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1. Bosma, M.L., McGuire, J.A., DelSasso, A. et al. Efficacy of flossing and mouth rinsing regimens on plaque and gingivitis: a randomized clinical trial. BMC Oral Health 24, 178 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12903-024-03924-4> 2. Figuero, E., S. Roldan, J. Serrano, M. Escribano, C. Martin and P. Preshaw (2020). "Efficacy of adjunctive therapy in patients with gingival inflammation. A systematic review and meta-analysis." J Clin Periodontol 3. EFP: Guidelines for effective prevention of periodontal diseases (2014). Available at: <https://www.efp.org/news-events/periodo-workshop/past-workshops/periodo-workshop-2014/>

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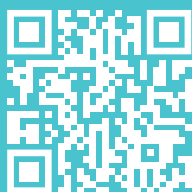
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Understanding the funnel

Key steps and strategies to
optimise practice growth

A good trip

Is your patient journey
up to scratch?

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How I Did It: Dentozen



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The Future of Practice Growth Starts Here

Reflect, refocus and reignite

Siobhan Hiscott

Group managing editor

As the year draws to a close, it's tempting to charge straight into the next one with fresh goals and ambitious plans. Dental business owners, by nature, are forward thinkers – driven by patient outcomes, practice growth, and innovation. Yet before we plot the path to 2026, there's immense value in pressing pause. Reflection isn't indulgence; it's intelligence. The most successful leaders know that looking back with intention is what gives clarity to the way forward.

The past 12 months have undoubtedly brought a mixture of trials and triumphs. The dental landscape continues to evolve – we've seen shifting patient expectations, recruitment challenges, rising costs, and rapid digital transformation.

It's easy to get caught in the cycle of reacting rather than strategising. But reflection allows you to step above the day-to-day and see patterns that only hindsight can reveal.

What did your team achieve this year that truly made a difference? Which investments in people, technology or marketing paid off – and which didn't deliver as expected? How well did your culture hold up under pressure? These aren't just nostalgic musings; they're diagnostic

tools. Health checks underpin every patient consultation, but when was the last time you took a health check on your business? Before prescribing the next year's business goals, examine the health of your practice.

Reflection also fosters gratitude and perspective – two powerful yet often overlooked business assets. Recognising how far you've come reignites motivation and strengthens team morale. Remember, it's not about perfection – it's about progress. By understanding what worked, what didn't and why, you create a foundation of wisdom that will make your 2026 strategy not just aspirational, but achievable.

As you take stock of 2025, make time to document insights, celebrate milestones and identify lessons worth carrying forward. Share these reflections openly with your team – the best goals are those shaped collaboratively, grounded in shared experience and collective ambition.

The coming year promises new challenges and fresh opportunities. But before you leap, look back. Reflection transforms hindsight into foresight. And in business, as in dentistry, a clear diagnosis is the first step toward effective treatment. So, pause, reflect and realign – because a practice that learns from its past is already one step ahead of its future.



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PRIVATE

DENTISTRY

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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BChD MJDF, is owner and principal dentist at The Dental Studio in Wakefield and is also known as the Dental Architect. She has an interest in orthodontics, Invisalign and facial aesthetics.



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



SAM JETHWA

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



ANGELA LY

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



HANNA MIRAFTAB

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



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



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Petition launched to reform overseas registration exam booking system

A petition has been launched by *Dentistry* calling for a priority booking system to be introduced for the overseas registration exam (ORE).

A significantly in-demand exam, the ORE booking system currently works in a way similar to securing concert tickets – whoever is fastest on the day.

As a result, those who have previously tried and failed to book an exam place will have just as much of a chance as somebody who is attempting to book for the first time.

According to research by the Association of Dental Groups (ADG), in June this year an estimated 5,000 fully-trained overseas dentists were in the registration queue to practise as dentists in the UK.

As a result, *Dentistry* believes that a quick, short-term solution to getting enthusiastic and talented overseas dentists into the UK dental system is for the General Dental Council (GDC) to introduce a priority booking



system for both Part 1 and Part 2 of the exams.

This, *Dentistry* believes, will reduce participant anxiety, protect the reputation of UK dentistry and, ultimately, help to plug the shortfall in the dental workforce.

Dentistry understands that this is not the only solution – wider, long-term policies need to be considered

to make the ORE a more effective system. However, it hopes this will alleviate the months of uncertainty faced by thousands of clinicians attempting to book the exam and restore some faith in a system that could have a key role to play in improving dental access in the UK.

Visit dentistry.co.uk to sign the petition.

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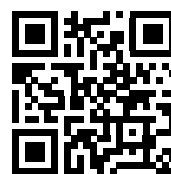


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Work-life balance 'biggest priority' for dental professionals

Work-life balance, career development and a supportive culture are top of the list of priorities for dental professionals.

This is according to new research from Bupa Dental Care, which suggests that dental professionals are increasingly seeking flexible workplaces that offer development opportunities.

Dental practitioners said they prioritise work-life balance (35%), training and development (31%), and a collaborative, supportive culture (29%) when it comes to their career.

One in three (33%) feel there are limited opportunities for progression and a lack of mentoring. On top of this, one quarter of respondents said they want to make a meaningful impact in the industry, while 24% want to feel valued and work somewhere they are proud of.

The findings come as Bupa Dental Care launches its Feel at Ease campaign, which is designed to support dental professionals in feeling confident and cared for in their careers.

The campaign also supports the patient experience, recognising that dental anxiety remains a common barrier to care.

Toothpaste tubes now recyclable across the UK

All toothpaste tubes sold nationwide will now be made of recyclable polyethylene as part of a sustainability drive led by toothpaste manufacturers.

Toothpaste tubes have previously presented a challenge for recycling as they were formed of a sheet of aluminium sandwiched between plastic. Led by toothpaste brands such as Colgate and Haleon in collaboration with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the tubes will now be 100% recyclable.

While many local authorities are beginning to accept toothpaste tubes for recycling via kerbside collection, many consumers will still not have access to tube recycling from home. However, toothpaste tubes can be taken to Boots locations across the country, where customers will receive Advantage Card points for participating in the Recycle at Boots scheme.

Research conducted by WRAP found that most people believe toothpaste tubes are non-recyclable.

Catherine David, WRAP CEO, said: 'Dentists are the frontline of behaviour change in promoting oral healthcare practices, so we hope they'll have a minute to encourage patients to recycle the tubes too.'

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Every little helps

As we approach 2026, think about how you can be a part of the movement to help others, says **Chris Barrow**



CHRIS
BARROW

It's such a cliché to say that 'every year seems to pass more quickly than the last' and yet, here we are, approaching the close of 2025. In fact, this is the last edition you will enjoy before we begin all over again.

I don't know about you, but for me the second half of 2025 has felt very similar to the same period in 2020.

Not, this time, the recovery from COVID-19 and an adjustment to new working practices – but what feels like a similarly tense landscape, leading to a deterioration in the resilience of those we hire and the patience of those we serve.

What has been behind the pressures of the last few months? I'm going to point a finger at the media. Not social media, but 'the media'. Why? Because every time we reach for a device or switch on a screen, the media bombards us with nothing but bad news.

Whether it's global, international, national or local. Whether it's politics, economics, climate or crime, whether it's the movement of populations away from or towards danger or the rantings of dangerous egotists, a relentless battering of negativity.

Hardly surprising, therefore, that we all wonder at some stage 'how do I navigate my way through this?'

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Alongside this tsunami of bad news, 2025 will be the year that we look back on for the true arrival of artificial intelligence (AI) into our everyday lives, slowly matching (and ultimately replacing) Google as our primary means of asking questions in the world, and even getting things done.

The age of the emoji before a bullet point, emboldened fonts to make a point and infuriating US spelling. Bah humbug!

In the face of all of this, I'm reminded of the responsibility that we carry, if we are able, to demonstrate leadership.

A leader is 'the custodian of the vision of where we are going, the architect of the plan to get there and the living example of the standards of performance and behaviour required to arrive'.

HELPING OTHERS

Those of us who are privileged in any way must ask how we can help others, either around us or far away. Dental folks are brilliant at this – something we can all be proud of.

Every week I see members of our community helping others:

- In the workplace – by keeping an eye out for team members who may be facing struggles at home or in their jobs – and offering the same watchful eye over patients who might confide
- In their local communities through effective CSR engagement, whether it is through sustainability or support
- In their country of residence by supporting the work of both national generic charities and those that are dental specific
- And overseas, again generically supporting international movements or through dental outreach programmes.

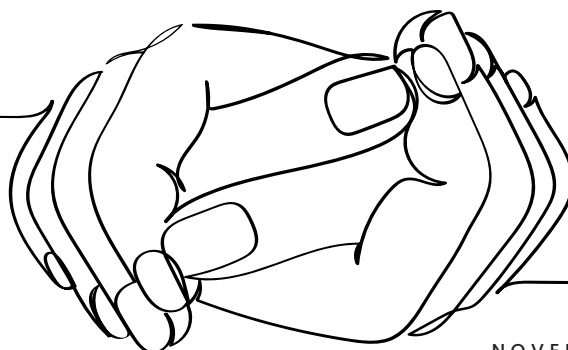
Dental individuals and teams are committing to physical challenges, community service, fundraising or volunteering.

GIVING BACK

Here's what I think – we are marvellous – and in the face of all the negativity that prowls in the airwaves, and the advent of artificial intelligence – we are a beacon of light.

As we approach 2026, think about how you can be a part of that movement for good, how you can lead and/or give – to help others.

We need more love in the world, not more AI – and love is a verb.



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Dentozen

Saba Arif pivoted her career to open a clinic that complements her other business interest – compliance – and a deep passion for interior design

My interest in dentistry has led me on a journey to become a serial entrepreneur.

And, although it has not always been an easy path to follow, hard work and valuable help have taken me a long way.

I grew up living between Pakistan and England, facing pressure to be a role model for my younger brothers and pursue a medical career, while also navigating the cultural differences between the two countries.

My family was in Pakistan when I returned to the UK to study biomedical science at university. While studying for my degree, I began training as a dental nurse. To earn some money, I worked as a dental nurse every other Sunday and then found a Saturday dental nursing position, which is when I truly developed a passion for nursing. I thought it was incredible.

I loved dentistry and enjoyed working with people. I enjoyed caring for patients and found the entire experience fascinating. When I finished my dental nursing training, I was in the final year of my biomedical science degree.

I was working in my role as a dental nurse with Smilepod on Saturdays when I was offered a practice manager role there. I progressed to become the area manager, overseeing multiple sites. I then

THE COLOURS ARE SUBTLE, WITH CREAMS BLENDING WITH BURNISHED GOLDS

had a job interview with Bupa. I had completed my last university assignment when I received a job offer and started working at its clinic in central London.

I worked on multiple other projects in both the acquisition and integration departments, finally transitioning from finance to compliance.

The Oasis takeover of Bupa was a turning point and inspired my shift towards business ownership.

READY FOR IT

My drive comes from a love for creating new concepts, building businesses and identifying opportunities in the market. By the time I was ready to set up my practice, I had helped nearly 68 dental squats with their compliance through my Smart Dental Compliance business.

The dream was to create the kind of clinic I would genuinely want to walk into. It didn't happen overnight. It required planning, mistakes and the right team. Now? It's everything I envisioned – and more.

The first clinic, Dentozen London, opened in September 2021 and was born from a desire to introduce an exotic, spa-like experience within a dental setting.

