers of PCs, software, and operating systems, such as Windows, frequently issue software updates to fix minor bugs or improve security. It's essential to keep all devices up-to-date with the latest patches and software updates. They can usually be downloaded and installed automatically.

Remember that just one vulnerable computer puts all the others at risk, so it's important to ensure all available patches are applied to all of them.

Although a firewall should guard your computers, you should still protect user accounts (each person's 'identity' with which they log on to a laptop) and sensitive documents with passwords. Because each individual should have a unique username and a password, access to different parts of your IT system can be limited to certain people. It is important to remember that some individuals may have more than one username and password, perhaps if they have multiple roles.

This not only protects against accidental or intentional damage by staff to systems and information but also provides further security against outside intrusions. To achieve this, you can use security options built into operating systems such as Windows or buy specialised software online.

You can decide whether password control for a given item should be basic (for instance, one password authorising access to an entire computer) or stronger (each



document or application requiring a separate password).

Some individuals designated as computer admin may be given access to nearly everything, to perform technical work. You should keep the number of admins to a minimum.

Security software usually generates records showing which employees have used particular computers or documents at different times. This can be useful for pinpointing problems, but access to these records should, of course, be tightly limited. Otherwise, people misusing the system could alter them to cover their tracks.

8. CHECK REGULARLY

Install and run antivirus software on all your devices regularly to check for any issues or threats. Conduct a review of all the devices your employees use to access or store patient data or dental records. Ensure they all have the proper antivirus, firewall and data protection features.

Removable disks and drives, such

as DVDs and USB sticks, pose security risks in two ways. They can introduce malware into your computers and be mislaid when containing sensitive information.

Ensure that, as far as possible, only disks and drives owned by your dental practice are used with your computers.

9. BACK UP YOUR DATA

Do this daily and in multiple locations. Maintain an on-site backup using an external hard drive, and ensure at least one off-site backup through cloud storage. Ideally, use two separate cloud services to create redundancy and minimise risk.

THE WEAKEST LINK

Sadly, no system is 100% secure, so plan for when things go wrong. Define what 'major' means for you; something that puts a non-critical department offline for hours might not be considered as such, but something that prevents serving customers or vital functions like payroll is.

Establish how you will know if there's a problem. Your firewall or antivirus software may warn you of unusual activity. Plan your next steps: what help should you call in? Do you need to contact key dental patients or suppliers? Can some functions continue using other computers or pen and paper while systems are repaired?

Ensure clarity on who is responsible in an emergency.

Your plan can be documented and delivered in training sessions. It may incorporate elements of your plans for other disasters, like a fire, and can be adapted for less damaging incidents. Security is an ongoing process, not a one-off fix.

A cyber security strategy relying on effective record-keeping helps avoid pitfalls and safeguards against attacks. Regularly evaluate security measures and maintain updated software. Remember, a business's security depends on its weakest link – a thorough approach ensures nothing gets missed.

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Specialist practice sales

Connor Bryan explores the advantages of using a specialist dental lawyer when selling your practice

Engaging a specialist dental lawyer to sell your dental practice can provide significant advantages, especially when navigating the specific complexities of this type of transaction.

Here's a breakdown of what you get with an industry expert and the potential implications if you choose a general corporate solicitor with no dental experience.

SPECIALIST DENTAL LAWYERS: ADVANTAGES

Let's look at the benefits of using a specialist dental lawyer, which will ultimately get you to the finish line quicker.

Industry expertise

- CQC compliance. A specialist dental lawyer will understand the Care Quality Commission (CQC) requirements and can efficiently manage/advise on the progression of the buyer's application, which is crucial for a smooth sale. There may be circumstances where the assessor will ask for specific documents that only you, as a provider and owner of the practice, can source. An experienced specialist dental lawyer can help manage this element seamlessly for you and can advise on the substitutes that can be provided in place of the documents requested, should they not be available



Connor Bryan

Connor is a legal associate at Carter Bond Solicitors. He has more than eight years' experience advising clients in the dental sector.



- NHS contracts. If your practice has an NHS contract, specialist dental lawyers know how to handle the transfer of this to the buyer by way of the partnership route – a process that requires precision and deep understanding of NHS ICB's and the intricacies involved
- Capitation scheme arrangements. A specialist dental lawyer will be familiar with transferring private patient plans like Denplan and know how to ensure the process is handled effectively, for example, sending letters out to the patients 30 days before completion and liaising with the practice's designated dental plan representative.

Risk mitigation

- Promises you give to the buyer. A specialist dental lawyer will ensure all relevant warranties and indemnities specific to dentistry in the sale agreement are tight and clear, along with guiding you through the

disclosure process one warranty at a time, therefore protecting you from future claims related to the practice as best they can. While a general corporate lawyer will be able to guide through the standard unspecific warranties relating to general business, a specialist dental lawyer will be able to guide you through the dental specific warranties to reduce the risk of a future breach of warranty of claim

- Red flags. A specialist dental lawyer can identify and help you resolve potential red flags early, such as leasehold issues, relevant planning permissions for the number of surgeries at your practice, unresolved compliance matters alongside running UDA performance calculations early to assess where you are based on your target and giving you the heads up that you need to focus on your UDAs to avoid any consideration being knocked off the purchase price



- Deep industry knowledge. Specialist dental lawyers live and breathe dentistry. Familiarity with the dental industry allows them to pre-empt and address common issues that arise during a practice sale, potentially reducing delays. Having deep industry knowledge can avoid hiccups that a general corporate lawyer would miss, if they are not familiar with the landscape
- Relationships with brokers and buyers. Specialist dental lawyers have established working relationships with dental brokers, banks, and accountants, which can streamline communication and decision-making during the process.

GENERAL CORPORATE LAWYER: IMPLICATIONS

Next, let's explore some of the possible implications of using a general corporate lawyer when selling the practice.

Limited understanding of key issues

- CQC and the NHS. A general corporate lawyer without dental expertise may struggle with the nuances of CQC registrations and NHS contracts. Errors here can delay the sale or even risk its collapse
- Specialised contracts. Private patient plans, partnership agreements between co-principals, and novation of associate agreements may not be properly handled, alongside obvious red flags in the due diligence exercise being missed could result in disputes post-sale.

Increased risk of delays and higher risk of future liabilities

- Extra research: A lack of familiarity with dental-specific processes means the solicitor may need to spend extra time researching or consulting, which could slow the sale. You should be paying your lawyer to get the job done, not to learn on their feet what a UDA is or how regularly autoclaves should be serviced
- Future problems. If warranties, indemnities, or lease agreements are not tailored to your practice specifically, and are not tightened accordingly based on industry standards, you could be exposed to disputes or claims after the sale.

Lower credibility with your buyer and hidden costs

- Lost faith. Buyers (and their lawyers, if they have instructed a dental-specific one) will be less confident in a general corporate lawyer, leading to more scrutiny or additional demands, which could complicate negotiations
- Buy cheap, buy twice. While the upfront fees might be lower, inefficiencies, delays, and potential post-sale liabilities could cost you more in the long run.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

If, having gotten a quote from a general corporate solicitor, you find them to be significantly cheaper, weigh the potential savings against the added time, stress, and risks

associated with their potential lack of expertise. Discuss the scope of services and ask whether they've handled dental practice sales before. Specific examples or references would help assess their suitability.

Speak with a specialist dental lawyer to request a detailed quote and ensure you understand exactly what the services include.

THE VERDICT

The higher fees of a specialist dental lawyer often reflect our ability to manage the transaction efficiently and mitigate risks specific to the dental industry. Using a general corporate lawyer may save money initially, but the potential for delays, errors, or liabilities can outweigh those savings.

For a transaction as significant and intricate as selling a dental practice, investing in expertise is often the wiser choice. Opting for a specialist dental lawyer will give you the peace of mind that your legal representative has deep expertise in the nuances of dental practice transactions. These include navigating NHS contracts, CQC compliance, dental plan agreements, and Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) regulations as discussed in this article.

While more expensive, such lawyers can streamline processes, mitigate risks and optimise outcomes.

Finally, this article isn't a substitute for legal advice, so if you're looking to sell your practice, always seek legal guidance for your specific situation.



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

Financial foundations

Graham Hutton shares three financial key foundations for a resilient private practice

Every successful private dental practice relies on more than just clinical skill or patient loyalty, it rests on strong financial foundations. These provide stability during times of change, support sustainable growth, and give practice owners confidence when making long-term decisions.

While day-to-day operations often demand most of your attention, stepping back to review the bigger financial picture is vital.

There are three areas of planning that can make a significant difference to the resilience and future direction of your practice:

1. Underpinning your partnership or shareholder agreements
2. Protection that supports continuity
3. Investing idle practice funds.

UNDERPINNING YOUR PARTNERSHIP OR SHAREHOLDER AGREEMENTS

Partnership or shareholder agreements are the backbone of many business relationships in dentistry. The reality is that they are often outdated, unclear and overlooked until problems arise – but a regularly reviewed, comprehensive agreement, underpinned with the right protection, can prevent misunderstandings and conflict further down the line.

When entering a partnership or working within an existing one, it's

essential that the agreement covers more than just profit splits and working hours. It should clearly outline what happens if a partner wants to retire, reduce their clinical commitment, or leave the business altogether.

Equally important is planning for unexpected events – such as illness or death – that can seriously affect the continuity of the practice. Reviewing and updating your agreement regularly with a specialist financial planner and solicitor, especially as the practice evolves, ensures that everyone's interests are protected and that transitions happen smoothly, keeping the practice in the right hands and protecting the legacy you've worked so hard to build.

PROTECTION THAT SUPPORTS CONTINUITY

Practice protection is about preparing for the unexpected.

Most private dental practices rely heavily on a small number of key individuals, such as the practice owner, manager and key specialists within the practice, to generate income and maintain operations.

If one of those individuals is unable to work, the financial consequences can be significant. Key person cover, occupation-specific income protection and professional expenses plans aren't just insurance products, they're essential tools for ensuring continuity and safeguarding the people behind the practice.



Graham Hutton

Graham is a dental specialist financial planner at Wesleyan Financial Services, supporting dentists with the intricacies of financial planning from business succession and retirement exit strategies to commercial investments.



Having appropriate cover in place gives peace of mind, knowing that the business can continue to function during periods of illness or disruption. It also helps maintain the financial commitments of the practice without compromising patient care or long-term viability.

STEPPING BACK TO REVIEW THE BIGGER FINANCIAL PICTURE IS VITAL

INVESTING IDLE PRACTICE FUNDS

The strategic use of commercial investment is the third key foundation.

Practice owners are no strangers to reinvestment, often upgrading equipment, modernising facilities or expanding their service offering. But the most effective investments are those made with intention and clarity.

Some owners may benefit from exploring investing profits outside those needed for day-to-day operations of the business to support retirement planning or practice improvements. Commercial investments can help your business make better use of surplus cash by aiming for higher returns than traditional savings, helping to offset the impact of inflation over time.

Leaving large balances in a business savings account may feel safe, but inflation can erode the real purchasing power of that money. By investing through your corporate entity, you have the potential to grow your funds over the medium- to long-term – though it's important to remember that all investments carry risk, and the value of your investment can go down as well as up. You may get back less than you invest.

Whatever the goal, it's important to understand how this decision fits into the broader picture, considering cash flow, taxation, risk and return, and how any investment aligns with both personal and professional goals. It may be beneficial to seek tailored advice to get the right balance for your risk tolerance and goals.

START BUILDING YOUR PRACTICE ON STRONGER FOUNDATIONS

Together, these three areas – clear agreements, strong protection, and purposeful investment – form the cornerstones of a financially resilient private practice. They help protect what you've built, support confident decision-making, and lay the groundwork for a smooth transition when it comes time to exit the business or reduce your clinical hours.

Private dentistry offers huge opportunities, but it also carries responsibilities. By strengthening the financial underpinnings of your practice now, you're creating a more stable and rewarding future – not just for yourself, but for your team, your patients and your long-term legacy.

Book a conversation with Wesleyan Financial Services by visiting wesleyan.co.uk/dental or calling 0808 149 9416. Charges may apply, but you will not be charged until the services required and the associated costs are agreed.



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Mastering productivity

Rana Al-Falaki explains how to transform your life from busy to balanced

What would you do with more time? As dentists, we are incredibly time poor. Having to see patients back-to-back, spending lunch breaks catching up on admin, writing notes, planning cases, staff meetings; attending courses at weekends and using evenings to complete the compulsory CPD that doesn't seem to relate to your personal development plan and what you would really love to learn!

Imagine having more time. Not feeling overwhelmed by everything you have to do, and instead excited because what lies ahead is everything you want to do. The good news is that it is possible. But to achieve it, you have to master the art of productivity, and it really is an art.

PURPOSEFUL ACTION

True productivity is not about filling your diary with endless to-do lists or being so busy you can barely think, let alone be creative. Most dentists think they are productive because they manage to delegate some tasks to their dental nurse or practice managers or bask in a day off every now and again. That is not productivity – it's sidelining.

True productivity is about effective, purposeful action that energises rather than depletes you. In dentistry – where demands are relentless,

decision fatigue is real, and burnout rates sitting at more than 50% – mastering productivity isn't a luxury. It's a necessity.

Yet most professionals approach productivity the wrong way. They mistake busyness for effectiveness. They multitask, over-schedule, or rely on dopamine-fuelled to-do lists. But did you know:

- Only 41% of tasks on to-do lists ever get completed
- Multitasking can reduce productivity by up to 40%, impairing cognitive performance and increasing error rates
- Studies show that productivity is highest when people work in focused bursts, not when they cram more into their day.

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Distractions, procrastination, perfectionism, lack of sleep, and unclear goals are just some of the barriers that sabotage even the

most dedicated clinicians. And when left unchecked, the cost isn't just inefficiency – it's burnout, disengagement, and declining mental health.

Which brings me to the point at which I started working with Dr GT.

An accomplished associate dentist with a packed schedule, Dr GT was always 'on'. Patients loved him, the team relied on him, and the practice seemed to orbit around him. But inside, he was running on empty.