Dentozen Harrogate followed, officially opening in November 2024.

Fast forward, and our newest dental and skin retreat, Dentozen Leeds, opened in June in the heart of the city.

It's the third clinic under the Dentozen branding. All are designed to address the dental and aesthetic needs of patients within a luxurious setting.

Dentozen Leeds serves as our flagship location and started as a squat practice. The premises were previously used as offices before it

Step inside...

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DENTOZEN



The ethos

Dentozen is dedicated to redefining dental and aesthetic care by blending luxury, innovation and personalised attention. The ethos centres on creating a calming, spa-like environment where patients feel valued, relaxed and truly cared for. The approach is holistic, incorporating modern techniques and a patient-focused journey that emphasises comfort and wellbeing. Passionate about design and excellence, owner Saba Arif has crafted a business model to inspire confidence and peace of mind. Driven by a passion for creating unforgettable experiences, each clinic strives to set new benchmarks in cosmetic and dental healthcare, transforming routine appointments into truly exceptional journeys.

HOW I DID IT



was transformed. I absolutely love squats because you can really put your stamp on the feel, ethos and look of a practice, and very easily visualise a dream in terms of design.

A squat allows you the freedom to be very clever and creative with it. Interior design is a genuine passion of mine. If I were to choose a new career in the next five years, it would undoubtedly be in this field. I've always enjoyed creating comfortable, luxurious spaces where people feel at ease.

LAID-BACK LUXURY

With Dentozen Leeds, I aimed to provide an environment where patients can truly relax and enjoy a spa-like atmosphere, including two distinctly different waiting rooms.

The colours are subtle, with creams blending with burnished golds. It is designed with a contemporary and luxurious aesthetic that prioritises comfort and elegance through minimalism and warm neutral colours. The colour palette features beige, ivory, taupe and soft creams and whites, creating a calming environment.



GUESTS ARE WELCOMED WITH A DETOX DRINK AND A HOT TOWEL UPON ARRIVAL

The furniture is modern, and the accent chairs and nesting coffee tables in the waiting area offer a high-end touch that complements our minimalist theme.

Textures and materials play a crucial role in creating a warm and inviting environment. A plush circular area rug anchors the seating area, and the chairs contrast nicely with the ceramic flooring. A stone-finished fireplace introduces a homely addition, while the dried floral wall installation adds organic depth and artistic flair that reflect on-trend biophilic design principles.

The pampas grass and palm fronds also add neutral hues to the corridors that lead to our treatment rooms.

The gold sinks, matching gold fixtures, and a statement round mirror with a textured frame add visual richness to our cloakroom, providing another touch of luxury. The bold, herringbone-patterned accent wall in deep teal contrasts elegantly with the glossy, marble-effect tiles.

RELAXED AND STRESS-FREE

Our lighting has also been carefully chosen. Warm white LED spotlighting in the recessed ceiling provides a soft glow, delivering focused illumination without distraction. In contrast, cove lighting along the ceiling accentuates the vertical space of the waiting room.

The combination of these lighting features focuses on creating an overall calm, boutique hotel-like atmosphere, rather than that of a typical medical clinic.

The modern pendant and wall lighting combination in the cloakroom continues this theme. The result is a stylish, spa-inspired space that helps to reduce our patients' anxiety and enhances our brand image.

I also wanted to create a uniquely memorable patient journey – one that was unlike a typical dental experience. Guests are welcomed with a detox drink and a hot towel upon arrival, and I promote a digital-free environment to help them unwind and be present.

One of our clinics features a therapy room where we offer complimentary 15-minute massages before complex treatments, such as implants or sedation, to help patients feel at ease.

The team

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Saba Arif

LEAD DENTIST
Khawer Ali

PRACTICE MANAGER
Sarah Lillington

LEAD DENTAL NURSE
Ellie Foster

TREATMENT COORDINATOR
Maryam Mushtaq

OTHER PROJECTS

The Dentozen Leeds project took six months – from securing the location to complete fit-out. I had excellent contacts and managed the project myself, working closely with my own team of builders.

Even after three launches, the process doesn't necessarily get any easier. While the workflow becomes more streamlined with each new project, every clinic presents its own unique challenges and learning experiences. Each has its hurdles, but these are part of the journey and contribute to growth.

I am now planning to open a fourth practice, this time incorporating elements focused on biohacking as well as dental and aesthetic treatments. In addition to the three clinics, I also run Phitology, a private fitness studio and café, as well as Smart Dental Compliance and Training, and CQC Medisolutions. We recently hosted the Dream Squat Conference at the Savoy in London, which drew a large number of delegates and was designed to share practical strategies and knowledge.

I also recently launched a podcast series, Founders Footsteps, where I delve deep into the journeys of inspiring entrepreneurs and innovators, exploring their stories, challenges and triumphs to learn what it truly takes to build something from the ground up. My diverse experiences have given me valuable insights, and I am keen to inspire



Who was involved?

Builders
Dream Squat

Chairs/treatment centres
Clark Dental

Dental software
Dentally

Marketing
Start and Scale (Aaron Branch)

Suppliers
Dental Directory

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1



2



3



4



6



5

1 Flat Ring Chandelier
Purple, Besselink & Jones, £2,117

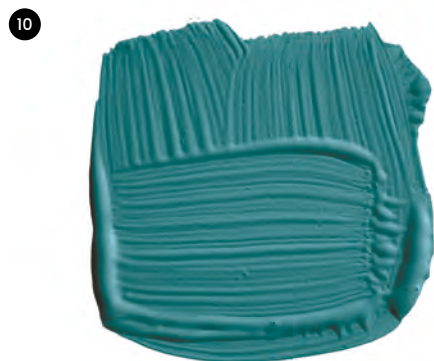
2 Bold Red Lips Bookends
Rockett St George, £42

3 Monochrome Console Table
Boca do Lobo, £POA

4 Marie Thérèse oversized mirror
Boca do Lobo, £POA

5 Emmeline I
The Radiator Centre, £336

6 Tall Lilo Mirror Zest
OKA, £695



7 Pierre The Cat Table & Desk Lamp
Oliver Bonas, £98

8 Roo Yellow Slim Single Switch
Switch, £87

9 Leopard Print Wallpaper – Oyster
Becca Who, £159

10 Vardo No.288 – Modern Eggshell, 2.5l
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The new patient funnel

David Nelkin reveals what's at the heart of practice growth

Let me ask you a question: if you had £5,000 to invest in growing your practice next month, would you rather spend it generating 70 new enquiries with a 10% conversion rate, or 35 enquiries with a 20% conversion rate? Both give you roughly the same number of new patients, but one approach sets you up for sustainable, compounding growth, while the other keeps you on an expensive treadmill forever.

Most practice owners instinctively choose more leads. It feels like growth. More enquiries coming in, more activity, more buzz. But the smart money – the practices that are genuinely thriving rather than just surviving – focus obsessively on conversion rates at every stage of their patient journey.

There are two fundamental approaches to growth through marketing:

1. You can spend more money filling the top of your funnel with more leads
2. You can work smarter by optimising how efficiently you convert the leads you're already getting.

The second approach is not only more cost-effective but also creates sustainable, compound growth that transforms practices.

The entire model at Xcelerator Dental is built around this principle.

We don't just generate leads for our clients – we help them measure, track and optimise every single conversion point in their new patient funnel. After all, what's the point of filling a leaky bucket?

Let me share some compelling mathematics that illustrate why this matters. If you improve just four conversion points – leads contacted, appointments booked, patients who turn up, and treatment starts – by only 5% each (which I love because it's achievable), your overall treatment starts will increase by approximately 50%. That's not magic – it is compound growth working in your favour.

Once you have this efficient funnel in place, any money you then invest in marketing delivers dramatically better returns.

WHAT IS THE NEW PATIENT FUNNEL?

Your new patient funnel is the multi-step process that moves potential patients from their first awareness of your practice through to becoming loyal advocates who refer friends and family. It's not just about getting people through your door – it's about creating a systematic approach that maximises the value of every single enquiry.

The funnel breaks down into several critical stages, each with its own conversion point that you should be measuring religiously.

Awareness

This is where potential patients first discover your practice, whether through Google search, social

media, a friend's recommendation, or your local reputation. At Xcelerator Dental, our 'promote' pillar focuses on generating high-quality leads through targeted local SEO, paid advertising (both search and social), and strategic content marketing that positions you as the go-to practice in your area.

Interest

Once someone knows about you, they need to engage with your content and offerings. This might involve visiting your website, reading patient testimonials, or exploring treatment pages. Website designs should be specifically built to nurture this interest and guide visitors smoothly towards enquiry.

Decision

This is where potential patients move from consideration to action – they submit an enquiry, pick up the phone, or send a Whatsapp message. Here, our 'convert' pillar ensures your website is optimised for conversions, with clear calls-to-action, easy contact methods, and persuasive content that addresses common concerns and objections.

Action

The final stage involves booking and attending a consultation, then ultimately starting treatment. This is where the 'grow' pillar comes into play at Xcelerator Dental, with our CRM system and practice success managers ensuring every lead is followed up, nurtured and guided towards treatment acceptance.



David Nelkin

David is the founder and CEO of Xcelerator Dental, a specialist dental marketing agency focused on sustainable practice growth. For more information, visit xceleratordental.com.

WHY IT'S CRITICAL FOR GROWTH

The financial impact of an optimised funnel is transformational. Let's say you currently get 50 leads per month. You contact 70% of them (35 people), book 40% of those into appointments (14 bookings), with an 80% attendance rate (11 consultations), and 50% convert to treatment (5.5 new patients). Now, improve each of these four conversion points by just 5%. You'll end up with approximately eight new patients – a 45% increase in treatment starts without spending another penny on marketing.

The exciting part? Five per cent improvement at each stage is always achievable. Often, much larger improvements are seen when practices start measuring and optimising systematically.

This approach creates sustainable growth because it builds systems and processes that improve your practice's fundamental efficiency. Every lead becomes more valuable, every team member becomes more effective, and your marketing budget delivers exponentially better returns. It's the difference between growth that requires constant increasing investment and growth that compounds on itself.

OPTIMISING YOUR FUNNEL: KEY STEPS AND STRATEGIES

Capturing leads effectively

The top of your funnel is all about visibility and attraction. At Xcelerator Dental, we take an integrated approach across multiple channels. Our local SEO strategies ensure you appear in Google's map pack and AI-generated results when patients search for dental services.

With 60% of searches now ending without a click, we know the search landscape has fundamentally changed. Your Google Business Profile has essentially become your new homepage.

We also leverage paid advertising across Google and Meta, but we don't just drive clicks, we drive qualified leads. Our ad campaigns are built around patient psychology, addressing specific concerns and desires at different stages of their decision-making journey.

Nurturing interest and engagement

Once someone lands on your website, every element should work together to move them towards enquiry. Sites shouldn't just look attractive – they should be conversion engines that guide visitors through a carefully crafted journey.

Email marketing and remarketing play crucial roles here too. Someone who visits your implant page but doesn't enquire isn't a lost opportunity, they're a warm prospect who needs more nurturing. Xcelerator Dental systems automatically add them to targeted nurture sequences, serving relevant content and offers based on their interests and behaviour.

Converting enquiries to bookings

This is where many practices lose the most potential patients, and it's where CRM systems can become transformational. The average dental practice loses 55% of their enquiries simply due to poor or non-existent follow-up processes.