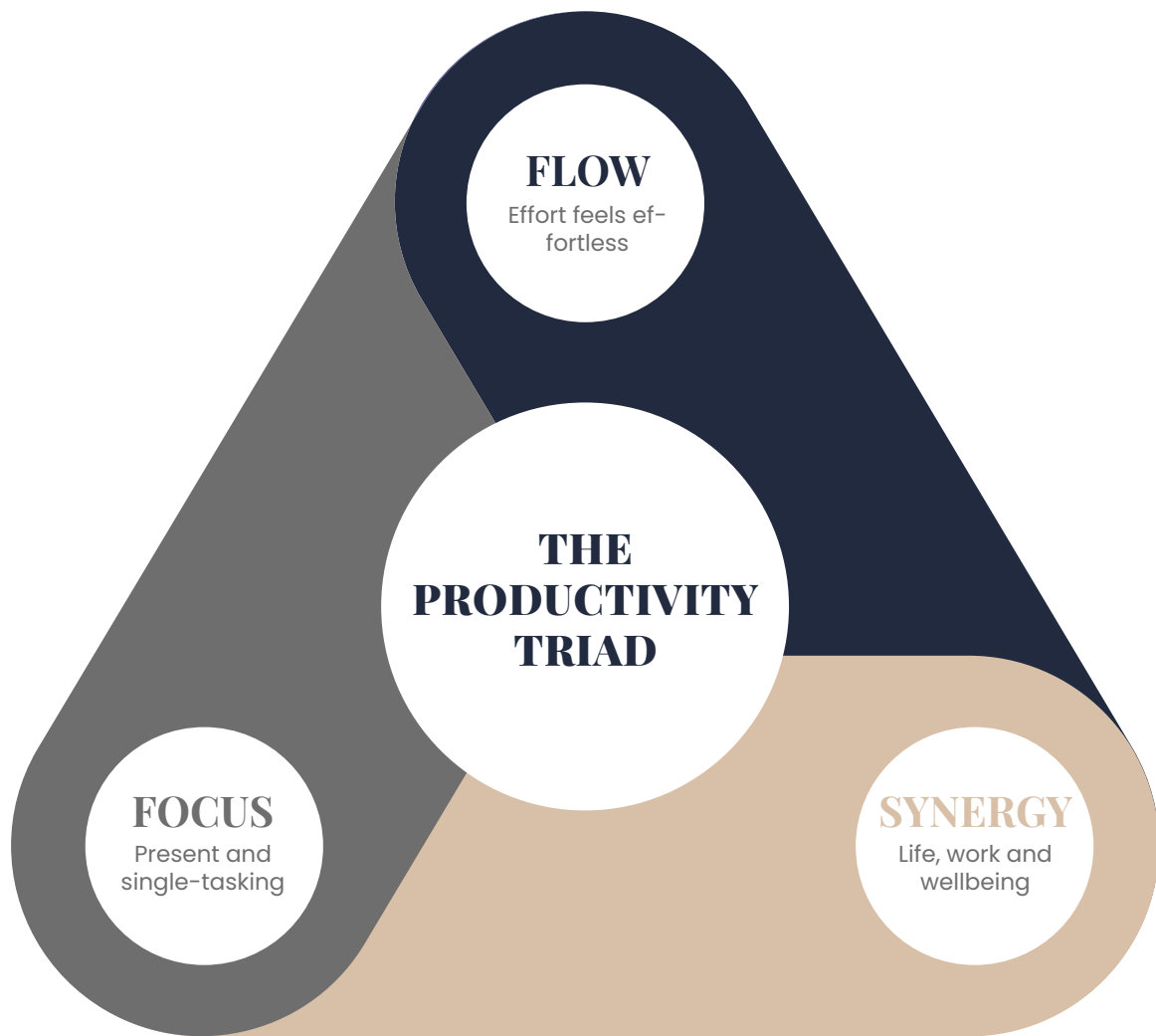
He said: 'I feel like I'm constantly chasing time. I stay late, I do everything myself, and I'm still falling behind. I would love to book a holiday but feel so pressured by being booked up months



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.





ahead, and my friends barely ever get to see me!’

He believed that productivity meant being busy. That if he wasn’t working, he was failing. He had longed to be busy at work by having a continuous flow of patients, but he hadn’t quite realised what that wish was going to cost him.

But the truth was stark: his constant rushing left him disconnected from his family, irritable with his team, and too exhausted to enjoy the career he had worked so hard to build, leaving him feeling as if he hated dentistry.

It’s vital to keep in mind that busyness is not a badge of honour, and that productivity without purpose is just motion without meaning.

When we explored his beliefs together, we uncovered the classic productivity pitfalls:

- Distractions and multitasking
- Procrastination masked as busyness
- Negative attitude and poor self-talk
- Lack of clarity or aligned purpose
- Perfectionism and need for control

- Neglecting sleep, nutrition, or exercise
- Inability to delegate effectively
- Poor communication
- Lack of motivation
- Fear of failure – and fear of success
- False beliefs like ‘no one else can do it right’ or ‘I’ll rest when I’m done’
- Poor time management.

THE PRODUCTIVITY TRIAD

Productivity isn’t about doing everything. It’s about doing the right things – at the right time, in the right way, with the right energy.

I introduced Dr GT to the productivity triad (see above diagram) taught as part of NAIL-IT Leadership, which highlights that productivity isn’t about doing more:

- Flow – the energised zone where effort feels effortless
- Focus – single-tasking with presence and clarity
- Synergy – aligning life, work, and wellbeing so everything flows better together.

Dr GT and I worked together, coaching and training on the seven Ps to productivity:

1. Patience – growth isn’t instant. Be kind to yourself and others. Give changes time to take root
2. Purpose – anchor your tasks to what truly matters. Meaning fuels momentum
3. Passion – do what you enjoy, and energy becomes self-renewing. Flow becomes more accessible
4. Prioritise – focus on the essentials and align your activities with your bigger, longer term goals. Prioritise your own wellbeing. You matter too
5. Plan – intentional scheduling reduces chaos. Build in space for reflection, rest, and play, device-free time, sleep and food schedules
6. Practice – rituals build consistency. Train your mindset, your habits, and your intuition
7. Perform – make optimal productivity part of who you are. Show up fully – and sustainably.

THE MOMENTUM: FROM BURNOUT TO BALANCE

Dr GT's transformation didn't happen overnight. Patience is, after all, one of the seven Ps! But after attending a NAIL-IT Leadership event, he experienced firsthand what it felt like to be in flow, focus and synergy.

He finally understood that self-care and self-alignment fuels focus, that purpose drives performance, and that leadership begins with how you lead yourself.

TRUE PRODUCTIVITY IS ABOUT EFFECTIVE, PURPOSEFUL ACTION THAT ENERGISES RATHER THAN DEPLETES YOU

He reduced his working days from five to four per week, without a drop in income.

He planned, reprioritised and managed his time more effectively and communicated more openly, freeing him to focus on leadership and clinical work.

His confidence increased, leading him to increase his fees and being busy with what he enjoyed rather than just busy and stressed.

Thanks to mastering his energy and attention, he completed his PG diploma in restorative dentistry, something he'd wanted to do – but had always been too busy!

At home, he became present and engaged: even managing some school runs, swimming in the mornings, walking in the evenings, and connecting more deeply with his family and friends.

He adopted a healthier lifestyle, not out of obligation, but because it now aligned with who he had become.

The Meddent training he had and his openness to the support

and guidance myself and our coaches gave him had allowed him to master his soul set (who he was inside), body set (his physical health), heart set (his emotional health) and mind set (his attitudes and behaviour).

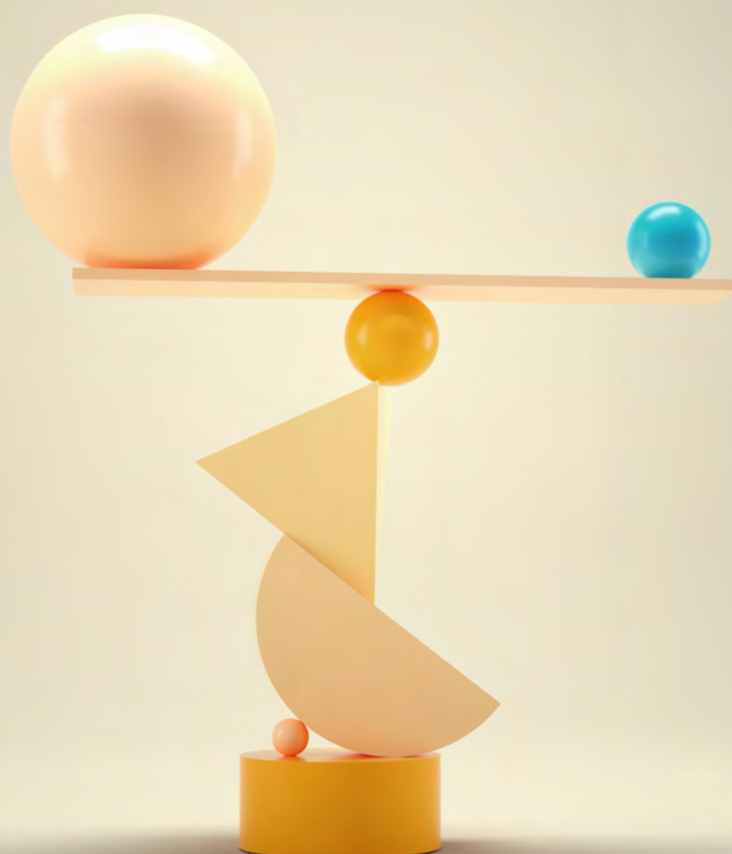
For Dr GT, productivity isn't about what you do, but rather who you become. It isn't about how much you can cram into your day. It's about how intentionally, efficiently and joyfully you can live it.

At Meddent, we don't just teach professionals how to be productive – we help them become leaders in their own lives. And when that happens, everything changes.

When you stop managing time and start mastering energy, productivity becomes a by-product.

Our survey says...

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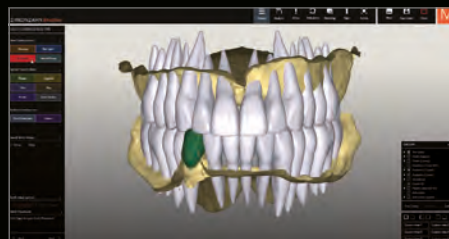


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From necessary evil to essential partner

Ryan Scott explains why it's time to reframe how practice owners think about temporary staffing in dentistry

For years, I've been having the same conversation – both out loud and internally – about how locum dental agencies are perceived in our industry. Too often, they're seen as a 'necessary evil' – something to turn to only when you're short-staffed and out of options.

But does it have to be that way? If we look across other sectors – healthcare, education, social care, for instance – it's common to see temporary staffing providers treated not as last-minute fixes, but as strategic partners.

Organisations are working proactively with their staffing partners to access specialist insight, increase resilience, and maintain high standards of service delivery through workforce flexibility. Why should dentistry be any different?

TRANSFORMING DYNAMICS

Having worked in recruitment and staffing for just over two decades, I've seen first-hand what happens when the relationship between a client and a staffing provider is built on trust, clear communication, and mutual respect. It transforms the entire dynamic. It's no longer just about plugging a gap, it's become about planning ahead, easing pressure,



maintaining continuity of care, and protecting quality.

The shift in mindset from 'just get someone in' to 'how can we work together?' is incredibly powerful. It leads to smoother processes, enhanced performance from the temporary staff (and, in turn, better retention of permanent staff), and very importantly, improved patient outcomes.

More value is placed on soft skills, team culture, and the day-to-day experience of the practice team.

Over the past few years, there's been a gradual but noticeable change in the conversation. More practices are engaging earlier, seeking collaborative input, and asking bigger questions – not just about how to fill tomorrow's shift, but about how to improve the whole staffing experience for both patients and professionals.

It's encouraging to see dental practices inviting agencies into broader conversations – whether around training, compliance or even culture. It's a sign that the 'necessary evil' label is beginning to fade and be replaced by something more constructive.

Using locum dental agencies effectively: five top tips

1. Think strategically, not just reactively

Instead of viewing agencies as a last-minute fix, treat them as long-term partners. This mindset shift can help practices access specialist insight, maintain flexibility, and improve patient care, turning temporary staffing from a reactive cost into a proactive asset.

2. Build trust and open communication

Successful partnerships rely on clear, ongoing communication. Invest time in building a relationship with your agency, focusing on mutual respect and shared goals. This approach transforms the dynamic from 'gap plugging' to a true partnership, enhancing both temporary and permanent staff performance.

3. Plan ahead to avoid crisis mode

Engage agencies before a staffing crunch hits. Integrating them into your wider workforce planning allows you to better manage unfilled vacancies, cover annual leave, and respond to seasonal demand without compromising patient care.

4. Prioritise cultural fit and continuity

Temporary staff can boost team morale and reduce burnout if they're familiar with your systems and culture. Early, proactive engagement allows locums to seamlessly integrate, ensuring a smoother patient experience and a more cohesive team.

5. Leverage fresh perspectives for continuous improvement

Locum professionals often bring fresh insights, best practices and renewed energy. Use this as an opportunity to strengthen your team's approach, drive innovation and create a more resilient practice.



Ryan Scott

Ryan is the managing director and co-founder of S4S Team, a leading locum dental agency based in Sheffield. With over 20 years' experience of leading teams in the temporary recruitment industry, working within education, social care and construction industry sectors, Ryan has built his business around his own core values of honesty, integrity and always working in an ethical manner.

THE SHIFT IN MINDSET FROM 'JUST GET SOMEONE IN' TO 'HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER?' IS INCREDIBLY POWERFUL

PROTECTING THE PRACTICE

The ideal time to engage a locum dental agency isn't during a staffing crisis – it's before one begins.

Forward-thinking practices are now incorporating temporary staffing solutions into their wider workforce planning, using them strategically to cover unfilled vacancies (or even as soon as a team member hands in their notice), to help with training apprentices, annual leave, or periods of increased patient demand.

By building a relationship with a trusted agency early on, practices gain access to a flexible pool of vetted, experienced professionals who will familiarise themselves with their systems, values and pace.

This not only minimises disruption but also boosts team morale, reduces burnout among permanent staff, and ensures patients continue to receive high-quality, consistent care.

Moreover, temporary staff can bring fresh insight and renewed energy into a team, often sharing best practices and contributing positively to the culture.

Rather than viewing agency support as a last resort, practices can see it as an investment in resilience – one that pays dividends in operational stability, professional satisfaction and patient trust.

Staffing remains one of the biggest challenges dental practices face, especially in the current climate. However, when temporary staffing is approached with clarity, care and commitment, it can move from being a reactive cost to a proactive asset.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

There's still work to do, but the more we talk about it, the more we challenge outdated assumptions, and the more we demonstrate what's possible when we work with practices – not just for them – as the dental industry continues to evolve.

Ultimately, dental practices and larger dental organisations should look to build long-term, reliable partnerships that support continuity, ease pressure and help their teams thrive.

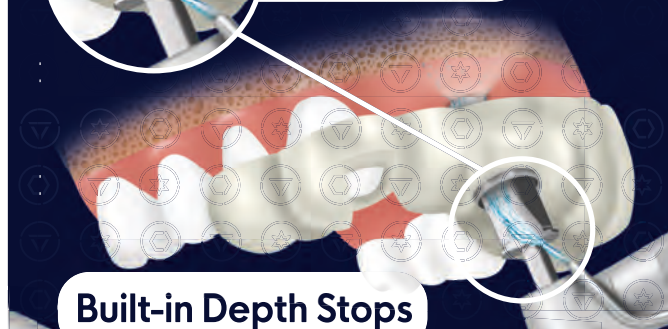
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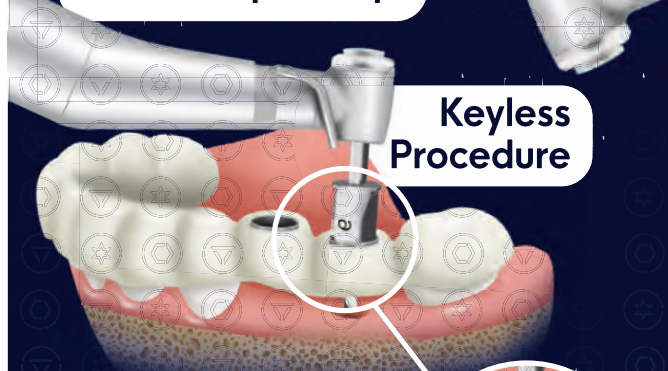
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Breaking the fee barrier

Barry Oulton explores selling value over price in dentistry and explains how to reframe the discussion around patient fees

Discussing treatment costs with patients can feel like walking a tightrope. Many dentists worry about seeming pushy or alienating patients, so they tread lightly, but often at the expense of case acceptance. Here's the reality: it's not the price that matters most to patients. It's the value they perceive.

If you've ever felt uncomfortable navigating the conversation about fees, it's time to reframe the discussion. By shifting your focus from cost to value, you can confidently present treatment options while ensuring patients feel empowered to invest in their care.

THE PRICE OBJECTION MYTH

It's easy to assume patients decline treatment because it's too expensive. But often, the real issue isn't the price, it's that they don't see the value.

Patients make decisions based on emotion, using logic to justify their choices. If they don't connect emotionally with the benefits of a treatment, they're unlikely to move forward, no matter the price.

For example, a patient might hesitate to invest in having a dental implant. What they're really questioning isn't the cost itself but whether the implant will deliver the emotional outcomes they're seeking: confidence, comfort and peace of mind. When you focus

on the value of those outcomes, you address the true concern.

THE VALUE-FIRST APPROACH

To shift the conversation from price to value, start by understanding what matters most to the patient. Then, frame your recommendations around the benefits they care about.

1. Discover their why

Patients rarely voice their true motivations outright. Asking open-ended questions helps uncover the emotional drivers behind their decisions. For example:

- 'How would having a healthier smile impact your daily life?'
- 'What would it mean to you to feel more confident when you smile?'

These questions help you understand what the patient values most, allowing you to tailor your conversation accordingly.

2. Highlight benefits, not features

Patients don't care about the technical details of a treatment. They care about how it will improve their lives.

For instance, instead of saying: 'This crown will protect your tooth', say: 'This crown will restore your ability to enjoy meals in complete comfort'.

Instead of focusing on the longevity of an implant, emphasise the confidence it will bring when smiling and speaking.

By aligning your language with the patient's emotional goals, you demonstrate that their priorities are your priorities.

3. Provide context for cost

When discussing fees, provide context to help patients understand the value of their investment.

Break it down into relatable terms. For example:

- 'This treatment costs less than the price of your daily coffee over the next year, but it will last decades'
- 'While it's a significant investment upfront, this solution will give you the freedom to eat, speak, and smile confidently for years to come.'

Framing costs within the context of long-term benefits helps patients see the treatment as an investment rather than an expense.

Taking action

- Uncover emotional drivers: ask open-ended questions to understand what motivates your patients
- Reframe the conversation: highlight benefits over technical features to connect emotionally
- Provide context for costs: help patients see treatment as an investment in their quality of life
- Empower your team: train your team to communicate value consistently across all touchpoints
- Follow up with confidence: use follow-up opportunities to reinforce trust and address any lingering concerns.



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).

**IT'S NOT THE PRICE
THAT MATTERS
MOST TO PATIENTS.
IT'S THE VALUE THEY
PERCEIVE**

OVERCOMING COMMON BARRIERS

Even with a value-first approach, patients may still hesitate. Here's how to address some of the most common objections:

- **'It's too expensive'**

Acknowledge their concern and reinforce the value: 'I understand this is an investment. Many patients tell me it's one of the best decisions they've made because of how it improves their confidence and quality of life'

- **'I need to think about it'**

Encourage a dialogue: 'I completely understand. What questions can I answer to help you feel more confident in your decision?'

- **'Can't I wait?'**

Educate them on potential risks: 'Waiting might lead to further issues that could require more extensive treatment. Taking action now can prevent that and save you discomfort and costs in the future.'

COMMUNICATING VALUE: THE TEAM'S ROLE

Presenting value isn't just one person's job. Every team member plays

a role in reinforcing the patient's understanding of the benefits of treatment. From the receptionist's warm greeting to the hygienist's educational explanations, consistent messaging across the team builds trust and confidence.

This is why I emphasise team training in my coaching programmes. When everyone in the practice understands how to communicate value effectively, patients feel supported and confident in their decisions.

This alignment often leads to increased case acceptance and greater patient satisfaction.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO SELL VALUE OVER PRICE

Ready to break the fee barrier? Here are actionable steps to help you shift the conversation:

- Ask emotional questions: start with open-ended questions to uncover what truly matters to the patient
- Reframe costs as investments: emphasise long-term benefits over upfront expenses
- Train your team: ensure every team member understands how to communicate value effectively

- Use testimonials: share stories of other patients who benefited from similar treatments
- Follow up: reach out to patients after their consultation to answer questions and reinforce the value of their care.

FOCUS ON VALUE TO TRANSFORM YOUR PRACTICE

When you shift the conversation from price to value, you empower patients to make decisions that align with their emotional and practical goals. This approach not only improves case acceptance but also strengthens trust and loyalty, creating a foundation for long-term success.

By focusing on what truly matters to your patients, you're not just discussing treatment options – you're helping them achieve the outcomes they desire most. This is the kind of care that leaves a lasting impact and builds a thriving practice.

By adopting this value-first mindset, you can break the fee barrier, elevate patient experiences, and grow a practice where patients feel understood, supported and ready to invest in their care.

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Creating a great culture

Amy Hansford explains how to avoid the recruitment merry-go-round by creating a motivated team



As attendees at the most recent Practice Plan Workshop Tour will have learned, having the right culture in your practice is essential to ensure your team works well together and, more importantly in the current climate, wants to stay with you.

You can have the slickest, smartest practice with all the latest equipment and great policies and protocols but if your team members' hearts sink when they walk into the building, regardless of all this, they are not going to want to stay with you and, pretty soon, will be looking for another job.

As most people in dentistry know, recruiting staff is difficult at the moment. As well as the hassle involved with the recruitment process, there is also a cost involved in filling a vacancy in the practice.



Amy Hansford

Amy is a regional support manager at Practice Plan. She has been supporting practices for 14 years to grow and maintain a well-populated membership plan drawing on her six years' experience in practice to help them run a successful practice.

Once staff members start leaving this can create instability and uncertainty amongst the team. Seeing a colleague hand in their notice may cause other team members to question whether they might be happier elsewhere too. This can set off a domino effect with multiple staff members deciding they want to leave, which could be disastrous.

This is why it is more cost efficient to invest in getting the right culture in the team than running the risk of being stuck on a constant merry-go-round of recruitment.

DEVELOPING A GREAT CULTURE

Generally, it's the practice owner who sets the culture. However, that needn't always be the case. Some owners prefer to delegate the running of the business to someone else while they concentrate almost solely on clinical work. That can work well if the person to whom things have been delegated is the right one for the business.

Culture begins with a vision for the practice and this needs to be expressed explicitly so all team

THE RIGHT CULTURE IN YOUR PRACTICE IS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE YOUR TEAM WORKS WELL TOGETHER

members understand it. It could be that the owner wants the practice to be the best in the country. It's then up to the team to deliver that vision. Every member of the team should play a part in this.

When you're considering your practice culture, one of the first things to do is to define your values. Values are beliefs that guide your behaviour.

On the Workshop Tour, teams were given the chance to drill down and define their practice's values.

Each team was given a list of values such as kindness, honesty, performance, growth and so on, and asked to choose the ones they believed applied to them. This helps to narrow down what it means to work at that particular practice.

Importantly, those values must chime with everyone who works there. So, when you're recruiting for a new member of staff, their values must align with those of the practice, as if they don't this will either cause conflict or they won't stay.

GOOD CULTURE IN PRACTICE

Once you've defined your values you need to lead by example. Demonstrate the type of behaviour you want to see in practice.

If one of your values is respect, then model that by how you treat your colleagues.

Encourage open communication. Nothing is guaranteed to create a bad atmosphere more than having a culture where people are afraid to be able to speak. Enabling colleagues to feel empowered to point out ways that things could be done better means everyone wins. Not only does this help to ensure you provide the best experience possible for your patients, but staff are able to feel they really can make a difference and that their views and ideas are taken seriously.

Set clear expectations and goals. Make sure that everyone understands what their role is and how they can contribute to the success of the practice. Being clear with staff about where they fit into the practice and its vision is more likely to increase their sense of investment in their workplace.

One of the hallmarks of a great culture is that staff feel appreciated. That's why reward and recognition are crucial. How you show your appreciation is up to you.

Marking successes, milestones and qualifications help to show staff that what they do and who they are matter to the team. You may choose to adopt a formal recognition scheme or an ad hoc one, that's up to you.

Regardless of which way you go, saying 'thank you' for a job well done is crucially important.

Avoiding the merry-go-round of recruitment: *five top tips*

To create a great practice culture and help avoid the recruitment merry-go-round, follow these five tips:

1. Define and align core values.

Establish clear, meaningful values that reflect your practice's mission and guide behaviour and decision-making. Make sure everyone shares the values to foster a cohesive, supportive environment

2. Lead by example and encourage open communication.

Model the behaviours you want to see in your team. Create a culture where the team feels safe to share ideas, concerns and feedback

3. Set clear expectations and goals.

Clearly outline roles and responsibilities, ensuring every team member understands how their work contributes to the practice's success

4. Recognise and reward achievements.

Celebrate milestones and acknowledge efforts to make team members feel valued. Whether through formal recognition programmes or simple thank you notes, consistent appreciation builds morale

5. Invest in professional growth and a positive work environment.

Support continuous learning and development, both professionally and personally. In addition, maintain organised, calm spaces to reduce stress and boost productivity.



Invest in training and developing your team. Having a team that's committed to continuing professional development is good for them and good for your patients too. As well as helping them to keep up to date with new developments and technologies, knowing that you're committed to helping them develop their skills will help to make your team feel valued.

Promote respect for the working environment. While you may not subscribe to the principles of Feng Shui, the Chinese practice of organising spaces to optimise the flow of energy, there's no doubt that people are more productive in calm, organised environments.

Try to ensure that your public areas are welcoming to patients and that your staff break areas offer the opportunity to relax for a few minutes during the day.

WRITE IT DOWN

We have developed a culture book at Practice Plan that outlines our vision and values and gives a flavour of what it means to work here. Why not develop a culture book of your own to showcase your practice's vision and values?

Our culture book looks impressive as we're lucky enough to have a team of first-class graphic designers in-house. However, a culture book need only be a document put together in the practice.

It can be a useful way of making sure that everyone is metaphorically (and literally!) on the same page. It can serve as a central source of information about the practice's vision and values. It should be available to everyone in the practice and could also be included in a starter pack for any new starters joining the practice.

There's no doubt that fostering a great culture in practice gives the best chance of creating and keeping a motivated team. It may take some effort and commitment to achieve, but it will pay dividends in the long run.

For more information, call Practice Plan on 01691 684165 or visit www.practiceplan.co.uk.



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MC Repairs: your dental equipment partner

Carl Wise discusses the importance of an independent partner to deliver exceptional repairs and equipment to your practice

In the world of dental care, reliable, high-quality dental equipment forms the backbone of an efficient practice, alongside the top-tier service delivered to patients.

At MC Repairs & MC Dental, we're your dedicated, independent partners, offering a wide range of services to keep your dental practice running smoothly and eliminating downtime at your surgery. Here's a deeper look into our commitment to dental excellence and what sets us apart from other suppliers and repair centres.

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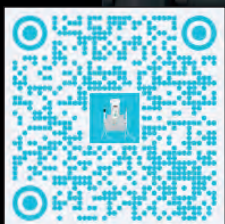


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Imposter syndrome in dentistry

Faye Mear explores imposter syndrome – and explains how to understand, manage and overcome self-doubt

In the high-achieving world of dentistry, where clinical excellence meets business acumen and patient care, many professionals quietly grapple with a nagging internal voice: 'I'm not good enough. I don't belong here.'

This persistent self-doubt, known as imposter syndrome, affects individuals at all stages of their careers – from dental students to experienced practice owners. But what exactly is imposter syndrome, why is it so common in dentistry, and how can individuals manage it, both personally and professionally?

WHAT IS IMPOSTER SYNDROME?

First coined in 1978 by psychologists Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes, imposter syndrome describes a psychological pattern where individuals doubt their accomplishments and fear being exposed as a 'fraud' – despite evidence of their competence.

It's not a mental illness, but a deeply ingrained sense of self-doubt, often accompanied by anxiety, perfectionism and a chronic fear of failure.

In dentistry, where dental professionals are expected to maintain technical precision, manage complex patient interactions, as well as navigate the business side of being in private practice, these pressures and responsibilities can feel very



high. And falling into a patterns of negative thinking and self-doubt can have a detrimental impact on your performance, your ability to achieve your full potential as well as your job satisfaction. At its worst, it can lead to breakdown or burnout.