The Xcelerator Dental CRM creates daily action lists for your team, ensuring every enquiry gets timely follow-up. It handles multi-channel communication from one platform, automatically sending instant welcome messages, educational content, and appointment reminders based on where patients are in their journey.

The system also uses AI-powered lead scoring to identify which prospects are most likely to convert, helping your team prioritise their efforts. Someone who's viewed multiple treatment pages, downloaded a price guide, and asked specific questions about financing is clearly more engaged than someone who submitted a generic contact form.

Maximising attendance and treatment acceptance

Getting patients to actually attend their consultation and then start treatment requires a different approach. By this stage, cost is rarely the primary factor

– patients are evaluating trust, competence, and whether they feel comfortable with your team.

Xcelerator Dental practice success managers work with your team on every aspect of the patient experience. This includes reception training on building rapport and handling objections, optimising your physical environment to create the right impression, and ensuring your clinicians are equipped to present treatment plans in ways that address both clinical needs and patient concerns.

FROM LEADS TO LOYALTY

At Xcelerator Dental, our mission is to simplify the path to growth and take the stress of marketing away from dental practices, so you can focus on delivering exceptional patient care. A well-optimised new patient funnel is central to this mission because it creates predictable, scalable growth.

If you don't have a well-converting funnel, don't invest more in marketing – it's like trying to fill a swimming pool with a garden hose when there's a massive hole in the bottom.

The practices that thrive are those that recognise this fundamental truth: sustainable growth comes from systematically improving how you convert opportunities at every stage.

Your new patient funnel isn't just a nice-to-have process, it's the beating heart of your practice growth.

If you're investing in marketing but not measuring your conversion rates at each stage, you're flying blind. The good news? Once you start measuring and optimising your funnel, even small improvements create compound returns that transform your practice's trajectory. That 50% increase in treatment starts from 5% improvements at each stage isn't theoretical – it's what we're helping practices achieve every single month.

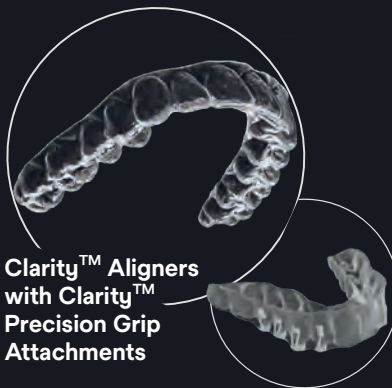


A Day Of Clarity

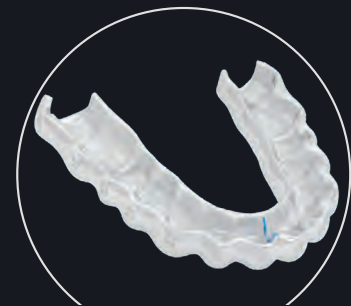
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Optimising the patient journey

Are you getting as many patients as you'd like? Is your patient journey as good as it can be? **Jo Phillpot** suggests ways to improve your patients' experience

Many dental practice managers believe the patient journey begins at reception and continues through the clinical experience. However, the reality is that this journey starts much earlier – well before a patient steps into the practice.

From initial discovery to first impressions online, every touchpoint shapes expectations. Understanding and refining these early stages is key to attracting new patients and building lasting trust.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS BEGIN ONLINE

Whether through advertising, social media or word-of-mouth, one way or another, most prospective patients will eventually land on your website. It's your digital shop front so it must reflect the values and personality of your practice.

To help achieve this, take a step back and reflect on how you would like patients to describe your practice. Remember, words such as 'caring', 'friendly', or 'professional', won't set you apart from the crowd. Consider how you can differentiate yourselves. You can still be friendly and caring but perhaps you could do this by having a 'modern and welcoming' or 'vibrant and community-focused' tone.

Once you've decided how you want to be viewed then these descriptors should be consistently reflected across all your communications – from your website to social media and any printed materials you have.

CONSISTENCY BUILDS CONFIDENCE

Consistency across marketing and patient experience is essential. If your online presence promises a warm, welcoming environment, then your in-practice experience must deliver the same. Don't try to appear as something you're not. If you're a family dentist caring for your local community then it would be misleading to portray yourselves as an upscale spa practice. Any disconnect can lead to mistrust and erode confidence before treatment even begins.

By setting clear, authentic expectations you help patients feel reassured and valued. This is especially important when you're dealing with referrals, where a valued patient introduces someone new to your practice. In a world where there are so many dupes and fakes, it pays to be authentic.

REFERRALS: A STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

Referrals remain one of the most effective ways to grow patient numbers for a dental practice, yet they're often underutilised. Rather than simply delegating the task of asking for referrals to reception, encourage clinicians to initiate the conversation directly.

Try using a simple, sincere message such as: 'Mrs Smith, it's always a pleasure seeing you. We're looking to grow our practice and would love more patients like you. If you know anyone who might benefit from our care, we'd be grateful for the



Jo Phillpot

Jo has been a regional support manager for DPAS and Practice Plan for 17 years. She has been involved in dentistry for nearly 35 years working in practice as a dental nurse and practice manager.

recommendation. Here are a few referral cards you might like to hand out to people you think might like to join the practice.'

This approach feels personal and authentic, and at the same time, it reinforces to the patient that they're valued by your practice.

MAKE YOUR WEBSITE WORK FOR PATIENTS

Many dental websites are written with clinicians in mind, focusing heavily on qualifications and technical expertise. While this is important, it isn't always what patients are looking for.

You have just a few seconds to capture a prospective patient's attention so it's important to

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT TO REMEMBER IS THAT THE PATIENT JOURNEY DOESN'T BEGIN AT RECEPTION

highlight just what makes your practice unique and patient friendly.

Rather than focusing on technical points, ensure your homepage communicates what you believe to be the most important things about your practice clearly and quickly. Also, steer clear of too much technical jargon and use language that patients will understand easily.

Invest in professional photography and well-structured video testimonials. People love to see the genuine experience of real people so they can be a real asset as they build credibility and help prospective patients visualise their experience.

CONSIDER ADDING A CHAT FUNCTION

Live chat can be a powerful tool for engaging prospective patients.

A friendly chat box that pops up while a prospective patient is browsing your website offers a low-pressure, anonymous way for them to ask questions and even begin building rapport.

Practices have reported a significant increase in appointment

conversions after implementing chat. The key? Friendly, proactive engagement that helps patients feel supported from the moment they visit your site.

TO SUM UP

The most important point to remember is that the patient journey doesn't begin at reception, it starts with a Google search, a social media post, or a referral conversation.

As a dental practice owner or manager, your role is to ensure every step of that journey is aligned, welcoming and reflective of your practice's values.

By investing in consistent messaging, strategic referrals and a patient-focused online presence, you can create a seamless experience that builds trust from the first click.

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1. BOCOUTURE Summary of Product Characteristics. Merz Pharmaceuticals GmbH:
<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/600/smpc> (Last accessed August 2025).

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Planning for retirement

Stephen Barry explains how to plan for your dream retirement

For many dentists, retirement represents the ultimate reward for decades of hard work. Even those who love their careers often look forward to a stage of life where the pace is slower, the diary is freer, and there is more time to enjoy the things that matter most.

In recent years, the idea of retiring early has become more attractive for many. Whatever your motivation, whether it is leaving early or stopping work at the more traditional retirement age, the key to achieving the lifestyle you want lies in careful preparation.

Retirement dreams do not fund themselves. They require a plan.

BUILDING AN EXIT STRATEGY

A clear exit strategy is the foundation of a successful retirement. This means working out not only when you want to retire, but also what you want retirement to look like. By starting with a vision of your ideal retirement, you can then work backwards to calculate the financial steps needed to secure it.

One of the most common challenges is working out how much is 'enough'. While you are still earning, it can be difficult to picture what your spending will look like when the regular income stops. That is why planning early, ideally with the support of a financial adviser who understands dental careers, is so important. Together, you can

determine whether your current sources of income such as pensions, savings or investments will provide for the lifestyle you have in mind, or whether you need to explore additional options.

For dental professionals, there are also practical considerations. Practice owners, for example, may want to start succession planning well in advance to ensure they can maximise the value of their business and hand over patients smoothly.

Associates will need to think about notice periods and, for those in the NHS, the timeline for applying for pension benefits.

These steps cannot be rushed, which is why setting out an exit strategy at least five years before your target retirement date is often recommended. That said, even if you have less than five years left, it is never too late to make meaningful progress.

THINKING IN STAGES

Another important question is how to structure your finances so they last not just into the first years of retirement but throughout your lifetime. With people living longer, it is helpful to think of retirement in three distinct stages.

The first stage is often the most active. In these early years, you may want to travel more widely, pursue passions you could not while working, or simply enjoy greater freedom in

your day-to-day life. The second stage may bring a gradual slowing of pace, with a shift in spending priorities. Finally, the later years can introduce new considerations, particularly around health and the potential costs of care.

By anticipating these stages, you can plan more accurately for what your financial needs will look like over

time. At Wesleyan Financial Services, we often use cash flow modelling to help clients visualise this. By mapping out expected income against projected

spending, it becomes clearer whether you are on track, where gaps may exist, and how to make the most of any surplus funds. It is a practical way to turn a retirement dream into a concrete financial plan.

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

Retirement should be an exciting prospect, not a source of uncertainty or worry. The earlier you begin planning, the more options you will have, and the more confident you will feel about stepping into this next phase of life.

Whether you are five years away from retiring or just starting to consider it, the right guidance can make all the difference.

Need help creating your own retirement plan? Visit wesleyan.co.uk/retirement-advice-dentists or call 0808 149 9416. Charges may apply, but costs are agreed in advance. Capital at risk.



Stephen Barry

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

How to choose a financial adviser

Adam Bernstein highlights the importance of looking beyond the glossy brochures and instead to the results a financial adviser can bring

The problem with money nowadays is that it's digital and so highly transient. We rarely hold bank notes, invariably ditch coins at the first opportunity, and most likely live via plastic. All of this makes it easy to spend beyond our means.

But just because we rely on non-cash methods of making payments doesn't abrogate our responsibility to be careful with our money. By extension, this means planning our financial futures for the long term. For most, unless they are a 'sophisticated investor', this means hiring a financial adviser.

However, many do not, as an October 2023 story in *Professional Adviser* noted. It reported that 'only one in 10 UK adults have sought professional advice'. Further, the research, conducted in collaboration with Yougov and 2,035 adults, showed that almost half (49%) felt uncomfortable with their level of retirement savings, while 38% said it is unlikely they will achieve their retirement goals.

Similarly, a January 2024 report in the *Independent* found that 'more than half of people (59%) do not have a financial plan in place.'

But with a bewildering array of financial advisers, not to mention the acronyms used in the world of finance, it's never been more important to find the right person.

So, whether it's advice on a new mortgage, pension, impending

retirement, or just a 'rainy day' fund, good advice is essential.

It's important to be mindful that someone needing financial advice does not have to be classed as 'rich' to qualify for help – indeed, good financial advice is as important for the average person as it is for the wealthy.

For some, the need to seek advice will be a function of being at a crossroads in their life – where something significant has occurred, such as the death of a spouse, an inheritance, or upcoming retirement.

ADVISERS DIFFER

As in other walks of life, advisers differ in the services they offer and the markets they serve – mortgages, investments or pensions, for example. Consequently, some may refer to themselves as a financial adviser, or they may call themselves a financial planner or wealth manager.