THE FIVE TYPES OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Imposter syndrome can come in different guises and Dr Valerie Young, an expert on the issue, identified five sub-types that illustrate how this kind of self-doubt can manifest in different personalities:

1. The perfectionist – sets excessively high goals and feels like a failure when anything falls short of 100%. Often plagued by anxiety and over-preparation

2. The superhuman – pushes themselves to work harder than everyone else to prove their worth, often at the expense of their wellbeing
3. The natural genius – believes their competence comes from innate talent. They believe they should get things right first time and any difficulties or setbacks are evidence of inadequacy
4. The soloist – feels they must accomplish everything alone. Asking for help is seen as a weakness or a sign of incompetence
5. The expert – measures competence by 'how much' they know. They constantly seek additional training or qualifications, worried they'll be exposed for not knowing enough. People with imposter syndrome tend to be intelligent high achievers and are



Faye Mear

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also likely to be perfectionists – which I think sums up many dentists to a tee!

You may identify with more than one of the above categories – which is not unusual, but understanding your type, or types, is a great first step towards recognising what's going on for you.

IMPOSTER SYNDROME AND DENTAL CAREER STAGES

Imposter syndrome can strike at any time, and there will be times in your career when you may be particularly vulnerable. These tend to be when you're facing a new challenge – it could be starting a new job, learning new skills or when encountering new situations.

Dental students and new graduates

For dental students and new graduates, some typical thoughts include: 'Everyone here is smarter than me' and 'What if I mess up this restoration?'

Imposter syndrome can be particularly acute at these stages of your career because everything is new! The pressure to get a place at dental school is incredible – there are 1,100 UK places and approximately 9,000 applicants each year – so the expectations are high before you even start to study.

Next, the transition from theoretical knowledge to clinical application is daunting. Constant assessment, comparison with your peers and the pressure to perform in front of supervisors can leave students feeling like they don't belong.

Typical imposter types at this time can be the 'natural genius' and the 'expert', but remember most students and graduates feel this way. Talking to your peers honestly will probably reveal exactly this and will reduce feelings of isolation, for you and them.

It's also a good idea to keep a record of your progress that you can use to reflect how far you have come and seeking constructive, regular feedback from tutors, trainers and mentors will help you maintain realistic self-assessment and boost your confidence.

Early-career dentists and associates

For early-career dentists and associates, some typical thoughts include: 'Am I really ready to treat

patients on my own?' and 'What if a patient complains?'

Newly qualified dentists, especially associates in private practice, often face increased autonomy and responsibility, yet may still feel ill-equipped. They may question their clinical decisions, second-guess treatment plans and fear they don't know enough and that they're not up to the job.

Complex cases, difficult patients plus comparisons with senior colleagues, as well as your peers, can be common triggers giving rise to the 'perfectionist' or the 'soloist' type feelings. Even if it's not pro-offered by your practice, actively seeking out a trusted senior colleague for debrief after challenging cases will build your resilience and confidence.

Use any discussion groups you are part of as an opportunity for shared learning and collaboration, rather than a place to

shame yourself or others. Accept that perfection is not possible, but progress is and mistakes and uncertainty are a natural part of learning and growth.

Mid-career and practice owners

As a mid-career dentist or practice owner, you might be thinking: 'Why do I still feel like I don't know enough?' or 'I run a successful practice – why can't I enjoy it?'

Experienced dentists aren't immune to imposter syndrome and feelings can actually intensify with success. Those who become practice owners or principals will have leadership responsibilities, staff management and financial pressures, plus the weight of having an established reputation that must be protected means feeling like the 'superhuman' or the 'expert' is understandable.

Just because you are an experienced clinician does not give you automatic business acumen, so seeking external support through business coaching and other professional services is a must.

You do not have to do everything! Build a practice team around you whom you trust and who have a range of skills and outsource to specialist businesses for areas you are lacking, such as marketing, finance and legal.

Delegating to your team and to specialist professionals will lighten your load of responsibility. Adopt a culture of appreciation within your team, to acknowledge support and celebrate wins together – and include yourself in that, too.

DISMANTLE THE ILLUSION

Realising that imposter syndrome is a common companion for many, but that it can be managed is important. Understanding the different types and recognising how it can manifest means you can begin to dismantle the illusion of fraudulence.

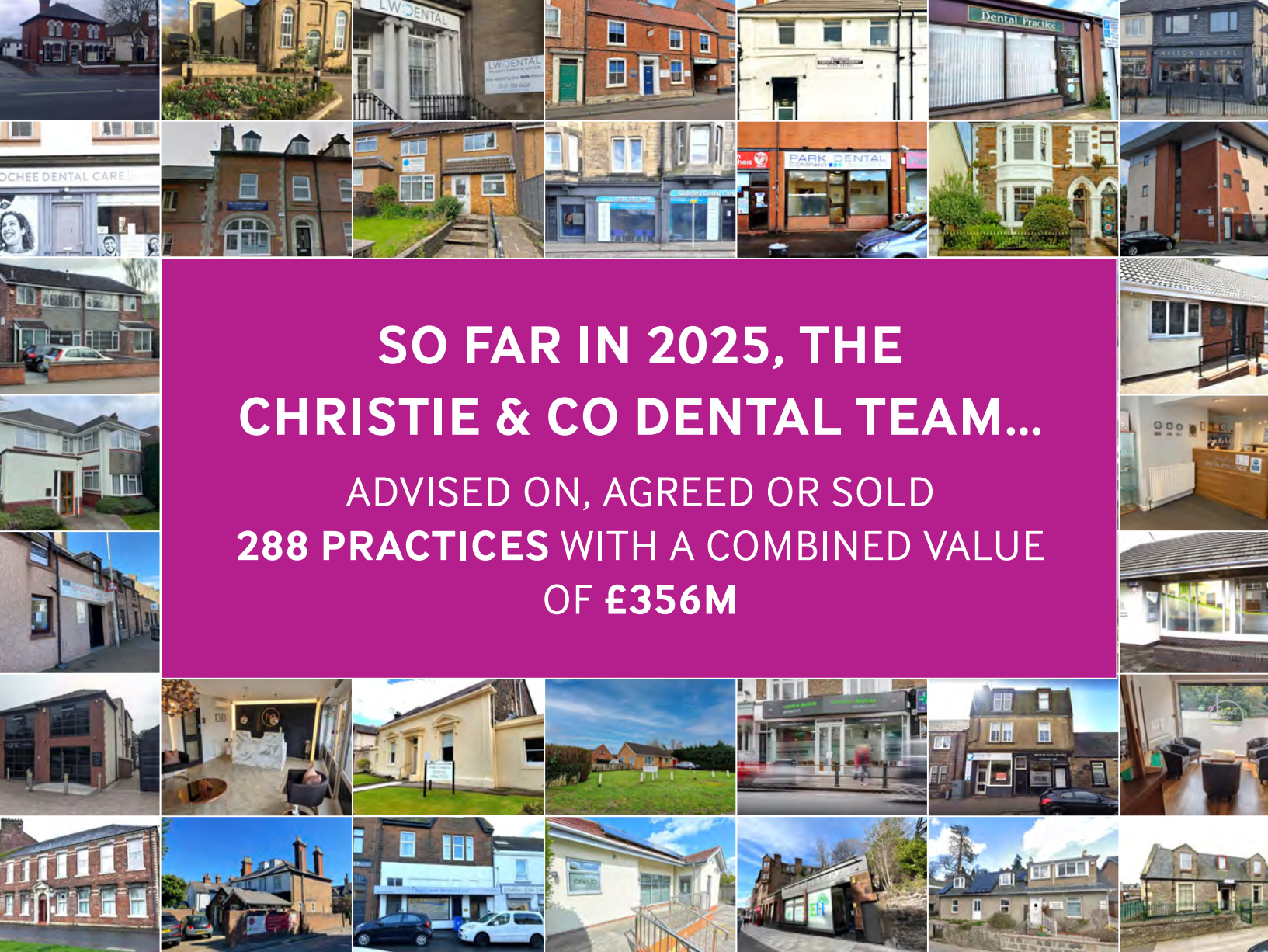
Being a good dentist isn't about being perfect or ever doubting yourself – it's about constantly showing up, learning, adapting, growing and continuing to care.

And finally, know that a true imposter would never worry. The very fact you have these feelings and concerns means you are most definitely not the imposter!

Overcoming imposter syndrome: strategies

Follow these practical steps to manage imposter feelings, regardless of your career stage:

- Name it to tame it: recognise and label the feeling as imposter syndrome. Awareness reduces its power
- Talk about it: speaking openly with peers will give you support, help normalise the experience and stop feelings of shame
- Reframe your thinking: instead of 'I don't know what I'm doing', try 'I'm learning, and that's ok'. Cognitive reframing helps replace irrational thoughts with balanced ones
- Record achievements: document your progress and success – new skills qualifications and certificates, patient feedback and thank yous all reflect positive activities and outcomes to quash doubt when it creeps in
- Aim for excellence, not perfection: establish achievable rather than unrealistic expectations.



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Building a first-class team

Mervyn Druian and **Bernita Shelley** reveal the essential elements of creating a happy and high-performing team

Team building is crucial for creating a positive and collaborative work environment for everyone. It helps foster strong relationships among team members and promotes effective communication and cooperation.

You need to invest in your team. Your team is the lifeblood of your practice. Investing in team members should be strategic and a long-term commitment. You do not want a high turnover of staff; the goal is for them to want to stay with you for a very long time. For you to be as committed to them as they can be to you. The more you invest in your team, the more growth and profitability you will achieve.

WORKING TOGETHER

By building a strong team, your dental practice can provide better patient care, increase productivity, enhance problem-solving skills and create a supportive and harmonious workplace. However, for your team to work in unison, you have to ensure you have excellent systems in place.



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 details, email contact@dba-success.co.uk.



Bernita Shelley

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

It's key that you have connection, interconnection and communication within the team – this is how you foster hope and encouragement, allowing the team to thrive and flourish, and the practice to improve and succeed.

A thriving team will enable resilience and strength. Team training is imperative. Not only will keep team members' knowledge

fresh, skills sharp and their confidence high, but it will also encourage engagement and fulfilment.

Team building activities, such as workshops, retreats, or even fun outings, can improve trust, boost morale and enhance overall teamwork. It is a fun and effective way to bring people together and achieve common goals.

Over the years, our practice has hosted family barbecues, in which we get all our team members and their families together at our house for a big social lunch.

We would also arrange dinners at Michelin-starred restaurants for the whole team. These gestures aim to reward and thank team members and show them just how much they are appreciated.

On each team member's birthday, we have a donut delivery to the practice so we can celebrate the individual. It's often the little things that can go a long way.

Investing in team building is how you create a successful practice. So, build an awesome team, achieve great things together and share in that achievement!

MAKE AN AGREEMENT

What can your team members agree on? It will really help your team to know what your common goals and commitments are.

After discussing these with the team, compile an agreement and encourage each team member to agree to the points – a bit

Team building: key points

- When recruiting, employee people who are nice and who will fit in with the team. Individual contribution is a secondary factor
- When interviewing prospective team members, invite their peers to be part of the process
- Perpetual training is essential
- Service is an attitude, an art and a process. When you are in tune with your patients you feel service in your gut – that is attitude. Art comes from caring and creativity. Process comes from a quality initiative
- The practice must have a culture. The secret to culture is sincerity
- The birth and nurturing of ideas from all team members must be taken seriously
- Celebrate success
- Service and professionalism must begin in the practice between team members and emanate outwards to your patients
- The way you treat those who work for you has everything to do with how they work for you.



like a contract. Here's an example agreement:

- We agree to work together as a team
- We agree to operate consistently with our mission statement and to always hold ourselves up to this statement
- We agree to handle any complaints or problems we have by communicating them only to someone who can do something about the situation. We agree not to criticise or complain to someone who cannot do anything about it. We agree not to receive or accept complaints from anyone that we cannot do something about, but to redirect the person to someone who can do something
- We agree to not begin any dental work on any patient without first making financial arrangements with the patient
- We agree to attend team meetings and participate honestly and openly

- We agree to replace ourselves if we are unable to be at work
- We agree to make every patient's next appointment before they leave the practice
- We agree to be honest with each other and tell no lies.

TEAM HAPPINESS

Having a happy team in the practice is a priority, but do you know the things that make your team happy and how you should aim to keep each team member happy?

If you have a happy team member – who is happy within themselves and able to 'get up and face a day's work' – they will be productive and good-spirited. To promote individual and personal happiness, encourage positive thinking within the team.

Let's take appointment booking as an example. Productive scheduling will make the dentists and the team alike happy. If they are not content or are dissatisfied, the depressed clinicians pass on the dissatisfied

REWARD EACH TEAM MEMBER FOR THE HARD WORK THAT HAS BEEN PUT INTO MAKING THE PRACTICE FLOURISH. EQUALLY, EMPOWER THE TEAM TO RECOGNISE ANY STRENGTHS OF MEMBERS AND BUILD ON AND ENCOURAGE THEM



10

tips for a first-class team

Looking to build a high-performance team? Roger Levin – dentist and founder of Levin Group – offers the following tips:

1. Create a vision statement
2. Share your vision
3. Communicate your goals
4. Hire the right people
5. Achieve excellent customer service
6. Educate your staff
7. Train with power scripts
8. Encourage success
9. Give positive feedback
10. Recognise that team building will be continuous.

and miserable vibes to the rest of the team, which makes them unhappy and uncertain. Suddenly, you find yourself in a viscous circle!

Don't forget, motivation should always be encouraged – a good team with high, first-rate and tip-top spirits will keep each team members' energy continuously positive. Keep inspiring and driving each other to keep on working together at a pleasing, positive and worthy pace.

Open communication between team members and dentists plays a significant and powerful role in any team and in every practice. To encourage good communication, holding regular team meetings is crucial.

Within these meetings, discuss the practice's vision and goals, role play scenarios and encourage positive criticism and open constructive discussion. While some people might find this challenging at first, it is beneficial to team building and helpful to everyone. In time, it will prove to be a fruitful exercise at any time.

Role playing can be useful, especially if there are problems between any team members. Trust is also an important element within any team and each person should be able to have a high trust and regard for one another. Team members must help and support each other.

A SHARED VISION

Don't underestimate the importance of having goals and visions within the whole team. The team must be able to work well together to achieve the rewards, goals and visions aimed for. By having a shared understanding of what the goals are and the vision of success for the team and dentists, they know what they're aiming for.

Ensure you share the practice's success, financially. Reward each team member for the hard work that has been put into making the practice flourish. Equally, empower the team to recognise any strengths of members and build on and encourage them. Weaknesses should also be recognised, and team members should aim to conquer weaknesses once these

have been identified, and overcome any problems that may exist or arise.

To encourage team bonding, a facilitator could help the team to get to know each other even better and also acknowledge any privacy or 'space' that any one member may want to retain.

The facilitator may measure, monitor or pick up and deal with any problems that may be around or might arise. Teams vary from practice to practice and some members may warm to this form of discussion, whereas others may not take to talking things through with an outsider/facilitator taking the 'lead' in team discussion. Any unwanted baggage found within the team will not be a welcome asset for the team to work together as effectively as possible. Therefore, to keep the team working happily and well together, discard any unwanted baggage. This could prove to be a stress reliever for the whole team as these burdens often cause unnecessary strain, tension and anxiety without anyone really realising it.

Although working together in so many ways, each team member should have their own space and enough of it! It is important to allow each member time and freedom to strengthen and stretch and generate their own thoughts and allow them to relax and enjoy their own habitat without anyone encroaching on their territory.

DESTINATION DENTISTRY

Before the time of online booking, there was a travel agency in Boston whose motto was 'The customer comes second!' It always struck me as rather strange – until I discovered the true meaning.

The travel agency looked after its staff so well – with politeness, care and compassion – that the customers picked up on the positive vibe and would recommend their friends and family to go there simply because everyone was so 'nice'. Now that is something worth aspiring to!

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.

Discovering joy in your career

Tearing up the traditional rulebook, **Andrea Ogden** is inspiring dentists to craft careers that align with their passion, purpose – and personal wellbeing

Words: Julie Bissett

Andrea Ogden

Andrea is a general dental practitioner and certified coach with more than 15 years of experience in NHS and private practice, postgraduate education, and professional development. Passionate about career diversity in dentistry, she works with the BDA to support students and early-career dentists while co-hosting a podcast on navigating authentic career paths. Instagram: @drandreaogden.

Andrea Ogden's Instagram posts seek to stop dentists in their tracks and inspire them to realign their career aspirations. Her insights may

challenge conventional thinking, yet her advice can be a wake-up call for those sleepwalking through their careers.

Andrea is a dentist with much to share. Rather than following the typical path to practice ownership, she now coaches dentists at all stages of their careers. A powerhouse of positivity, her goal is clear: to uplift and inspire her colleagues to find as much joy in dentistry as she does.

Instagram messages like 'Who you surround yourself with matters. Your network doesn't just shape your career; it impacts your wellbeing, productivity and even patient care' and 'Resilience isn't about enduring stress – it's about knowing how to navigate it and build a working life where your cortisol levels are under control' are drawn from a deep well of personal experience.

She's also driven by a desire to equip early-career dentists with the invaluable knowledge she lacked on qualifying. In a heartfelt letter to her former student self, she writes: 'Appreciate the journey; soak it all in, as it goes by so fast.' This moment of self-reflection also serves as sage advice for her target audience.

Andrea discovered her natural affinity with teaching early on in her career. She is now the BDA's first-ever undergraduate and career development lead and recently launched her one-on-one career coaching programme with a view to 'aligning dental careers, empowering success'.

But like many of her peers, she too was destined for practice ownership. Only a series of events opened her eyes to where her heart truly lay, helping her arrive at a place that feels more personally aligned and fulfilling.

A FLEXIBLE PLAN

Her journey was far from straightforward; trial and error seemed to shape her route to what she was destined to

become. Crucially, however, it taught her that having a career plan, even a flexible one, is essential as a dentist.

Without a family background in medicine or dentistry, Andrea initially studied human biology at King's College London. After graduating with a dental degree from Guy's, King's and St Thomas' in 2008, she had to chart her career path independently.

At the time, her primary objective was to qualify, motivated, she says, by a profound fear of failure. With limited insight into career opportunities beyond the conventional path of working in general practice, like many, she considered practice ownership the Holy Grail. However, entering the workforce as an associate – approachable and knowledgeable – she quickly became a go-to mentor for trainees. She recalls: 'I got a kick out of helping,' and enjoyed being a 'small part of their journey'.

The experience of aiding someone in need and feeling like she had 'saved the day' provided an ego boost she was mindful to rein in. More importantly, the experience prompted her to reflect on where her strengths lie, later undertaking a PGCert in dental education to then become an educational supervisor.

A NEW DIRECTION

Motherhood brought about another pivotal moment. After the birth of her first daughter, Andrea began to question her career choices. The weight of financial responsibility in running a practice and all the associated duties created a 'eureka' moment, ultimately leading her to withdraw from purchasing a business.

She applied for multiple roles to maintain her income and work-life balance. This marked the beginning of a broader career shift.

Discovering her natural talent for coaching had already ignited a passion. When an opportunity arose to become a training programme director, Andrea seized it, and her enjoyment of teaching and mentoring flourished as she managed 12 foundation trainees while working part-time with Health Education England (HEE).

For five years, she balanced this role alongside clinical practice until a departmental restructure prompted her transition to a position with the British Dental Association (BDA).

Drawing from her own experience with limited career guidance, she became instrumental in developing structured support systems for dentists navigating their professional journeys.

Her current role with the BDA allows her to reach a much wider audience, helping them navigate the challenges confronting every newly qualified person. She balances this with her clinical practice – two very different and dynamic roles, she notes.

One of her most significant contributions is the creation of BDA's Career Hub. 'It's my baby,' she laughs. This resource provides clear career pathways with minimal barriers and is marketed as an 'ultimate guide to a successful dental career'.

Initially focused on clinical and non-clinical roles that involve part-time clinical practice, Andrea envisions expanding the platform to assist those seeking opportunities abroad or engaged in teaching and various niche areas.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

With her tailored one-to-one coaching programme, her key advice is simple yet powerful: make career decisions based on what truly aligns with personal goals rather than external expectations. Dentists must 'take control of their career', she says. 'They've worked hard, often throwing themselves into postgrad courses but then find stress levels are soaring and their enjoyment falling. Next, they're questioning life decisions, and feel uncertain about the next steps.' This is Andrea's area of expertise.

'The first thing to understand is that the experiences of others are not yours. This involves stepping into their shoes and, from a coaching model, allowing them to pursue their own path. The dental school experience is quite different now, and understanding other perspectives matters.'

Recognising that work is a significant part of life is imperative, she says. 'We all get one lap around the track. After investing time, money, and intellect to reach your current position, you owe it to yourself to live authentically, and a key aspect of that is understanding your "why" – why did you enter dentistry in the first place?

'Social proof bias, particularly in uncertain environments, can lead you to follow the actions and opinions of others because it seems like the best option when everyone else is doing it. But your journey in dentistry is unique. It's not about following a set path but seizing every moment to learn and grow.'

Given her own winding career journey, would she advocate for a structured plan, or does she believe true growth happens more organically?

'To quote an oft-used phrase: "A goal without a plan is just a wish",' she says. 'You don't need to have your plan completely written out – just the first few steps clarified, including SMART-related goals. For example, if you want to reduce clinical hours, you must outline those initial steps – writing it down gives it power. And allow for obstacles, too.'

'We have a peculiar relationship with failure – while it can be an invaluable learning opportunity, it can also feel tremendously unpleasant.'

EXPLORING AUTHENTIC AVENUES

A portfolio career provides substantial benefits for dentists. What advice might she give practice owners considering a shift away from daily responsibilities to explore other opportunities?

'If you want to pursue something different, consider your skills, passions and interests, and focus on your professional network – it offers a wealth of opportunities. Whether it's part of an exit strategy or to break up the week, be aware that change often comes with new stresses.'

'Another role can add to the mix, but you must be able to dedicate time to it and avoid feeling overwhelmed; maintaining clear boundaries is essential to prevent one aspect leaking into the other. Identify the gaps, take action and tick any empty boxes – whether in your job, practice, public speaking or teaching or whatever.'

The key, she maintains, is having a clear plan.

Because of her diverse experiences,

Top tips to reignite a career

- Take a break to create space and uncover the real reasons you have lost your spark
- Identify what triggers stress and develop a plan to manage it
- Understand your unique strengths and values and pursue postgraduate training or roles that genuinely light you up
- Focus on your communication skills
- And here's the biggest revelation: the world is so much bigger than we think, and so much choice exists. When you start making choices based on what feels right for you – instead of what you think others expect – your life transforms in ways you never imagined.

she has encountered many dentists grappling with their role in the profession. Instead of advocating resilience, she recommends uncovering the source of that disillusionment.

'The vast majority of dentists I have met through my coaching have been in the field for four to seven years. Initially, they believe that where they are is their only option. Before reflecting on their experiences, they may not fully recognise the sources of their stress. However, once they do, they gain clarity, take control of their schedules and can introduce variety into their career. Empowering individuals in this way is hugely rewarding. It's a privilege when people have that "aha!" moment.'

She often discusses 'forging an authentic path'. She strongly opposes acquiring skills based solely on trends, the 'big ticket' value of treatments, or purely for financial gain, emphasising that TikTok and Instagram are 'just a small part of what dentists do.'

Aspirational posts can undoubtedly have both negative and positive impacts. But what wisdom can she offer those who may sometimes feel overwhelmed by the apparent 'success' of their peers?

'Cosmetic dentistry is aesthetically appealing and highly engaging on social media, making it a powerful tool for marketing high-value treatments. However, understanding the purpose behind these social media posts is

essential. Are they meant to educate colleagues, build influence, or attract patients? Some treatments, like a perfectly executed root canal, lack visual appeal and will not garner attention. In contrast, aesthetics-driven procedures such as composite bonding, veneers or complete smile makeovers tend to dominate.

'Context shapes perception, and recognising this is key to making an informed assessment.'

'We also need to understand our own personal values. This might manifest as finding a better balance between family and career or pursuing another area of dentistry altogether. It is about dismantling a problem, not simply enduring it. If there is a conflict with our values, we must change the environment.'

A WINNING FORMULA

Psychologist Adam Grant identifies three core types of motivation:

1. Extrinsic
2. Intrinsic
3. Prosocial.


For Andrea, this translates to dentists, who are often driven by recognition or financial rewards, satisfaction from mastering clinical skills and fulfilment from making a difference to patients' lives.

'While we all have a primary motivation, true career fulfilment occurs when all three are balanced. If something feels amiss, take a step back and reflect: what genuinely drives you? Aligning your work with your motivation is essential for building a joyful, sustainable career,' she says.

'The world is changing, and we need to keep up,' she adds. 'Dentistry offers us flexibility and the opportunity to choose – whether that is the hours we work, the paths we pursue or the postgrad education we embark upon. Being able to live authentically is a privilege.'

'If you have worked this hard and been given opportunities, don't squander them. By fulfilling your purpose and by understanding your "why", your career can be sustainable, more motivated, less stressed and fundamentally, you will deliver better patient care. If all this aligns, then you are winning.'

Email Andrea at drandreaogden@gmail.com.



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A new era of practice support

Craig Welling and Barry Lanesman on building the future of FMC

FMC is building on 30 years of trusted media leadership to launch a new chapter: a dedicated practice services offering, one shaped by collaboration, a clear vision for practice support, and a deep understanding of the evolving needs of dental professionals.

While FMC media remains an independent and trusted voice in UK dentistry, this new offering aims to provide practices with the support they need to grow and adapt.

At the heart of this next phase is a powerful partnership: Craig Welling, who has long steered FMC's connection to the profession, and Barry Lanesman, whose decades of operational experience in dentistry bring new perspective and depth to this expanding area of focus.

Together, they discuss their shared ambition, the trends shaping the market, and how FMC's evolving platform is designed to help practices navigate complexity and thrive.

BUILDING ON DEEP ROOTS AND CLEAR VISION

Craig Welling has been at FMC for nearly 16 years, leading its growth from a traditional media business into an essential resource for dental professionals.

His unique insight comes from continuous dialogue with practitioners and deep industry relationships.

Craig explains: 'We noticed significant fragmentation within practices – different logins for compliance, HR, marketing, and more.

'We realised there had to be a better way, a unified solution to support

efficiency and scalability.'

To help deliver this next phase of growth, Craig brought in Barry Lanesman as a non-executive director and investor alongside Coniston Capital to bolster FMC's practice services offering with decades of operational expertise.

Barry's career includes over 35 years in dentistry, from clinical practice to financial services, culminating in a decade building corporate dental practices across the UK.

Barry shares: 'Practices often lack the time or specific skills needed to scale and modernise effectively.

'A strong support partner should collaborate directly with principals and practice teams to grow and develop the practice in a meaningful way.'

WHY NOW – AND WHY FMC?

The decision to expand FMC's Dentistry Practice Services comes at a crucial time of rapid technological advancement and increasing patient expectations.

Craig points out: 'Practices face overwhelming changes. Technology now enables smaller practices to access tools previously exclusive to large corporates, but they need help integrating these effectively.'

**Barry
Lanesman**



For Barry, FMC was an ideal partner due to its unique combination of deep community connections and practical market understanding.

He explains: 'FMC has consistent contact with dental practices, suppliers, and practitioners. Their understanding of the profession's needs and the capacity to communicate effectively made it the perfect fit.'

Craig saw Barry's operational background as the essential ingredient for FMC's next stage: 'Barry's extensive experience running practices at scale, combined with FMC's deep industry relationships, creates a powerful dynamic. Together, we offer a genuinely comprehensive support model.'

DIFFERENTIATING DENTISTRY PRACTICE SERVICES

What sets FMC's Dentistry Practice Services apart is its holistic approach. 'We're not offering singular functions but a comprehensive range of services under one trusted brand,' Barry clarifies.

Craig adds: 'Our values centre on truly understanding our clients' needs. We listen first, then build targeted solutions around specific challenges around efficacy and growth, ensuring practices aren't burdened with excessive technology but equipped with precisely what they require.'

Dentistry Practice Services supports practices across four key areas:

- Dentistry Compliance, with expert tools and advice to ensure regulatory excellence
- Dentistry Consent, offering a fully digital platform to streamline the consent process
- Dentistry CPD, delivering high-quality, GDC-aligned learning
- Dentistry marketing, partnering with Xcelerator Dental, to drive patient growth and brand visibility.