In overview, a financial adviser is likely to offer a wide range of services outside of savings and investments – perhaps mortgages, insurance products or equity release (from a property).

A financial planner or wealth manager, on the other hand, tends to be more focused on investment and wealth and will seek to form a strategy taking account of the client's current circumstances, goals and other factors. They will look at the bigger picture and aim to take a rounded approach.

Regardless of the specialism, all are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Accordingly, it has rules to follow and obligations to its clients; any adviser officially recognised will be listed on the FCA's publicly searchable 'financial services register'.

While there are minimum qualifications for recognition, the more avant-garde will hold other specific



Adam Bernstein

Adam is director of Adam Bernstein Limited.

qualifications particular to their interest. Understanding how well qualified an adviser is would not be a wasted exercise.

If an adviser deals with investments, pensions or retirement products, they will be categorised as either 'independent' or 'restricted'.

Independent financial advisers seek to recommend products from firms across the market as a whole. In contrast, restricted advisers invariably have limitations on the type of products they offer, the providers they are able to choose from, or possibly both.

This means that it's important to know the status of the adviser being considered and what they can offer; if their status is unclear, it should be clarified. And if they are restricted, their providers should be clarified too.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The obvious way to begin the search is to ask for personal recommendations from friends and family, noting, however, that their assets, needs and level of sophistication will be different. Questions to pose to referees should revolve around 'personal chemistry', responsiveness, charges and, importantly, results.

In addition to friends and family, there are websites such as Vouchedfor, Society of Later Life

Advisers, Unbiased, Personal Finance Society and the Retirement Adviser Directory on moneyhelper.org.uk.

It's also possible that an employer or professional body may have a tie-in with an adviser. That said, it's still important to verify that the adviser suits the individual's needs.

PAYING FOR ADVICE

Advice comes with cost and it's important to walk into a relationship without surprises.

Any first meeting should be free, but after that, the charges can be highly variable.

Advisers recommending products such as investments, pensions or retirement income products cannot receive commission. Consequently, they will charge fees, this may mean an initial onboarding fee followed by ongoing fees that could be monthly or annual. Fees might be flat rate or based on a percentage of the assets. And while fees are presented as fixed, it may be possible to negotiate them down.

According to moneyhelper.org, hourly rates vary from £75 to £350 per hour – with an average of £150. But there could be a set fee for a given job, which may range from hundreds to several thousand pounds.

As for other forms of fee structure, searches of Vouchedfor returns examples. In one instance, for investment advice on assets of £250,000, an initial fee of 3% and 0.75% ongoing plus any investment fund fees would be payable. Another for the same found a different adviser charging £1,500 plus 1% of the assets initially with 0.75% ongoing plus any investment fund fees.

Fees will also depend on location, service delivery (in person, phone or online), whether advice is independent or restricted, who provides the service, qualifications, complexity of the work, and whether the service or product is actively or passively provided. Advisers must give a copy of their charging structure before providing any services.

Advisers for mortgages, equity release, general insurance (car, holiday or travel) or protection insurance such as life insurance may be paid commission, which should be disclosed.

While acknowledging that advice comes with cost, those seeking pension advice may be able to use the UK Pensions Advice Allowance. This allows those in defined contribution pension schemes to take up to £500 out of their pot tax-free to pay for retirement advice. This is permitted up to three times and no more than once in a tax year. However, not all pension providers provide for this.

There's also the government's free Pension Wise service for those aged 50 years and over who have a defined contribution pension. Pension Wise, via appointments of around 60 minutes, gives 'guidance' but not regulated financial advice. The 'adviser' will go through the options, tax implications but won't make any recommendations.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

It's a regrettable fact of life that a relationship with a financial adviser may sour. And it may fail to the point that a complaint is necessary.

While clients can refer the matter to the free-to-use Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) for a determination, they must follow a defined procedure before the FOS can consider the complaint.

In overview, a formal complaint must be made to the adviser, or their employer, outlining the issue and the resolution sought. They have eight weeks to respond with a 'final response' letter. If the outcome isn't satisfactory only then can the matter be referred to the FOS.

There is, of course, more to the process, which the FOS website details (visit financial-ombudsman.org.uk). But given the workload of the body, a swift outcome should not be expected. However, if the FOS investigator agrees, it can order an apology and/or compensation to a limit of, currently, £430,000.

SUMMARY

Taking financial advice is a serious matter where percentages may look small but could, in time, through compounding, make thousands of pounds of difference.

Ultimately, the choice of adviser is personal. But even so, it's key to look beyond the glossy brochures and to the results the adviser can bring.

Advice on advisers

Looking for a financial adviser? The following websites can help:

- Vouchedfor: vouchedfor.co.uk
- Society of Later Life Advisers: societyoflaterlifeadvisers.co.uk
- Unbiased: unbiased.co.uk
- Personal Finance Society: thepfs.org
- Retirement Advisor Directory: moneyhelper.org.uk

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Buying your first practice: considerations

Paul Graham shares tips for first-time buyers looking to take their first step into practice ownership

For many dentists, owning a practice is the ultimate professional milestone. It brings clinical freedom, financial control and the opportunity to build something of lasting value. But with opportunity comes complexity, and the right preparation can make all the difference between a smooth acquisition and a frustrating false start.

UNDERSTAND THE MARKET

Before jumping into practice ownership, it's important to understand the market you are entering. Here's an overview.

As reported in Christie & Co's *Dental Market Review 2025*, there are 12,223 dental practices in the UK. Of these, 2,203 are owned by corporates and larger groups (more than 30 sites), 2,065 by mid-sized and smaller groups (three to 29 sites) and 7,955 by independent operators (one to two sites).

Last year was a pivotal chapter for the UK dental market, marking a transition toward a more sustainable, quality-driven and independently led landscape, with more than 80% of Christie & Co deals agreed with independent owners. However, in the first half of 2025, we saw the re-entry of corporate and group buyers into the market, buoyed by stabilising interest rates and a renewed focus on quality over scale. Many larger groups spent much of 2023 and 2024 refining their portfolios and operating models and are now expected to return to acquisitive strategies, but in a more targeted, strategic fashion.

Analysing these deals revealed that, across all buyer types, there is a sector-

wide movement away from purely NHS dentistry and towards mixed and private practices. Between H1 2023 and H1 2025, corporate buyers increasingly targeted private dental practices, reflecting a strategic shift toward higher-margin, consumer-driven models amid NHS funding challenges. Small- and medium-sized groups also leaned more toward private and mixed (private) acquisitions. While independent and first-time buyers initially preferred NHS practices, they began pivoting toward private models by 2025. This shift reflects changing buyer expectations, increased access to funding, and a response to the perceived stability and profitability of private dentistry amid NHS uncertainty.

CONSIDER THE PRACTICE

Firstly, think what kind of practice you would like to buy – are you looking for a fully private or one with mixed-income? How many surgeries do you want? Where do you want it to be located? Are you willing to commute?

These are all important things to consider. That said, flexibility is key as no practice will tick every box. The most successful buyers are those who balance clarity with an open mind, recognising that the perfect opportunity may look different from what they originally imagined.

START YOUR SEARCH

Registering with a specialist dental agent is a good first step. It should never cost you anything; be cautious of any agent that charges upfront fees to buyers. A good agent will give equal access to all serious buyers and help you explore suitable opportunities on a level playing field.

Once you've chosen your business agent, call them to discuss your

options. This will help give you an idea of what's out there and give them the best understanding of what you want so they can match you with the right opportunity.

SAVE FOR A DEPOSIT

Next, think about how you are going to pay for your purchase. In most cases, a deposit of 10–30% is required to purchase a practice – though this can vary depending on your expertise, the robustness of your business plan, the profitability of the practice, and whether you intend on buying the leasehold or freehold interest.

The dental market is often classed as a prime, 'green-light' sector for funders due to its needs-driven nature. If you need advice about your funding options, get help from a specialist finance broker.

SEEK HELP

Speak with a solicitor and an accountant who specialise in dentistry – they will have a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the nuances of the sector, which will help you avoid any common pitfalls. It's essential to have a team of these professionals and get the right advice to ensure a smooth and seamless acquisition.

BE PREPARED

The dental market is highly competitive, and the most desirable practices move fast. If you lose out on a deal, don't let it derail your ambition. With more than 7,000 independently owned practices across the UK, the right opportunity is out there, and your preparation today is what will make you ready for it tomorrow.



Paul Graham

Paul is managing director – medical at Christie & Co.

*To find out more, email
paul.graham@christie.com.*

The gratitude effect

Rana Al-Falaki reveals how appreciation transforms performance in dentistry

Most people think leadership is about strategy, skill and stamina. Yet the greatest leaders have one thing in common: gratitude.

In dentistry, where perfectionism and pressure dominate, gratitude may seem like a soft concept, but it is one of the most powerful performance tools available. It transforms energy, mindset and team culture – all of which directly affect patient experience, productivity and profit.

Research from Gallup shows that employees who feel recognised are five times more likely to stay in their role and 4.6 times more engaged in their work.

According to OC Tanner's Global Culture Report, teams that regularly practise gratitude are 31% more productive and 44% less likely to experience burnout. In other words, appreciation doesn't just make people feel good. It makes them perform better.

THE GRATITUDE MYTH

The belief many professionals hold is that gratitude is fluffy, emotional and unrelated to work. Dentistry is about precision, compliance, and control, not feelings. Yet this mindset keeps countless leaders stuck in cycles of exhaustion and underappreciation, even when they appear successful from the outside.

Dr SB is a principal dentist who had been running a thriving mixed practice for years. From the outside, it looked like a success story. The books were full, the team was busy, and the practice

reputation was solid. But inside, she felt empty.

She worked through lunch, replaced days off with extra clinics, stayed late for emergency patients, and constantly said yes to others. The more she gave, the less she felt valued. Everyone else was getting paid, appreciated, and acknowledged – but what about her?

Her team seemed disengaged, morale was low, and she started questioning her future in dentistry altogether. She told herself she just needed to work harder or take a long holiday, but neither option fixed the real issue: a lack of fulfilment and recognition.

When we first spoke, Dr SB described herself as 'done'. She cared deeply about her patients and staff, but the weight of leadership had drained her joy.

As for the idea of gratitude – she believed 'gratitude is nice, but it won't change anything at work'.

THE TRUTH ABOUT GRATITUDE

As part of NAIL-IT in Dentistry's essential team wellbeing pack, we began with a personalised team engagement survey. The results were a shock.

Although Dr SB believed she was showing appreciation ('I say thank you all the time'), her team didn't feel recognised at all. In fact, the majority felt their contributions went unnoticed, and several described the practice as 'transactional'. Gratitude had become a habit of words rather than a language of meaning.

According to Gallup's State of the Global Workplace Report, only one in three employees feel their work is appreciated, and lack of recognition remains one of the top three reasons people leave their jobs. The CIPD's Good Work Index further notes that when employees feel valued, they are significantly more likely to report higher wellbeing, commitment and performance.

Dr SB's challenge wasn't a lack of effort or care – it was that her appreciation wasn't resonating. Together, we began embedding small but consistent gratitude rituals throughout the practice culture.

PRACTICAL ACTION STEPS FOR TEAM APPRECIATION

Using the NAIL-IT framework, we helped Dr SB and her practice introduce three simple initiatives:

1. The gratitude jar: a clear jar in the staff room where anyone could drop a note of appreciation – for help, effort or kindness. At the end of each week, they would read them aloud together, and when the jar was full – the whole team got a treat
2. The appreciation board: a visible space highlighting team wins, patient praise, and acts of collaboration
3. The buddy system: each team member was paired with an 'appreciation buddy' for the month – someone they would intentionally notice, support and thank.

The goal wasn't to create token gestures but to build emotional connection.

GRATITUDE STARTS WITHIN

Dr SB began her own journey through the NAIL-IT titanium leadership programme. She learned and integrated the 'SELF-APPRECIATION' formula.

True gratitude starts with yourself. You can't give authentic appreciation to others if you don't feel it internally. That's where self-appreciation becomes leadership in action.

These qualities make up NAIL-IT's SELF-APPRECIATION formula:

- Self-respect – value your own worth
- Empathy for yourself – be understanding and compassionate towards yourself
- Love for yourself – demonstrate affection and acceptance for who



Rana Al-Falaki

Rana is an internationally acclaimed leader in dental wellbeing and leadership. As founder of NAIL-IT in Dentistry, she works with dentists to achieve optimal performance. A multi-award-winning periodontist, coach, author, speaker, she blends over 25 years' experience with the NAIL-IT system to transform lives. Visit www.nailitindentistry.com for more details.

you are

- Forgiveness – let go of past experiences, learn from failures, and release any negative energy around blame or guilt
- Acceptance – recognise both your strengths and your weaknesses, and accept yourself
- Positivity – be positive, confident, and optimistic about your potential
- Purpose – determine your goals and desires, and create meaning
- Resilience – recognise your ability to bounce back from setbacks
- Expression – express your thoughts and feelings authentically and freely
- Courage – have the bravery to overcome your fears, follow your dreams, and stand up for yourself
- Integrity – stay true to yourself in all aspects of life
- Awareness – be conscious of your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours without any judgement
- Thankfulness – practise gratitude for your accomplishments and qualities
- Inspiration – identify and embrace the internal sources of motivation that drive you

- Open-mindedness – be willing to consider new ideas, perspectives, and experiences that can enhance your understanding of yourself
- Nurturing – nourish your mind, body, and soul with self-care and prioritising your personal growth and wellbeing. Honour your needs.

By embedding these qualities, Dr SB shifted from self-criticism to self-appreciation. Instead of ending her day listing what hadn't gone well, she began acknowledging what she had achieved. Instead of focusing on staff mistakes, she noticed progress. The change was subtle but profound.

TRANSFORMATIVE SHIFTS

Over the following months, the atmosphere in the practice changed.

Team members reported feeling more connected and confident. Patients commented on the warmth of the environment. Friends and family noticed how much lighter and happier Dr SB seemed. Her energy returned, and with it, her enthusiasm for dentistry.

Interestingly, the more gratitude she practised, the more she received.

Opportunities flowed, staff became proactive, and the practice's performance indicators improved. But the greatest success wasn't numerical. It was emotional – a renewed sense of meaning and peace.

GRATITUDE AS A PERFORMANCE STRATEGY

The science is clear. Studies from Harvard Health and the University of Warwick show that gratitude improves heart health, strengthens immunity, enhances sleep, and increases productivity by up to 13%.

Psychologically, it shifts attention from what's missing to what's meaningful, creating a sustainable source of motivation. In leadership terms, it cultivates empathy, trust and collaboration – the hallmarks of high-functioning teams.

Gratitude is not a luxury. It's leadership fuel. When you practise appreciation – for yourself and others – performance naturally follows. Dentistry can be demanding, but when you lead with gratitude, you don't just work better. You live better.

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Celebrating your team



Faye Mear explains why team recognition matters and how to do it well

Running a successful practice requires more than great clinical skills and modern equipment – it depends as much on a motivated, engaged and happy team.

Your dental nurses, hygienists, reception team and associates are the backbone of your practice. They help your patients feel welcome, supported and cared for every day, and as a practice owner, one of the most valuable investments you can make is showing genuine appreciation for your team.

In the busy-ness of daily dentistry, it's easy to forget that your team needs to feel valued, but recognition and appreciation aren't just 'nice extras', they're essential to building loyalty, boosting morale and creating a thriving practice where both staff and patients want to be, and want to stay.

Let's explore common pitfalls in team recognition – and how to avoid them.

1 UNDERESTIMATING THE POWER OF RECOGNITION

The problem

Dental practices are high-pressure places – patients need support, schedules are hectic and demands on staff are constant. Without recognition, even the most dedicated employees can start to feel invisible and under-appreciated. This can lead to disengagement, lower morale and eventually, staff turnover.



Faye Mear

Faye is client liaison at Corona Marketing, a dedicated dental marketing agency. She's passionate about helping dental professionals and practices grow, thrive and achieve success through better marketing and communication. For more information, email faye.mear@coronadc.co.uk.

The solution

Make recognition part of your practice culture. Appreciation doesn't need to be extravagant – sometimes the small gestures make the biggest impact. Whether it's a thank you in the middle of a busy day, a shout-out in a team meeting or a short handwritten note – these little moments of recognition show your staff that their efforts are seen and valued.

Top tips

- Build a short 'recognition moment' into every team meeting
- Be specific: 'Thanks for helping that nervous patient yesterday' means more than 'good job'
- Encourage peer-to-peer recognition too – it strengthens bonds and creates a positive atmosphere throughout your practice.

2 TREATING APPRECIATION AS A ONCE-A-YEAR GESTURE

The problem

Many practices only celebrate their team during set events like the Christmas party and, while these annual occasions are enjoyable, they shouldn't replace regular, consistent recognition.

If appreciation only happens once or twice a year, it feels tokenistic rather than genuine.

The solution

Weave appreciation into everyday practice. Regular small gestures often carry more weight than big, occasional ones.

Stocking the breakroom with snacks, surprising the team with lunch, or regularly checking in with each individual shows ongoing care and consistency.

Top tips

- Keep a stash of small rewards (coffee vouchers, treats or gift cards) for spontaneous recognition
- Surprise the team with mid-week treats, particularly during busy or stressful periods
- Add reminders to your calendar to personally check in with each team member individually.

3 OVERLOOKING MILESTONES AND PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The problem

Life events like birthdays, work anniversaries or personal milestones can easily be missed when the practice is busy.

Missing these opportunities to celebrate can make staff feel unimportant.

The solution

Create a simple system for tracking milestones so nothing gets missed. Celebrating these moments doesn't need to be expensive – the important thing is to make people feel thought about and seen.

A card signed by the team, some flowers or a team lunch can mean a lot.

Top tips

- Keep a shared calendar of birthdays, work anniversaries and other key dates
- Celebrate achievements, such as gaining qualifications, passing exams, receiving great feedback or achieving shared business targets
- Personal touches matter – acknowledge individual contributions as well as collective successes.

4 IGNORING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A FORM OF APPRECIATION

The problem

Many practice owners see CPD as a box-ticking exercise rather than an opportunity. When training is only about compliance, staff can feel bored and stagnant, which erodes their motivation.

The solution

Show your team you care about their future by investing in their professional growth. This could be funding external courses, supporting conference attendance or providing in-house training sessions. Offering development opportunities, beyond the basics, tells your staff that you believe in them and that you want to see them grow.

Top tips

- Ask each team member what skills they'd like to develop and align training with those interests
- Encourage staff to share what they learn at external courses in team meetings
- Remember: supporting professional growth is one of the best retention tools you have.

5 FORGETTING ABOUT WELLBEING

The problem

Dental work is physically and emotionally demanding – long hours, patient demands and clinical pressures can lead to stress and burnout. If wellbeing isn't prioritised, even the best employees may struggle to stay positive.

The solution

Invest in wellbeing initiatives, however small. This could be ergonomic equipment, flexible working or promoting a culture where taking breaks is normal and encouraged. A team that feels cared for will repay you with loyalty, energy and commitment.

Top tips

- Consider offering wellbeing perks – subsidised gym memberships, subscriptions to

mindfulness or meditation apps, normalise mental health days

- Make sure breaks are protected time, not optional
- Use your individual check ins not just to talk about performance, it's just as important to check in on how people are feeling too.

6 ASSUMING MONEY IS THE ONLY MOTIVATOR

The problem

It's easy to think that financial rewards are the best (or only!) way to show appreciation. While pay and bonuses matter, they're not enough on their own. If your culture doesn't feel supportive, money won't stop people from leaving.

The solution

Blend financial recognition with emotional recognition. Bonuses and incentives should be part of a wider appreciation strategy that includes personal acknowledgement, growth opportunities and team building.

Top tips

- Use financial rewards for big achievements, but don't neglect day-to-day appreciation
- Consider small, creative incentives (eg small treats and gifts, impromptu time off, or a fun team experience)
- Make rewards personal – tailor them to what motivates each team member.

7 NOT INVOLVING THE TEAM IN DECISIONS

The problem

When decisions are made behind closed doors, staff can feel like cogs in a machine rather than valuable contributors to your practice's smooth running and success. This will erode trust and leave people feeling disengaged.

The solution

Involve your team wherever possible.

Whether it's choosing new equipment, shaping workflows or brainstorming to improve patient experience, giving your team a voice shows respect and builds ownership.

Top tips

- Ask for feedback regularly – and listen to it!
- Involve staff in discussions about changes that may affect their daily work
- Highlight when you've acted on a team suggestion to show their impact.

BENEFICIAL IMPACT ON THE BUSINESS

As a practice owner, you're in the unique position to shape the culture and environment in which your team works every day.

By showing appreciation for team members' hard work in meaningful ways, you'll not only strengthen morale; you'll also drive your long-term business success.

A happy, appreciated team delivers better care, creates more positive patient experiences and ensures your practice thrives.

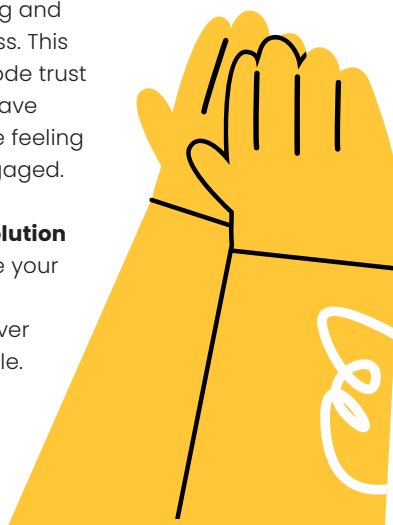
Appreciation doesn't have to be extravagant, but it does have to be genuine and consistent.

Weave it into the fabric of daily practice life through simple thank yous, goal driven rewards, professional development opportunities or whole team celebrations.

When team members feel valued, they're more motivated, more engaged, more loyal and proud to belong.

In the end, patients may come for your clinical skills, but they stay because of your team.

You couldn't be the practice you are without your team members – celebrate them well!



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Taking the scary out of oral surgery

Kaila Girvan rethinks the patient experience in private practice

Let's face it, no one wants oral surgery. Even in high-end private practices, where patients are accustomed to luxury touches and short waiting times, the word 'surgery' can trigger anxiety. And understandably so. For most people, surgery means pain, swelling and discomfort – particularly when it's happening in your mouth.

But what if it didn't have to be that way? This is where private practices have the opportunity to shift the narrative. It's not just about offering faster appointments or a plush waiting room; it's about changing how the entire surgical process feels from the patient's perspective.