Their support spans clinical excellence and commercial success. Craig emphasises: 'Most dentists enter the profession to deliver patient care, not to run businesses. Our role is to simplify backend management, freeing them to focus on what they do best – patient care – while simultaneously improving their financial health.'

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking to the future, Barry highlights the transformative potential of digital tools: 'Today, HR, compliance, marketing – all previously manual, cumbersome tasks – are becoming seamlessly integrated and tech-enabled. Our job is to ensure these tools genuinely help practices scale effectively.'

Craig visualises success clearly: 'Success is having clinicians openly share how significantly our services have contributed to their practice's growth and their ability to deliver outstanding patient care.'

SUPPORT, PASSION AND VISION

Both leaders are passionate about the journey ahead. Craig summarises: 'We're building something special – driven by support, passion, and vision.'

Barry leaves practice owners with a key message: 'There is powerful support available. Practices no longer need to face these challenges alone; Dentistry Practice Services is here to ensure their success and growth.'

Together, Craig and Barry's partnership signals an exciting future for FMC – and a transformative moment for dental practices throughout the UK.

A portrait of Craig Welling, a man with short brown hair and a beard, smiling. He is wearing a dark blue jacket over a black t-shirt.

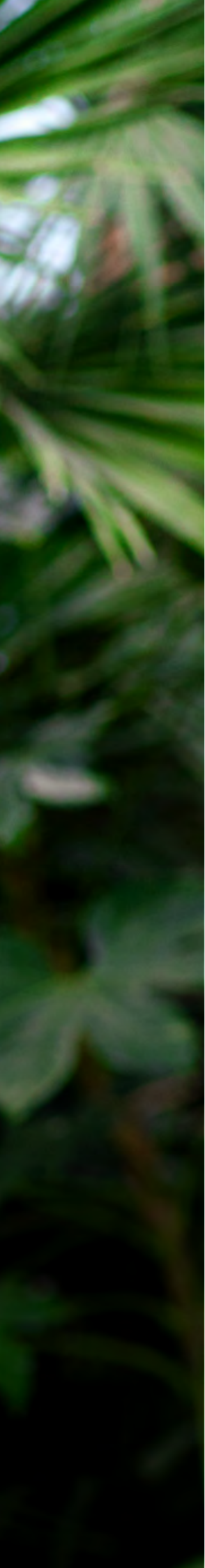
**Craig
Welling**

**Dentistry
Practice Services**

*To find out more about FMC's
Dentistry Practice Services,
visit dentistry.co.uk.*

A catalyst for change

Sarika Shah speaks to *Private Dentistry* about launching Flourish as a Female – In Dentistry to help women thrive through sustainable performance, powerful mindset work and self-leadership



Sarika Shah is on a mission to empower fellow female clinicians to grow into optimal performers.

Witnessing how hard women in dentistry are working yet still feeling stretched and undervalued has led the dentist, practice principal and mindset and performance coach to create Flourish as a Female – In Dentistry.

Here, she shares how self-leadership, using easy and practical strategies, can help female practitioners confidently lead, earn and thrive, allowing them to move forward – professionally, personally, and financially.

IN SARIKA'S WORDS

Flourish as a Female – In Dentistry focuses on the inner drivers of external success – because technical skill alone doesn't guarantee fulfilment or financial growth.

The mindset, motivation, communication and leadership behind your clinical work are what truly elevate your outcomes.

The Flourish method is built on four transformative pillars, each directly linked to improving your everyday experience in dentistry – and your long-term success:

1. **Self-leadership.** Leadership doesn't start with managing others – it starts with managing yourself. From expanding your clinical offering to confidently increasing fees or influencing team culture, I help female clinicians become proactive, emotionally intelligent leaders – equipped to lead with impact in every area of their dental journey
2. **Wellbeing.** You can't pour from an empty cup. Dentistry can be physically, mentally and emotionally demanding, so I teach practical strategies to protect your mental health, maintain motivation, build intentional goals and avoid burnout. These tools can be used daily – in clinic or at home – to help you stay grounded and resilient
3. **Performance.** High performance isn't about perfection or long hours. It's about clarity, focus and consistency. Delegates at my two-day in-person course and coaching learn how to structure their day, manage clinical and business responsibilities more efficiently, and maximise their time and income – all in a sustainable, repeatable way
4. **Mindset.** The most successful clinicians aren't just technically skilled – they think differently. Whether you're facing imposter syndrome,

fear of judgment or plateauing confidence, I help you rewire limiting beliefs and build a growth and high-achiever mindset that fuels bold, empowered decisions in your career and finances.

TRANSFORMATIVE TRAINING

What makes Flourish as a Female – In Dentistry different is that it's not a one-off motivational boost – it's a practical, grounded framework you can use every day. The tools and strategies I share are designed to be realistic, accessible, and easy to implement – even in the busiest clinical environment.

Many of the delegates find the course transformative. They leave with a changed mindset, renewed motivation, actionable plans, and a toolkit that enhances not only their clinical work, but their wellbeing, relationships, financial earnings and overall life satisfaction.

This goes beyond the dental chair. Whether it's clearer boundaries, better time management, or greater confidence in decision-making, everything learned is designed to be applied both in the practice and your personal life.

POSITIVE ALLIES

For male clinicians in the profession, your support makes a difference. Be an ally by actively listening, encouraging women's ideas, challenging outdated biases, providing mentorship and using your platform to open doors for others.

When you support your female colleagues, you're not just doing the right thing – you're elevating the profession for everyone.

I envisage Flourish as a Female – In Dentistry to be more than just a course – I want it to be a catalyst for change.

I want to help female clinicians grow with purpose, lead with confidence, and earn with clarity. So, I've created an immersive two-day self-leadership experience where delegates will walk away with practical strategies they can use immediately – in clinic, in business and in life.

If you're ready to step into your full potential, Flourish as a Female – In Dentistry will give you the mindset, tools and momentum to get there – sustainably and powerfully. Because when women in dentistry rise, we don't just elevate ourselves, we redefine the future of the profession.

Find out more at flourishasafemale.com.

PRIVATE

DENTISTRY AWARDS 2025

Meet the judges

With entry open for the **Private Dentistry Awards 2025**, let's meet the expert team who will decide this year's winners

JAMES GOOLNIK Chair of the judging panel

James was previously president of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. He lectures worldwide on the mouth-body connection. In 2024, James was voted one of the 50 most influential people in dentistry. He is an accredited member of the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology, has written several books and is the founder of Optimal Dental Health, a holistic dental practice in London.



PAUL ABRAHAMS

Paul works in private general cosmetic practice and has been the principal owner of Smilemore Dental Care in St Johns Wood for 32 years. He is co-founder of the Real Dentist Academy, a past president of the BACD and founder member and ex-board member of the BAPD. With a particular interest in digital dentistry, Paul is a clinician engagement lead for Portmandentex, a key opinion leader for several international companies and a lecturer/educator in the UK and internationally. With a mantra of 'the only constant is change', he believes education should be fundamental to every dentist's progression.



ZAINAB AL-MUKHTAR

Zainab qualified as a dentist in 2010. She was awarded Membership of the Faculty of Dental Surgery from the Royal College of Surgeons



of Edinburgh and Membership of the Joint Dental Faculties of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 2013. Zainab co-owns the award-winning clinic Harrow on the Hill Dental and Facial Aesthetics in north London.

MARTIN ATTARIANI

Martin is a highly qualified and experienced dentist, known for his expertise in digital dentistry. He holds a master's degree in combined specialist practice of restorative aesthetic dentistry and implantology and is a visiting lecturer at ICE Postgraduate Dental Institute and Hospital.



VINNIE ATTARIANI

Vinnie is a private practice owner with a special interest in digital and cosmetic dentistry.



ANGELA AULUCK

Angela is the director of Dental Rooms, a multi-specialist practice in Wimbledon Village, and winner of 12 Private Dentistry Awards over the past three years. Her main clinical interest is the use of invisible braces. She has a keen interest in postgraduate education and is senior clinical lecturer on the clear aligner diploma.



SIMRAN BAINS

Simran is the chair of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry Young Membership Committee



and the secretary of the College of Dentistry West Midlands Division.

LINZY BAKER

Linzy qualified as a dental therapist from Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry in 2017. She practises on Harley Street, where she combines restorative and preventative care with facial aesthetics.



She is a member on several board's including the Association of Dental Implantology (ADI) and The Female Dentist. Alongside her clinical practice and working with new innovations in dentistry, she is passionate about mentoring and inspiring others. Linzy is a trainer with the Botulinum Toxin Club (BTC) and regularly takes part in webinars and speaking engagements.

AVIJIT BANERJEE

Avijit is chair in cariology and operative dentistry, honorary consultant/clinical lead, restorative dentistry, at the Faculty of Dentistry, Oral and Craniofacial Sciences, King's College London/Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals Trust, London. He is honorary consultant adviser for the Office of the Chief Dental Officer.



TARIQ BASHIR

With 20 years of clinical experience, Tariq is a highly experienced restorative and aesthetic dentist. He has practised at the award-winning Visage Cosmetic Dental Clinic in Glasgow since 2008.



He has travelled extensively to train with some of the biggest names in dentistry and has completed the nine-step modular curriculum at the Kois Center in Seattle. Tariq is a full member of the British Academy of Aesthetic Dentistry. Heavily involved in dental education, he co-founded the Scottish Dental Study Club in 2018 and has been teaching his resin anterior composite course regularly to dentists throughout Scotland. He is the current president of the Glasgow Odontological Society.

CLAIRE BERRY

Claire is a multi-award-winning hygienist, qualifying 15 years ago while serving in the Army. Her work includes co-hosting 'Your Dental Besties' podcast, co-founding the Contemporary Hygienist study clubs, being an international speaker on systemic health and oral health links and is a proud key opinion leader for Oral-B, as well as a dedicated SDA trainer for EMS. On top of her clinical role, Claire works as a business consultant for hygiene department growth. She recently published a dental book and has numerous articles in dental and consumer press.



JOE BHAT

After qualifying in 1992, Joe furthered his training in oral and maxillofacial surgery for five years. During this time, he became a Fellow of the



Royal College of Surgeons England. He undertook specialist training in prosthodontics at the London Dental School in 1998, which culminated in a master of clinical dentistry from the University of London and membership in restorative dentistry from the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh in 2001.

As principal and founder of the Moor Park Specialist Dental Centre, he spends his clinical time as a private referral practitioner there.

Joe regularly lectures in the UK and abroad on dental implants and runs his own implant training and mentoring programme for dentists.

MANISH BOSE

Manish became the owner of Ikon Dental Specialists in 2011. He is a specialist in periodontology and an accredited member of the European Federation of Periodontology. He now devotes his time between his own specialist private practice and teaching commitments.



FAYE DONALD

Faye is a registered dental hygienist and highly experienced GBT clinician, currently working in private general practice in the UK. She graduated from Leeds University in 2001 and went on to complete the national certificate in counselling skills & behavioural therapy NCFE level 2 (2006).



Undergoing further training in Switzerland, Faye went on to become a certified Swiss Dental Academy Trainer and now frequently writes for dental journals and lectures at dental events both nationally and internationally on GBT and prophylaxis.

Faye is chairperson for the north east BSDHT and is a key opinion leader for Oral-B.

BHAVNA DOSHI

Bhavna is CEO of Dental Wealth Builder, where she focuses on change management, business strategy, practice profitability, and growth solutions. With over 30 years in dentistry, she has been a successful practising dentist, principal to multiple award-winning practices, business coach and mentor, and director at the Perfect Smile Advanced Training Institute. She is also an international keynote speaker and author of bestselling books *Lead to Grow* and *Dental Alchemy*.



RAHUL DOSHI

Rahul has lectured internationally on cosmetic dentistry and practice growth strategies. He was a multi-practice owner, founder of Perfect Smile Studios and is the founding partner for Dental Wealth Builder Coaching. He was the past president of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry and regional partner and clinical director for Portmandentex.



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JUNE 2025

CAT EDNEY

Cat is a dental therapist with a passion for multidisciplinary team working. She founded The Modern Therapist – a training brand dedicated to putting therapy into practice: providing training and support to dental therapists and dental practice teams.

**GARETH EDWARDS**

Gareth is co-principal of multi-award-winning Smile Stories in Bournemouth, the clinic that is proudly 'nothing like your old dentist'. Amassing more than 600 five-star Google reviews, his unconventional thinking is helping to shape how dentistry is delivered in the UK.

**TIM ELDRIDGE**

Tim graduated in dentistry from the University of Birmingham in 1997. He established his clinic, Myface dentistry and facial aesthetics, in 2009, which combines non-surgical treatments with cosmetic and restorative dentistry. Tim is also founder and trainer of Myface Training. He has written numerous articles for the dental and aesthetic press and has lectured at international conferences, courses, and masterclasses. Tim has also acted as a key opinion leader and trainer for various facial rejuvenation products.

**FIONA ELLWOOD BEM**

Fiona has had an extensive career in dentistry, both clinically and in education and is passionate about supporting and facilitating the progression of others. She is a mental health campaigner and an advocate for human factors in dentistry, putting the team first.

**JAS GILL**

After successfully selling multiple dental practices, Jas now works as an expert aligner provider in clinics across the UK. He also supports fellow dentists as a business coach and mentor, helping



them scale their practices and navigate the challenges of modern dentistry.

ROBIN HORTON

Robin is the principal dentist and sole owner of Wayside Dental Practice. He has postgraduate training in smile design, laser dentistry, implant dentistry, Invisalign and Six Month Smiles, and lectures on laser dentistry in relation to implants and in computer guided surgery. Robin is a mentor for Nobel Biocare and interviews at Barts and the London every year to help select new dental students.

**MARK HUGHES**

Mark has cemented a formidable reputation as a global cosmetic and restorative dentistry luminary. Over his more than 30-year career, he has founded 10 successful dental practices, including several on London's Harley Street. Mark is the founder of Canon House Clinic, currently practising in Harley Street, Chelsea and outside the capital.

**AHMED HUSSAIN**

Ahmed graduated from Bart's and The London in 2006. Shortly thereafter, he completed his MJDF and MFDS. In 2015, he earned an MSc in restorative dentistry with distinction from Eastman Dental Institute, which was subsequently published in a renowned journal.



Ahmed has co-authored several books and he runs a live composite course at his multi-award-winning private practice in London, along with a sought-after masterclass. He has shared his expertise at numerous conferences and universities across the country. Recently, he was honoured with a Fellowship from the College of General Dentistry.

LUKE HUTCHINGS

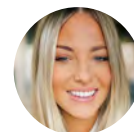
Luke has spent the past eight years in private practice in Hampshire. His particular interests lie in minimally invasive cosmetic dentistry. Luke sits on the board of directors and education committee for the



British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. Luke has been a finalist in the Aesthetic Dentistry Awards six times and has won twice.

RACHEL JACKSON

Rachel is practice principal at Superior Smiles. She began her career as a dental receptionist in 2004 before she became a qualified dental nurse in 2007 and then a lead dental nurse, practice manager, business manager and now practice owner.

**NEEL JAISWAL**

Neel is a partner at both Professional Dental Indemnity Ltd (PDI) and Neel Dentistry Ltd, blending clinical expertise with a commitment to supporting fellow dental professionals. He is the UK director of Dentinal Tubules study clubs, a British Association of Private Dentistry founding member and co-founder of the British Academy of Microscope Dentistry.

**ZAKI KANAAN**

Zaki is a well-known and highly respected UK dentist and the only dentist to have been president of both the Association of Dental Implantology and the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry.

**GUY LAFFAN**

Guy is an experienced and award-winning general dentist known for his excellence in clinical care and innovation. With a strong background in aesthetic and implant dentistry, he leads two successful private practices and also helps mentor the next generation.

**CHRIS LEECH**

Chris is vice president of the BACD as well as an international examiner for the Royal College of Surgeons. He is a partner at the multi-award-winning Clear Dentistry in Hampshire, focusing on implant dentistry and full mouth rehabilitation.



JOE LOVETT

Joe is the owner of Catalyst Sales and Marketing and the founder of the Fast Tracking Your Future event.



AMJAD MALIK

Amjad is lead clinician at Improve Your Smile. He has a particular interest in implants, bite disorders and reconstructive dentistry. He is a Kois mentor and has been an honorary lecturer at the Royal London Hospital. For many years he was a senior UK clinical instructor for the Rosenthal Institute's Aesthetic Advantage course in London and New York.



ALIF MOOSAJEE

Alif is a principal, implant dentist, lecturer, author, award winner and proud judge of the Dentistry Awards and Private Dentistry Awards.



SHAKIR MUGHAL

Shakir qualified from King's College London and has since completed advanced cosmetic and orthodontic dental training all over the UK, Europe and the United States. His main passion and expertise lie in improving patients' smiles with invisible braces, such as Invisalign clear aligners. Shakir is co-author of *Dental Success Stories* and has also developed Pure Earth Essentials, an eco-friendly brand of dental products.



SHEILA NGUYEN

Sheila is a multi-award-winning cosmetic dentist with a special interest in aesthetic medicine. She qualified as a dentist from King's College London and holds a first-class honours degree in biomedical sciences. She has also been awarded a master's in aesthetic medicine from Queen Mary University of London.



CLAIRE NIGHTINGALE

Claire is a multi-award-winning specialist orthodontist. She won Best Practice UK at the Dentistry Awards 2020, Most Transformed Practice 2022 at the UK and Ireland Invisalign Awards, as well as Best Principal London (2022) and Best Team London (2023) at the Private Dentistry Awards. She is a consultant orthodontist at Watford General Hospital and principal orthodontist at Queen's Gate Orthodontics, London. Claire is the UK specialist orthodontist for the Invisalign EMEA Advisory Group and a key opinion leader for Dental Monitoring. She is also an accredited expert witness and treasurer of the Women Dentists Network.



MARIA PAPAVERGOS

Maria is a general dentist and practising yoga teacher, based in south west Scotland. She graduated from Newcastle University in 2007 and obtained the Diploma



of Membership of the Joint Dental Faculties at the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 2011. Maria qualified as a yoga teacher in 2017 and subsequently as an aerial yoga teacher in 2019.

Maria founded The Lifestyle Dentist in 2021 to help spread her preventive philosophy and lifestyle-centred approach to oral health. Her passion and mission are to put the mouth on the map to overall health and link lifestyle to longevity.

DEV PATEL

Dev is a dual specialist in prosthodontics and oral surgery, and the founder and partner of the multi-award-winning Dental Rooms. He is also associate professor and programme director of the MSc in implant dentistry at UCL Eastman Dental Institute. His key interest is education and training in implant dentistry, combining clinical innovation with mentoring to develop the next generation of implant dentists.



SHIVANI PATEL

Shivani is a specialist orthodontist who practises at Elleven Dental in London and Park Lane Orthodontics in Reading. As a multi-award-winning specialist and Diamond Apex Invisalign provider, she believes in face driven dentistry and her clinical care is centred around health, function then aesthetics.



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SPOTLIGHT

MANRINA RHODE

Manrina owns DRMR Clinic in London and runs cosmetic dental courses from her training facility there – DRMR Academy.



NIK SETHI

Nik is a director at Elevate–dent education and the current president of the British Academy of Aesthetic Dentistry (BAAD). He is passionate about education, mentoring clinicians across the UK and Europe. He holds a master's in aesthetic dentistry from King's College London and the Membership in Advanced General Dental Surgery from the Royal College of Surgeons. Nik co-founded Elevate in 2020 with Dr Sanjay Sethi and Professor Riaz Yar and Elaine Mo, a leading education platform that supports dentists in refining their clinical expertise and accessing evidence–based training. He is a key opinion leader for multiple dental companies.



NEIL SIKKA

Neil has spent the past 30 years in private practice. As the founder of Barbican Dental Care (BDC), he established 10 dental practices in central London before Bupa acquired the practice in 2014. Neil continues to work as a dentist at Bupa Dental Moorgate and as chief dental officer within Bupa UK Insurance. In 2024, Neil was appointed



the director of dentistry of the 385 Bupa Dental Clinics around the UK. He leads the clinical advisory team, sits with the executive team and leads the Bupa relationship with Dentaaid. Neil is a sponsor of several community projects including a dental unit on The Lifeline Express, Gwalior Children's Hospital Charity and Dentaaid/Kampong Cham Cambodia. He founded Inskills and is currently developing an oral health programme for children within NGO schools around Delhi.

ASHISH SONEJI

Ash has won numerous Aesthetic Dentistry Awards, published many articles and lectured nationally and internationally. He is also a key opinion leader for many companies. In 2018, he won Best Young Dentist South West and was awarded Best Young Aesthetic Dentist in 2023.



ADS THANKI

Ads is clinical director of the Ace Dental Group, Rita Rakus Clinic and Until. He is also a co-founder of Pärla, with the aim to educate and empower individuals to make conscious choices from their oral care through positive sustainable change.



MARK TOPLEY

Mark helps dental owners and managers create practices where people love to work – places



built on strong values, clear purpose, and everyday leadership. His mission is to support leaders in building aligned, energised teams that perform well, stay longer, and contribute to a culture patients can feel the moment they walk in.

DEEPA VAKIL

Deepa is clinical director of the multi-award-winning Yor Dental clinic. She leads a passionate team to craft beautiful smiles while embracing both the drive and the journey.



MARCOS WHITE

Marcos is an international speaker on digital workflows and is recognised as one of the UK's most prominent opinion leaders for digital dentistry and intraoral scanning. He has built his own onsite digital lab, Velvet Digital, which produces cosmetic work for dentists all over the UK. Marcos' expertise is in the blending of digital, business and technical processes to elevate the patient experience.



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For more information, including entry guide, visit dentistry.co.uk/private-dentistry-awards.

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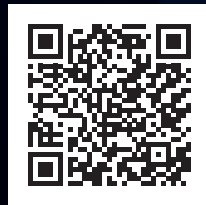
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ENTRY OPEN

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12 SEPTEMBER 2025



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21 NOVEMBER 2025

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On a quest for good surgical courses?

Trycare shares details of its upcoming courses in association with Dr Girish Bharadwaj from Quest Education

Trycare, in association with Dr Girish Bharadwaj from Quest Education, are delivering a wide range of surgical courses in Edinburgh this year, including their flagship implantology course, which is designed for anyone looking to learn how to place implants or hone their existing skills and knowledge.

All the Quest courses have learning and development at the heart of their ethos, but understand that learning needs to be fun and rewarding professionally too.

Feedback from previous course delegates highlights Girish's very knowledgeable, engaging and informative approach, plus the opportunity to ask questions at any time and not to leave without being certain about the answer.

IMPLANTOLOGY COURSE – STARTS SEPTEMBER 2025

The Quest Implantology Course is a three-part modular course, with each module lasting two days. It teaches delegates everything they need to know to start implementing simple implant treatment plans plus 39 hours of CPD!

Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh accredited and presented by Girish Bharadwaj, the course gives delegates a thorough basic knowledge of implantology including an overall perspective with an evidence-based approach; necessary surgical and restorative skills to implement simple treatment plans; an understanding of the challenges involved in the surgical and prosthetic



ALL THE QUEST COURSES HAVE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE HEART OF THEIR ETHOS

phases of treatment; and an understanding of when to refer based upon their skill levels.

Completion of the course will enable participants to diagnose and carry out implant treatment planning; carry out initial risk assessment and consent the patient appropriately; insert and restore implants under supervision in a simulated environment; identify the complexity of individual cases and place implants in simple cases under supervision; and know when to refer for additional support and guidance.

Held in Edinburgh, the course fee is £7,500. To help enhance teamwork, one nurse or hygienist can attend Module 2 free of charge. Additional nurses can attend for £125 each.

IMPLANT SUPPORTED OVERDENTURE COURSE – 7 NOVEMBER

This one-day course is designed to deliver the principles and practice of placing and restoring implants to enable implant supported overdentures.

The aim of this course is to help delegates understand the limitations of conventional denture design, learn how implant supported dentures can overcome some of these limitations and gain insight into the technique and concepts involved in removable implant supported dentures.

It offers 6.5 hours of enhanced CPD (outcomes A and C), for just £595. Early Bird before 30th August is £495.

SINGLE TOOTH IMMEDIATE LOADING COURSE – 5 DECEMBER

This one-day course is designed to deliver the principles and practice of placing and restoring implants using an immediate loading protocol.

The aim of this course is to help delegates understand the indications and contraindications for immediate loading in a single tooth scenario, compare the pros and cons with the conventional protocol, and assess feasibility of this protocol.

It offers 6.5 hours of enhanced CPD (outcomes A and C), for just £595. Early bird before 30 September is £495.

For further details, visit www.trycare.co.uk, contact your local Trycare representative, email events@trycare.co.uk or call 01274 885540.

We keep dentists smiling

Our Service

- ✓ Competitive fixed fees
- ✓ Annual accounts and Tax Return
- ✓ Guidance on tax due and payment timescales
- ✓ Pro-active tax planning advice
- ✓ HMRC registration for new associates
- ✓ NHS Compass guidance
- ✓ HMRC investigation fee protection included
- ✓ MTD software

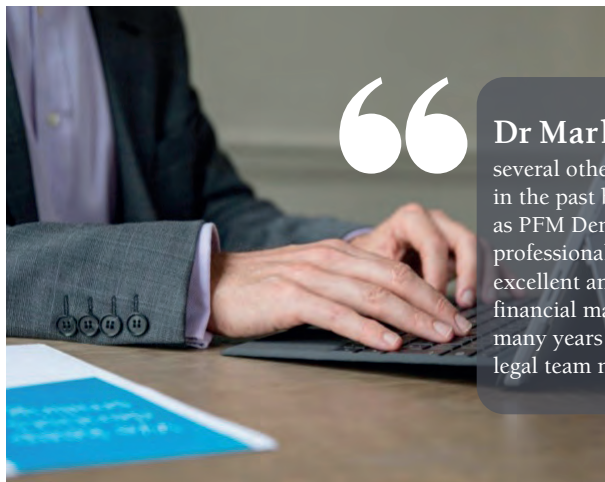
John Alker “As a new practice owner the challenge of tax planning and accounts was extremely daunting. However, thanks to the team at PFM we have been able to get on top of it all with minimal fuss and stress. They are extremely professional and are always on hand to answer our questions, even going so far as to give me a tutorial about the use of Xero - something completely new to me. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend and indeed I already have.”

”



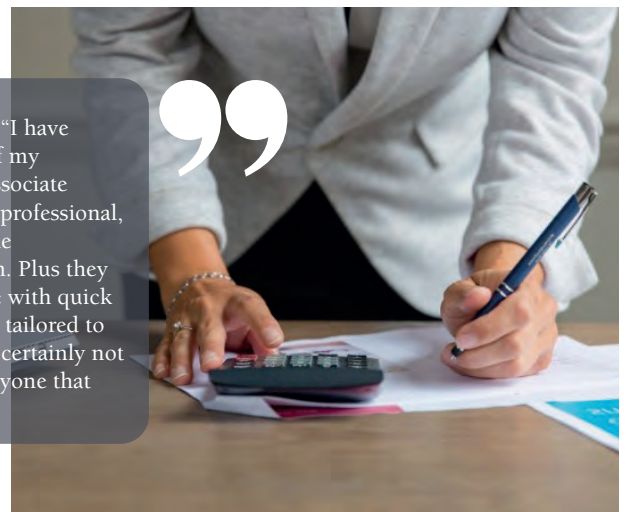
“

Dr Mark Lawrence “We have used several other specialist dental accountants in the past but none have been as pro-active as PFM Dental Accountancy. Their level of professionalism and approachability has been excellent and an added bonus is the “in-house” financial management we have enjoyed for many years with PFM Dental. The addition of a legal team now can only add to a great team”.



”

Dr Hussein Hassanali “I have commissioned PFM to take care of my accounts since I first became an associate several years ago. They have been professional, timely, accurate and knowledgeable throughout my dealings with them. Plus they are always available to offer advice with quick responses and precise information tailored to each individual situation. I would certainly not hesitate to recommend them to anyone that asks”.



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dinner on us £50**

Restoring composite: case study

Nicolò Barbera discusses treatment of a discoloured, previously traumatised vital tooth

A 30-year-old patient, with a healthy medical history, attended the practice requesting replacement of a previous composite restoration following trauma to the U1. On clinical examination, the tooth was responsive to vitality testing and did not present periapical lesions radiographically.

The tooth was discoloured and more palatally positioned than the contralateral U1 (Figure 1).

Aesthetic analysis highlighted an asymmetry of the gingival zenith between U1 and UL1. Using a periodontal probe, under anaesthesia, a malpositioned marginal gingiva was confirmed according to the classification of Coslet et al.