A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

Between the NHS and private practice, the difference is often in the details. Private patients expect more; quicker access and state-of-the-art technology, but more than that – they expect a better journey. In oral surgery, small touches have a big impact:

- A comprehensive consultation that not only covers the clinical facts but also introduces the patient to the practice environment and the surgeon
- A clear, friendly 'what to expect' guide sent a week before the procedure
- A well-thought-out aftercare pack, including detailed recovery information, pain relief, ice pack and out of hours contact information
- Plain-language conversations that replace medical jargon with calm, confident explanations.



Kaila Girvan

Kaila provides surgical dentistry at The Row Dental in Edinburgh.

When patients feel informed, involved and supported, surgery transforms from something they fear into something they can approach with confidence.

ADDRESSING FEAR HEAD-ON

Fear is a significant factor in oral surgery. Even confident adults can feel overwhelmed at the thought of a simple surgical procedure – not necessarily because of pain, but because of the unknowns.

It might be tempting to rush through the consent process, cover the basics and move on, but taking the time to explain things clearly – or better yet,

show them using visuals or scans – can eliminate much of the fear and empower the patient to feel in control.

You can almost feel the tension lift as their questions are answered and fears acknowledged; there's a noticeable sense of ease once the unknowns have been addressed. Information – delivered with care – empowers patients.

For particularly anxious patients, IV sedation can provide a safe and effective way to feel more at ease during treatment.

THE REFERRAL PROCESS

It's common for referred patients to arrive with little idea of why they've been sent to us. Many say: 'I don't really know why I'm here – my dentist just told me I needed surgery.' That's why the initial consultation is crucial. It allows time for a proper conversation, helping the patient understand their treatment needs and feel confident about what's ahead.

It's also essential that we keep the referring dentist in the loop. A prompt postop letter helps ensure continuity of care. Patients notice – and appreciate – when their care feels coordinated.

FINAL THOUGHTS

When it comes to surgery, opportunities exist to deliver something truly outstanding and elevate the experience from 'adequate' to 'exceptional'.

A surgical experience that's calm, compassionate and well-communicated isn't just good for patients. It's good for your team and ultimately, your reputation.

At The Row Dental, we believe that the best surgical outcomes don't start in the chair – they start with the very first conversation.

Oral surgery three takeaways

1. Make preop personal: a warm, well-written email or reassuring phone call explaining the next steps can help patients feel seen – not just scheduled. Personal touches build trust
2. Stay present postop: a quick check-in (a follow-up courtesy call or message within 72 hours) makes patients feel cared for and supported during recovery
3. Think beyond the procedure: surgery isn't a one-off event; it's part of the patient's broader story. Treat it as such and guide them through the process.



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A vision for success

Mervyn Druian and **Bernita Shelley** explain how a relentless focus on the outcome can set the direction, establish goals and navigate any challenges that may arise

Leadership is a multifaceted concept that involves the ability to inspire, influence and guide others towards a common goal. Other characteristics include vision, great communication, influence, empathy, integrity, resilience, the skill of decision making, and the ability to delegate.

The practice owner does not have to have all these qualities, as leadership can be shared. Team members may have many of these leadership qualities. In fact, regular team meetings in our practice are chaired by some of the more junior team members and it is a joy to watch them grow and develop having been given this opportunity to lead our check-ins.

We've got team members at our practice who have been with us for many years. Much of this is due to the leadership opportunities that have been offered.

A CLEAR VISION

David Taylor wrote *The Naked Leader*, a great book about leadership and how to lead with authenticity and transparency. He provides practical advice and insights on how to inspire and motivate others, as well as how to build strong relationships and make a positive impact in your professional and personal life.

A relentless focus on the outcome



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*.



is key to achieving your goals and driving success. It means staying determined and committed to reaching the desired result, no matter the obstacles or setbacks along the way. By keeping your eye on the prize and staying motivated, you can overcome challenges and stay on track. Stay focused, work hard and maintain a positive mindset.

As a leader, it is important to have a clear vision of the desired outcome and to communicate that vision to your team. By maintaining a strong focus, you can inspire and motivate others.

A leader with a relentless focus on the outcome sets the direction, establishes goals and helps guide their team through any challenges that may arise. This kind of leadership can drive productivity, foster innovation and ultimately lead to the successful achievement of goals. It is a valuable trait for any leader to possess.

TAKING ACTION

As a leader, it is important to address the matter at hand and act in the present moment. Being proactive and responsive to the current needs

and challenges is crucial for effective leadership. By staying focused on the immediate tasks and priorities, you can guide your team towards accomplishing goals and driving progress.

Take the initiative in getting things done now to move closer to success. So, be sure to always tackle the matter at hand and make things happen!

It is also important to remember that it is not how many times you get knocked down, but the fact that you keep on getting back up that truly matters.

Resilience and the ability to bounce back from challenges are key qualities of a great leader. No matter how many setbacks or obstacles you face, it's important to stay determined and keep pushing forward.

Each time you rise again, you become stronger and more equipped to handle whatever comes your way. So, remember to get back up, keep fighting, and never give up!

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

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Future-proofing the practice

Mark Topley shares the leadership skills you'll need for the next decade



If the last few years have taught us anything, it's that the world isn't just changing, it's accelerating. The pace of technological, cultural, and generational change is now so fast that the old ways of leading simply can't keep up. For practice owners, the question is no longer 'should we adapt?' but 'how fast can we?'

The practices that will thrive over the next decade will be led not just by the most experienced, but by the most adaptable.

FROM STABILITY TO AGILITY

Not long ago, strong leadership in dentistry meant control, structure and consistency. The role of a principal was to provide certainty – clear systems, steady hands and high standards.

That worked beautifully in a world dominated by baby boomers and generation X, who valued loyalty, hierarchy and experience. But today's teams – made up mostly of millennials and gen Z – are wired differently. They seek flexibility, purpose and connection. They expect their leaders

to listen, to coach, and to lead with humanity, not hierarchy.

As I explored in my 'leadership of generations' work earlier this year, today's workforce is multi-generational – four generations working side by side, each with distinct expectations. Understanding that mix is now a strategic necessity. Because the way you lead a 25-year-old digital native must be different to how you lead a 55-year-old clinical expert – and both have something vital to contribute.

THE TECHNOLOGY CURVE WE CAN'T IGNORE

That truth hit home for me recently at the Boxly Unbox the Future event in London, where the company launched its AI-powered receptionist technology.

Jason Bradbury – known to many as the energetic former presenter of *The Gadget Show* – gave a fascinating talk about the history of computing. He charted how far we've come in just 80 years – from room-sized machines that could barely calculate to handheld devices that can simulate the human voice, recognise emotion, and now use generative AI to make intelligent decisions.

Then he said something that stayed with me: 'We are at the bottom of the exponential curve. From here, things won't just change – they'll change constantly. Standing still will no longer be an option.'

That's exactly where dentistry finds itself today. AI isn't science fiction anymore. It's already transforming diagnostics, workflows, and communication – from automated reception systems to predictive treatment planning. The question isn't whether AI will change how we lead – it already is. But the real opportunity lies in how we use it.

The smartest practices aren't replacing humans; they're using AI to free them. They're automating the laborious tasks – admin, scheduling, reminders, data entry – so their teams can focus on the things only humans can do: empathy, communication, problem-solving, and care.

The future of leadership will be defined by this balance – using AI with humanity.

FROM TOY TO TOOL

A brilliant example of this came at the Straumann Exclusive event earlier this year.

While I was there speaking about leading the next generation, I also listened to Steve Booth, Straumann's general manager, outline the company's vision for a joined-up patient workflow. The company isn't just building a digital upgrade – it's a complete reimagining of how teams and patients interact: a seamless ecosystem that connects every stage of the patient journey, from scan to

Five skills for the decade ahead

1. **Digital curiosity:** you don't need to be an expert, but you do need to explore. Learn how AI tools can enhance your patient and team experience
2. **Empathic communication:** adapt your feedback and support to different generations. One-size-fits-all leadership no longer works
3. **Purpose-led decision-making:** clarify your 'why' and make sure every system and investment aligns with it
4. **Coaching over command:** replace instructions with questions. Help your people think – not just do
5. **Cultural maintenance:** revisit your values regularly. Culture drifts if you don't actively maintain it.

smile, through a single, intelligent platform.

Here's why it matters for leadership. This is exactly the kind of technology that younger generations expect to see in the workplace. They've grown up with intuitive, integrated tools – and they measure professionalism not just by clinical quality, but by how smooth and joined-up the systems around them feel. When the tech works, it sends a message that the business is progressive, capable, and worth belonging to.

For gen Z and millennials, clunky processes and fragmented workflows aren't just frustrating – they're disengaging. Seamless systems say: we care about your time, your wellbeing and your experience at work.

When tools like Straumann's are connected, people feel connected too.

The practice runs more calmly, communication improves and the culture gains energy because the friction is gone. That's not just a technology story – that's how you engage a new generation.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF INNOVATION

For all its potential, technology alone won't fix poor leadership. In fact, without the right mindset, it can make bad habits more efficient.

The future of dental leadership will belong to those who can do two things at once: embrace intelligent systems, and lead with intelligent empathy.

That means:

- Using data to inform decisions, but people to make them
- Encouraging your team to experiment and learn, not fear getting it wrong
- Leading conversations about purpose, not just performance
- Recognising that wellbeing, flexibility and inclusion aren't 'extras' – they're essentials for retaining the next generation of talent.

As one gen Z associate told me recently: 'I don't need a boss who has all the answers – I need one who listens and helps me grow.'

That's the kind of leadership that will future-proof your practice.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The next decade won't reward the biggest or even the most technically advanced practices, it'll reward the best-led ones.

Leadership in dentistry is no longer about being the expert at the front. It's about being the learner in the middle, guiding your team through constant change with clarity, curiosity and compassion.

AI is not the enemy. Poor leadership is. Used wisely, technology won't replace the human element in dentistry – it'll finally give it room to shine.

In the decade ahead, standing still won't be an option – but leading well always will be.

If your practice could benefit from a leadership refresh, Mark offers a limited number of complimentary 90-day leadership roadmap calls each month. Apply at www.great-boss.com.



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Building a culture of connection

Sarika Shah explains how to create an environment where your team thrives

Running a dental practice isn't just about patient care, financial targets or compliance. At its core, leadership in dentistry is about people – and creating a work environment where your team feels valued, supported and motivated to thrive.

Thriving teams don't happen by accident. They are nurtured through intention, consistency and a genuine investment in your people beyond the paycheck.

Here's how we, as dental leaders, can build a practice culture where our teams don't just survive the day, but feel fulfilled, connected and excited to come to work.

1 BEYOND THE PAYCHECK: INVEST IN WELLBEING

Fair and competitive pay is, of course, fundamental. But in today's workforce, especially among younger clinicians and support staff, salaries alone aren't enough to retain talent or inspire loyalty.

Thriving teams are built on wellbeing. That means offering more than just time off or a free lunch. It's about creating opportunities for personal connection, mental health and shared joy.

At my practice, we regularly host wellness sessions and team bonding activities – some as simple as gratitude circles, stretch and

rest moments, or even celebrating birthdays in meaningful ways.

These moments deepen our connections and remind everyone that they matter as people, not just as professionals.

2 SHARED VISION: ALIGN ON PURPOSE, NOT JUST PROCESS

In the fast-paced world of dentistry, it's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day. But thriving teams need to feel part of something bigger than a list of patients or the UDA count.