Wanting to carry out the most conservative restorative treatment possible, taking into account the age and vitality of the tooth, it was decided to carry out a direct composite restoration following planning and a diagnostic wax-up.

On the treatment day, following local anaesthesia, the tooth was isolated using rubber dam extending the isolation to the first premolars. The fractured composite restoration was removed and a short bevel was performed on the preparation. Then the entire surface of U1 was sandblasted with 27µm aluminium oxide powder (Figure 2).

To correct the altered passive eruption, we recreated the emergence profile of the tooth by accentuating the vestibular bulge and seeking symmetry with the



Discolouration and palatal position of U1



Reconstruction of the vestibular emergence profile with an enamel shade of composite



Use of light blue and white effect shades

contralateral tooth. For this purpose, a pre-formed metal matrix and two wedges were used.

Once the matrix was adapted, bonding was carried out with a three-step etch and rinse system. Each step was followed by polymerization with UV light for 40 seconds. The vestibular emergence profile was recreated with an enamel shade of Estelite Asteria WE (Tokuyama Dental) (Figure 3). After creating a silicone index of the diagnostic wax-up, the palatal wall was reconstructed using an enamel shade of Estelite Asteria WE (Figure 4). The dental anatomy was reconstructed by reproducing the mamelons with an opaque OA2 dental shade of Estelite Sigma Quick (Tokuyama Dental); this shade was fundamental for correcting the shade of the dischromatic tooth too.

Light blue and white shades of Estelite Color (Tokuyama Dental) were applied



Removal of fractured composite restoration



Reconstruction of the palatal wall using an enamel shade of composite



Restoration after 12 months

to emulate the opalescence in the incisal area (Figure 5). The layering was completed using Estelite Asteria WE in the vestibular area. The vestibular surface was modelled using 3D volumes in order to require as few final adjustments as possible. It was then polymerized for 20 seconds and 40 seconds in the vestibular and palatal areas, using a covering of glycerine gel to inhibit the hybrid layer.

Finishing and polishing were carried out trying to emulate the transition lines of the UL1. The patient was reviewed after 21 days and 12 months (Figure 6) to evaluate the aesthetic result in shape and colour.



Dr Nicolò Barbera

Nicolò is assistant professor in the division of cariology and endodontics at the University of Geneva Private Clinical Practice in Lausanne.

Tokuyama composites are available from Trycare. For further information, visit www.trycare.co.uk, contact your local Trycare representative, call 01274 885544 or email dental@trycare.co.uk.

New webinar on digitally designed full dentures

Presentation of **Zirkonzahn's** digital workflow, materials and techniques for creating full dentures

Minimally invasive procedures are becoming increasingly important and their basic idea to preserve

as much tooth structure as possible is undisputed among experts. However, there are still patients who need a complete restoration after total tooth loss. In addition to implant-supported prostheses, full dentures are still a tried-and-tested method, especially for old people. On the topic of digitally designed full dentures, a new webinar is now available for dental technicians and dentists. Offered by the Italian company Zirkonzahn, the webinar provides insights into the company's new workflow for producing full dentures (Florence Totalprox® Denture System), including the digital processes involved, the resin materials used and specific bonding techniques. When producing a full denture with 28 teeth in a completely edentulous situation, one of the primary challenges for restorative teams is ensuring its fit in the patient's mouth, both aesthetically and functionally.

However, every patient's initial situation is different: some patients may appear completely edentulous, or they might wear dentures in good or bad condition. In light of these scenarios, the first part of the webinar presents possible solutions tailored to different patient situations.

The webinar continues with the presentation of the digital design of dentures in the Zirkonzahn.Modifier software. The software includes natural tooth libraries and automated set-up functions that greatly simplify the accurate placement and alignment of teeth. This ensures maximum precision and considerable timesaving throughout the entire process. The last part of the webinar focuses on



Full dentures created with Zirkonzahn's Florence Totalprox® Denture System. The materials used are Abro® Basic Multistratum® and Denture Gingiva Basic Mono, which are almost monomer free

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two new resin materials, Abro® Basic Multistratum® and Denture Gingiva Basic Mono, which are almost monomer free. It also introduces an innovative bonding protocol using Polibond®, based on the principle of cold welding.

The participation is free, however registration is required. For more information and registration contact Zirkonzahn's Education team at the company's headquarters: +39 0474 066 650, education@zirkonzahn.com. Scan the code to know more about Zirkonzahn's Florence Totalprox® Denture System and to see real patient cases.



Design meets efficiency

Vita Zahnfabrik

Vita Zahnfabrik presents the next generation of the Vita Smart.fire furnace: the Vita Smart.fire Advanced. This extensively developed furnace offers



numerous new functions that ensure even greater efficiency in the dental practice, as well as in the laboratory.

The Vita Smart.fire Advanced is equipped with a larger firing chamber, which now also offers enough space for 14-unit bridges, creating even more versatility for laboratories. Linear cooling with object temperature simulation, ensures precise and reliable firing results.

The new optional and attachable cooling tables, along with the new firing tray and firing tray pins (four-finger pins and ceramic pins) expand the range of possible uses for the furnace, and make it even more convenient to use. The new firing pins are available separately in single-variety replacement sets, as well as in a mixed basic set.

The Vita Smart.fire Advanced has retained the intuitive operation, preinstalled programs and space-saving design of its predecessor model. This ensures easy handling and optimum use of space. This furnace has been optimised for chairside applications, as well as for laboratory uses and meets all requirements for efficiency, precision and flexibility.

www.vita-zahnfabrik.com

Surgical solution designed to last

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The Implantmed Plus from W&H is flexible, modular and upgradable, seamlessly combining oral and maxillofacial surgery with implant dentistry.



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You can simply switch between modes. A choice of wireless or cabled foot control options allows you to manage multiple W&H devices, and the colour touchscreen interface is intuitive, with user-friendly menu guidance.

Implantmed Plus is designed to be futureproof and can be upgraded to increase functionality while benefitting from the W&H software updates, allowing ongoing improvements and new functionality. This ensures your full surgical solution remains effective for longer, and grows with you as the technology develops.

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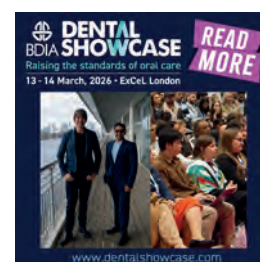
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Dental Showcase refreshes and revitalises

BDIA

BDIA Dental Showcase was back with a bang this year, offering a refreshed approach to learning and discovery for the entire dental team. Dental professionals had access to more than 300 exhibitors, over 130 expert speakers, more than 150 lectures and various hands-on workshops to ensure a truly enriched and revitalising experience for all.



Among everyone's highlights was a fascinating discussion with the one and only Professor Brian Cox, who Professor Avijit Banerjee spoke to about everything from Britain's legacy in science to black hole development.

Throughout the bustling two-day programme key themes emerged, including the importance of curiosity for innovation and the need to protect your own health as dental care providers, aside from countless clinical tips and guidance for all.

Dr Ann Howard, Colne Dental Care, said: 'The hands-on element is definitely a benefit to attending BDIA Dental Showcase. The rest of the show has been really good too and I've enjoyed my visit.'

Sneha Dahal added: 'I would absolutely recommend BDIA Dental Showcase to others, a plethora of knowledge for no cost, there's no doubt about how great the whole showcase is!'

BDIA thanks the event sponsors – Align Technology, Listerine, NSK, Oral-B and Solventum – for their support in shaping this year's event.

www.dentalshowcase.com

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New materials for full dentures Zirkonzahn

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

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

On the other hand, Denture Gingiva Basic Mono Pink is a gingiva-coloured resin with improved material properties in terms of flexural strength and fracture resistance, specifically conceived for the production of denture bases. The resin blanks are also available in Ø125mm for the manufacture of up to two denture bases in just one milling process.

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

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Omnichroma set for continued success Tokuyama Dental

Exclusively available from Trycare, Tokuyama Dental's groundbreaking Omnichroma filling materials have once again received the prestigious Top Product Award from the Dental Advisor trade journal at the beginning of 2025.

This honour once again emphasises the outstanding quality and innovative strength of the Japanese manufacturer. Thus, the Omnichroma family, with its three viscosities, continues to be at the centre of state-of-the-art restorative dentistry.

Praise from the Dental Advisor's independent reviewers included: 'Omnichroma is an absolute game changer in dentistry.'

Particular emphasis was placed on its outstanding colour-matching properties, which make the shade selection process redundant, its ease of use and its natural aesthetic results. Omnichroma Flow was praised as the perfect addition due to its versatility for all cavities. In addition, Tokuyama's Bond Force II, a self-etching single-component adhesive, and Shield Force Plus, a dentine sealing material, have once again been honoured as Preferred Products. These accolades underscore the exceptional quality and added value of the Japanese manufacturer's comprehensive product range.

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Overcoming matrix limitations Garrison Dental Solutions

The Quad Matrix system overcomes the limitations of traditional matrix systems, effectively addressing complex scenarios. Whether it's a single restoration or an entire quadrant of class IIs, the Quad system provides the solution with its design features:

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- The split tip design of the Quad wedges easily adapts bands to both cervical margins in a back-to-back restoration for deeper seal and a more natural emergence profile.

The Quad Matrix system supports a wide range of clinical scenarios:

- Back-to-back restorations: simultaneously restore both sides of adjacent class IIs using two matrix bands, one Quad Wedge, and one Quad Ring
- Deeper caries: achieve a secure seal for subgingival restorations with Firm Bands and Quad Wedges enhanced by the driver-tip design of the ring
- Multi-tooth restorations: use Universal (blue) and Tall (orange) Quad Rings to create ideal contours and contacts.

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IN THE HOT SEAT

Andrea Ubhi shares a glimpse into living life to the max in the Lake District

Q When and where was your last meal out?

A Last night! After a late sunshine walk through Borrowdale with my sister, over the 'Chinese Bridge', we ended up at Mizu, an Asian restaurant tucked beside the river. Heaven. Highlight of the evening? On the way there, my sister dropped her sunglasses into the river... and a half-naked, slightly tipsy Geordie jumped in and fished them out. Total hero. We gave him a round of applause – and then went for sushi.

I REDESIGNED MY LIFE TO BE UNWOUND BY DEFAULT. IT'S A DAILY PRACTICE, NOT A RESCUE PLAN

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

A I think it would probably be Cate Blanchett. I've been told I look a little like her – and I reckon I've nailed that signature stare.

Q What's your guilty pleasure?

A Definitely rock climbing. It's dirty, difficult, and gives me a ridiculous thrill. Beat that!

Q What was the last gift you gave/received?

A I gave my boyfriend beef tallow as an anniversary gift. I'll say no more!

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

A Stayin' Alive by Bee Gees. It's a classic that gets me moving every time!

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

A It has to be: 'Be unapologetically yourself.'

Q Describe your perfect holiday...

A I live it. I'm in the Lakes – hiking mountains, climbing crags, mountain biking through forests, motorbiking over high passes, paddleboarding on mirror-flat water, and eating ridiculously good food. Honestly, going away usually feels like a downgrade.

Q What's your all-time favourite book?

A *Lean In* by Sheryl Sandberg. It shifted how I saw my leadership.

Q What keeps you awake at night?

A That would be wildly inappropriate to answer here!

Q How do you unwind?

A I redesigned my life to be unwound by default. It's a daily practice, not a rescue plan.

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

A Truthfully? Not much. I already have everything I need – and more than I ever imagined.

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

A My sister and I, next to my Vespa after a ride. Hair windswept, big grins, blue sky, no filter needed.



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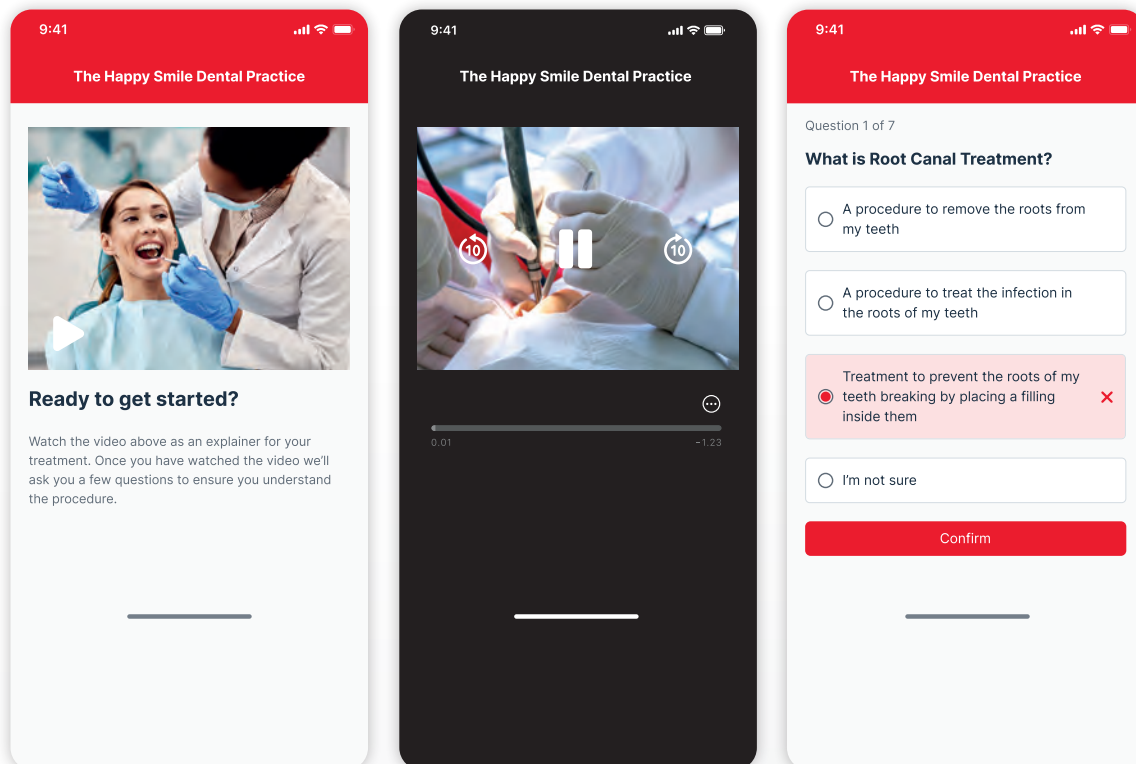
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