Share your why. What does your practice stand for beyond profit? Maybe it's transforming patient anxiety into trust. Or creating a warm, inclusive experience.

Whatever it is, articulate it – and invite your team to co-own it.

In my own team meetings, I regularly bring us back to our core values: compassion, communication and clinical excellence. When

we realign on purpose, we make better decisions and everyone feels more connected to the mission.

3 CELEBRATE INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS

No two team members are the same, and that's a strength. But, often in dental practices, roles can become rigid and creativity is stifled.

Thriving cultures embrace individuality. Got a receptionist who's brilliant at design? Let them contribute to your social media visuals. A dental nurse who loves event planning? Involve them in practice celebrations or patient open days.

At Flourish, I coach female dental professionals to own their strengths – even the ones outside their clinical role. When leaders see and amplify these strengths, confidence and contribution skyrocket.

4 GROWTH, NOT JUST PERFORMANCE

Dentistry is a field of lifelong learning. But too often, CPD

becomes a checkbox activity rather than a genuine investment in growth.

If you want your team to thrive, create clear pathways for progression – not just clinically, but personally.

That could be

mentoring junior team members, cross-training in new skills, or supporting ambitions beyond the practice walls.

In performance reviews, I always ask: 'Where do you want to grow this year—and how can I support that?' Sometimes, that conversation alone rekindles a sense of ambition.

**TEAM MEMBERS
MUST FEEL
THAT THEY'RE
CONTRIBUTING
TO SOMETHING
MEANINGFUL,
THAT THEIR VOICE
HAS WEIGHT, AND
THAT THEY ARE
APPRECIATED**



Sarika Shah

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

Top tips

for creating a positive work environment

1. Schedule one non-clinical, team-building moment each month – something fun, relaxed and not about dentistry. Watch what it does for morale
2. Ask each team member what part of the patient journey matters most to them – and why. You'll discover powerful stories that fuel a collective sense of meaning
3. Once a quarter, ask team members: 'What's a hidden talent or interest of yours we don't see at work?' Then find ways to let that shine
4. Build a mini personal development plan with each team member. Help them choose one skill to develop – and give them time and resources to do it
5. At your next team meeting, highlight a recent win and link it directly to each team member's contribution. Connect the dots – and celebrate them together.

5 FOSTER EMOTIONAL FULFILMENT

At the top of every workplace need is fulfilment – the sense that your work matters and your presence makes a difference.

This doesn't come from praise alone (though that helps). It comes from being seen, heard and included.

Regular one-to-ones, open-door leadership, and recognising small wins go a long way. But more importantly, team members must feel that they're contributing to something meaningful, that their voice has weight, and that they are appreciated.

At our practice, we take time to show how each role contributes to the patient experience – from the way the receptionist answers the phone, to how the dental nurse greets the patient, to how the clinician closes the appointment.

6 IT'S AN ONGOING JOURNEY

Creating an environment where your team thrives isn't a one-off strategy, it's a way of leading.

It requires continuous reflection:

- Are my team members growing?
- Are they energised?
- Do they feel safe, supported, and seen?

The most rewarding part of my leadership journey has been witnessing the transformation of team members.

From unsure or overwhelmed to confident, engaged professionals who lift the entire culture of the practice.

Thriving teams don't just improve the work environment, they also elevate patient care, drive loyalty, and create a ripple effect that benefits everyone in the practice.

SETTING THE TONE

As dental leaders, we set the tone. We have the power to build environments that energise, uplift and retain incredible people – not just with perks or praise, but with purpose, connection and care.

Because when your team thrives, your practice doesn't just succeed – it flourishes.



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Natalie Walker



Andrea Ubhi speaks to **Natalie Walker** about her aspirations to be an astronaut, becoming a practice owner and the importance of a solid support network

In dentistry, behind every smooth-running practice is a leader carrying both the clinical and emotional load of ownership. This month, I'm delighted to share a conversation with Natalie Walker, principal dentist at Dawley Dental.

From being the first in her family to go to university to navigating the pressures of running a business as a solo mum, Natalie's story is one of resilience, integrity and building a career on her own terms.

Tell us about your path into dentistry and what keeps you passionate about it today. What values guide the way you lead your team and treat your patients?

From an early age I loved learning but especially science. If you'd asked

me what I wanted to be when I was little, I would say, an astronaut!

My father had a career as a taxi driver but had told me he had wanted to become a dentist but never had the opportunity. This gave me the idea of the career path, and after a wonderful work experience placement at my local dental practice, I decided this was the career I would embark on.

I was the first of my family to go to university and because of this, I lacked confidence, and found it a challenge. I remember coming home in tears one night after a particularly difficult day on clinic, questioning whether I'd ever pass my degree! I persevered and graduated, and 10 years later I purchased the practice I was working in as an associate, which I now have owned for 10 years.

I love the variety and challenges that running a practice brings and it is what keeps me passionate about my career today.

Running a dental practice is both addictive and yet draining at times! No two days are similar, as you never know what problem a patient may present with or what practice or staff dilemma you may be faced with. The key values that guide how I lead my team and treat my patients include integrity, excellence, respect and accountability, along with great teamwork.

What's one thing you wish more people understood about the emotional load of being a practice owner?

Leading a dental practice is a huge emotional rollercoaster, especially at the beginning when you have very little business experience.

There is a constant pressure of providing excellent patient care while also ensuring the business aspects are taken care of such as compliance, marketing, payroll, dealing with patient complaints!

You're also trying to maintain staff morale and grow the business in the process. You leave work after a busy day treating patients and solving practice problems, worrying how you are going to keep the diaries busy, or how you are going to resolve staff conflict. The burden can be heavy!

When the pressure is on, what keeps you grounded?

My home life and my three children keep me grounded.

I'm a solo mom and we love travelling together as a family. I find having holidays to look forward to helps with the emotional load and is a real means of escapism from the business.

It's the only time I properly switch off from work and family time is so important!

Get to know Natalie

Natalie Walker graduated from the University of Birmingham in 2005 and began her career working in practices across London and Wolverhampton before joining Dawley Dental in 2007.

In 2015, Natalie became principal dentist of Dawley Dental Practice. She now leads the team while continuing to provide a full range of general and cosmetic treatments, alongside an extensive portfolio of facial aesthetic procedures.



Natalie with some of the team

How do you create a positive motivated team culture, even when times are tough?

If I'm honest, I still struggle with this! At the recruitment stage, along with looking for candidates that are on board with my vision of providing top-notch dentistry and five-star customer service, I also just look to hire people with good problem-solving abilities. I've found when times are tough the team has pulled together. I was particularly proud of the team over the COVID-19 period, which seems a lifetime ago now!

Any non-negotiables you've set in place to protect your wellbeing?

I still love to treat patients, but I now only work two and a half clinical days. On my non-clinical days, I go to the gym for some me-time and may work on the business from home or have meetings with my management team.

I ensure I have one day per week free from work, where I meet my mum or a friend for lunch or go to a spa.

What's been one of the hardest lessons you've had to learn as a leader?

The main lesson I've learnt is that it can be very lonely and it's so important to have a network around you, who are in the same boat, for support.

Actually, Andrea, you were one of several female practice owners in a Whatsapp group, formed during COVID-19, which was invaluable during such a stressful time. I've made a couple of lifelong friends from that group!

Is there anything you've decided to stop doing in your work life, for the sake of protecting your energy and values?

The main thing I'd say is worrying what people think of me and trying to make everyone happy! As long as I know my decisions are being made with kindness and in the best interests of the business, I'm ok with it. I'm responsible for a large team, which also means a lot of livelihoods, so ensuring the

I USED TO THINK SUCCESS WAS HAVING THE BIG HOUSE THAT WE NEVER HAD WHEN WE WERE GROWING UP BUT I'VE COME TO REALISE THAT IT IS TIME!



Natalie and her mum, Jayne

business stays viable it my utmost concern.

I feel much happier having difficult conversations nowadays than I used to!

How do you personally define success now and has that changed over time?

I used to think success was having the big house that we never had when we were growing up but I've come to realise that it is time!

We're not going to live forever, so when you're able to reduce your hours and maintain a good work-life balance, that is success.

What excites you most about the next chapter for you?

I'm looking forward to continuing to run my practice with the experience and maturity that comes from being a woman in my 40s, who has been through a lot but now has the confidence to lead with clarity and conviction.

If you could give one piece of honest advice to a dentist just stepping into ownership, what would it be?

My advice would be to take the plunge, but to expect to make a lot of sacrifices in the first few years. It's worth putting the effort in, doing more clinical hours initially, to get to know your patients and understand the business and then you'll reap the rewards later on.

My children were always the first dropped off at breakfast club and one of the last to be picked up from school at 6pm. It was difficult



Natalie and her dental nurse, Ellie

at the time, but I'm so thankful that I made those sacrifices now.

If the next phase of your work had a title, what would it be?

I've always liked the quote 'she believed she could, so she did'. So 'she leads well' would do it for me!

COURAGE, VALUES AND WELLBEING

Natalie's journey is a reminder that success in dentistry isn't just measured by practice growth

or clinical excellence, but also by the courage to lead with clarity, to protect your own wellbeing, and to stay true to your values.

As we continue to spotlight voices from the edge of our profession, I hope you're encouraged by Natalie's honesty about the sacrifices, challenges and rewards of ownership.



This series is looking to spotlight honest, bold voices in dentistry – especially those who've stood at the edge and led with integrity. If someone comes to mind, get in touch with Andrea on Instagram @andreaubhi.



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Leadership unfiltered: evolving styles

Christina Chatfield has refined her approach to practice ownership, discovering that transparency and collaboration often drive business success

Practice ownership demands some heavy lifting regarding communication and relationship building. But true leadership is forged in the heat of uncomfortable moments, where conflict tests diplomacy skills, empathy and the ability to chart a path forward.

For Christina Chatfield, clinical director of Dental Health Spa, having 'those difficult conversations' is key to resolution. However, this has been 18

years in the making. Over that time, she has learned to step out of her comfort zone to find the courage to tackle those flashpoints.

Challenges come in many forms and from all angles. From navigating team dynamics to making bold investment choices and steering critical business decisions, Christina has had to 'let go' and 'not take things personally'.

Her goal is to create an environment of openness, sharing the challenges of business ownership while actively

listening to the issues facing her team. As a result, she hopes that through deeper understanding and critical discussions, everyone will work together for the greater good.

Standing firmly beside her is Carol Oram, the clinic's financial director – the pragmatic 'bad cop' to Christina's compassionate 'good'. Together, they strike a balance that is powering the clinic forward.

Here, Christina discusses her experience of leadership and the key lessons learned.

LESSON ONE

Trust and commitment are fundamental. Carol and I never planned to work together; she initially assisted me in exiting a previous business partnership that had soured. We couldn't have anticipated the dynamics of our relationship, and we quickly recognised each other's strengths and weaknesses, forming a natural collaboration.

Carol is my sister-in-law and, with a legal background and a former career as a lawyer, she brings an analytical and firm approach that complements my creative, passionate and driven nature. She often tells me I'm too soft, but I can't change my empathetic nature. That same empathy has been crucial in building strong relationships with my patients.

I have developed my business acumen over time. Initially, I was naïve, believing the clinic would grow quickly, yet I never lost faith in its success. Carol truly believed in me and supported my decision to take on the business independently.



SPOTLIGHT

LESSON TWO

A balance is crucial in any partnership – you need ideas and structure to bring them to life. I never stop thinking outside the box, seeking solutions and voicing new possibilities. But you also need someone who can set emotions aside and think strategically. That's why my discussions with Carol and others are so valuable.

LESSON THREE

Relationships are the glue that hold everything together. Setting up a partnership takes time, effort and mutual respect.

One of my earliest memories is of the accountant sitting with my former business partner and me, discussing the need for a shareholders' agreement. We assured him we were confident: 'Of course, we'll have one, but we won't fall out.' He replied: 'You'd be surprised.' I insisted: 'No, no, I trust her; she trusts me. It'll never happen.' However, the shareholders' agreement proved to be one of the most important documents. Not long after, I had to dissolve the partnership, and the fallout had serious consequences. Things escalated, and as a consequence, my credit rating plummeted, forcing me to sell my house.

Recognising the damage of this dispute, the bank manager initially froze the account but later visited me at the clinic and saw how hard I was working to grow the business, allowing me an overdraft to drive it. That's when Carol stepped in, and she and her husband guaranteed the financing. And that was the beginning of our journey together. Once we started, we just had to keep going.

These relationships served me well because, in the end, both my accountant and bank manager – and Carol – saw what was happening and trusted me.

LESSON FOUR

COVID-19 posed one of the greatest challenges we have ever faced. At one point, we genuinely didn't think we would survive. In 2019, the bank agreed to support us with a loan to purchase a scanner and clear our overdraft. We applied in November, received the funds around January, paid off the overdraft, and ordered the scanner. However, just before COVID-19 hit, Carol insisted it had



to go back, even though I didn't want to return it. But she saw what I couldn't – closures were coming.

Despite my reluctance, we returned it. In hindsight, that decision saved us. If we had kept it, we would have drained our bank account, exceeded our overdraft before furlough arrived, and likely gone bankrupt.

LESSON FIVE

Sometimes, you must trust your vision and believe in your journey. When we emerged from the pandemic, we were burdened with much debt without a clear direction forward.

I wanted to introduce a new surgery, but Carol felt nervous. However, we both understood that if we wanted to grow, we needed to enable our team to work the hours they could (while we had space in the practice, we didn't have the proper setup for the clinicians we needed). So, we took a leap of faith – investing in a new surgery when we weren't sure if it was the right move. Ultimately, we didn't just add one surgery – we added two and started to provide Invisalign.

We found ways to cut costs elsewhere, where Carol's strengths truly shone. She's incredibly thrifty, ensuring that we never overspend. She's meticulous about managing bills, switching energy suppliers at the right moment and

maintaining overall financial efficiency – something I wouldn't manage alone. Carol is the steady, rational thinker when we need it most. My heart sometimes leads me in ways that aren't practical, but her foresight and pragmatism balance us out – and that's what makes us strong.

LESSON SIX

A practice manager unified our leadership styles and strengthened the team. In 2019, just before COVID-19 hit, Victoria Clark joined us. With her experience in SOE, she helped us take a more strategic approach to the business. Although COVID-19 became a major setback, she laid the necessary groundwork before stepping away for a year. When she returned, she picked up where she left off and continued to help implement the changes we had started together.

We also acknowledged our gaps in management, and she helped fill those. She also helped to improve our digital interface drastically.

During furlough, she left again, but not before we made a much-needed software change. I had known for a while that choosing R4 was a mistake, so I supported the switch. After her return, our digital interface drastically improved, and she helped stabilise the business.

I learned a lot from her during that time, especially on the management side, which I continued to apply after she stepped back from that role in December 2024. She still works with us on branding and social media – an area where I enjoy collaborating with her. We now have Gemma, a dedicated practice manager. She has given me the chance to live a bit more outside of the practice. Letting go is quite hard, but I placed my trust in her, and she has stepped up and proved invaluable.

I focus on driving the business utilising diary management, and Carol handles Xero – bringing creativity and analytical thinking to the table. Strong management and a great team are essential, as is recognising and valuing everyone's contributions.

LESSON SEVEN

Carol's focus is on profit and loss, while I see the broader context. Our systems are well-established. Our accounting is fully digital, using Xero for financial management. Over time, we've switched compliance companies several times, but we've now settled on DCME. It shows our compliance

status with CQC. All staff records are digital, too. At a glance, I can check CPD progress, DBS checks and other essential compliance details, which can often be overlooked but are crucial for effective management. We use My MPC, a performance management tool. Carol primarily reviews business numbers through Xero, utilising her banking background. Meanwhile, I analyse them, focusing on the ratios between dentists and hygienists, identifying opportunities and assessing marketing strategies.

LESSON EIGHT

We do disagree – but not a lot. For example, when it comes to increasing fees, I might say, 'it's too much' or 'we can't do that'. Last year, they raised fees behind my back because I was concerned that patients wouldn't cope. In reality, there were only one or two complaints. Sometimes, I overthink things.

We talk about these issues a lot. I'm a great reflector – if we've had a heated discussion (heated because we care, not because we're angry), I'll often come back later and say: 'I've been thinking this over...' No business partnership

of this length is smooth sailing, but respecting each other's opinions is key. Some of our best work conversations happen outside of work. Even after a challenging discussion, we'll often laugh about it.

LESSON NINE

People often believe that business success happens overnight, but the reality is that it can take time to turn a profit. I probably wouldn't have pursued it if I had known what lay ahead. However, I have no regrets.

Naively – perhaps bravely – Carol and I found ourselves at a point where we had no choice but to keep pushing forward. I knew who she was; she knew who I was, which was a good place to start. We had to adapt together, discovering new ways to earn money, adjusting our marketing strategies, and refining our networking approaches.

If you can create a good lifestyle for yourself along the way, which I've been fortunate enough to achieve, it makes the journey worthwhile. I have trained 13 apprentices, provided jobs for a team of 20, and offered a valuable service to the community. That's what motivates me.

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The secret weapon for a competitive edge

Bashar Al-Naher explores how psychological empowerment helps dentists thrive – personally and professionally

Words: Julie Bissett

Running a dental practice is incredibly rewarding yet undeniably stressful. The challenges – from patient care and financial management to leading a team and maintaining a personal life – can, on occasion, feel overwhelming. However, with the right mindset, strategies and self-development tools, it is possible to rise above the stress and self-doubt.

Viewing daily struggles as part of a larger vision makes it possible to transform stressors into stepping stones towards a healthy mindset and business growth.

Bashar Al-Naher has dedicated more than four decades to the art and science of dentistry and has been ‘privileged to witness our profession’s evolution’. He explains: ‘Dentistry has evolved – not only in its clinical mastery but also in a growing awareness of something even deeper: the profound role of psychology in determining success, fulfilment and longevity in our careers.

‘Throughout my journey, one truth has emerged time and again: technical excellence alone does not guarantee fulfilment. True mastery requires the development of the mind and the heart alongside the hands.’

This realisation inspired him to broaden his learning beyond his

clinical skills, studying clinical hypnosis at University College London and undergoing training in life coaching, mindfulness, neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and emotional mastery techniques.

Over the years, he has integrated these disciplines into his clinical and professional life, creating innovative approaches such as the Enjoyable Dentistry Technique and Life Inspiring Fundamental Therapy (LIFT), which aim to empower patients and professionals alike to experience psychological and emotional wellbeing.

He explains: ‘The catalyst for my exploration was simple but powerful: I realised that a deeper psychological story was behind every clinical experience, whether triumph or struggle. I saw patients paralysed by fear, despite excellent clinical outcomes. I witnessed brilliant colleagues weighed down by invisible emotional burdens. It became clear that transforming the mind could revolutionise the dentistry experience for both patients and practitioners.

‘Through coaching and hypnotherapy, I learned to view setbacks not as failures but as feedback. I stopped resisting challenges and began embracing them as invitations for personal growth. This internal shift did more than change my practice; it transformed my life. It equipped me with tools to navigate personal and professional storms with grace, clarity and a renewed sense of purpose.’

But, he adds, such empowerment is

‘not a luxury; it is essential, and every dentist deserves it’.

Here, he shares the lessons, insights and strategies he has learned along the way that can empower every dentist to enjoy a career and life filled with resilience, purpose and joy.

Q What are the most common stressors in dentistry, and how can they be effectively managed?

A Silent stressors are the hidden burdens that dentists carry. We operate under immense, often invisible, pressure. Every day, we balance multiple roles, such as:

- Clinical perfectionist: delivering flawless results under high emotional expectations
- Business leader: managing teams, finances, regulations, and patient care
- Emotional container: absorbing patient fears, anxieties and frustrations
- Visionary: charting the uncertain future of a practice amid an evolving landscape.

Yet despite these burdens, we rarely pause to care for the mind that carries them. The first step toward resilience is acknowledging the weight we carry and making a conscious decision to strengthen ourselves psychologically, not just technically. Among the practical strategies I recommend are:

- Daily grounding rituals: begin and end each day with a few minutes of mindfulness, intention setting or gratitude
- Delegation: free yourself from administrative overwhelm. Focus



Bashar Al-Naher

Bashar is a dentist, life coach and hypnotherapist. He is the inventor of the Enjoyable Dentistry Technique, developed during a master’s degree from University College London in 2003. He has been using and perfecting it ever since. For more information about his work, visit drbashar.co.uk.

your energy on high-impact activities

- Personal boundaries: protect time for rest, family, and self-reflection, as fiercely as you protect clinical time
- Support networks: cultivate relationships with mentors, coaches and peers who understand and uplift you.

Q Self-doubt is a natural response to challenges. How can dentists overcome this?

A Self-doubt is often misunderstood. It is not a symptom of inadequacy but evidence that you are expanding beyond your previous limits. Confidence is not the absence of doubt but the willingness to move forward purposefully despite it.

The most significant leaps in my career came not when I was 'ready', but when I dared to trust the deeper call within me even while uncertain. The key is to reframe that self-doubt is to:

- Recognise it as natural: every significant growth step will trigger uncertainty
- Reflect on victories: remember past moments when you succeeded despite doubt
- Align with your values: acting from your deepest values builds lasting inner certainty
- Seek perspective: mentorship and coaching reveal strengths we may overlook during self-questioning moments.

Q How can dentists cultivate emotional resilience and maintain balance in their professional and personal lives?

A Building emotional resilience is the true competitive advantage. In dentistry, it is not optional – it is vital. Without it, stress accumulates, burnout creeps in, and joy fades. With it, we navigate challenges with strength, grace, and creativity. How can you cultivate emotional resilience?

- Daily gratitude: shift your focus to what is working rather than what is missing
- Mindfulness practice: train your mind to respond thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively
- Emotional journaling: process thoughts and emotions

constructively instead of bottling them up

- Boundaries: create clear limits between professional demands and personal time.

Above all, resilience flourishes through meaningful relationships. Throughout my career, the unwavering support of my wife and children has been my foundation. Their love reminds me daily that I am not defined by my successes or failures but by the heart and intention I bring to everything I do. Strong family and social support systems are not distractions from professional excellence. Rather, they are the soil from which it grows.

Q Many dentists struggle with perfectionism and decision-making paralysis. What practical strategies can they use?

A Dentistry demands excellence, but it becomes paralysing when it morphs into perfectionism. The antidote to perfectionism is not sloppiness but courageous, consistent action in service that reflects our highest values. We must remember:

- Perfection is unattainable: it is a moving target that stifles creativity
- Progress is powerful: each step forward, however imperfect, builds momentum
- Decisiveness is a skill: practise making decisions within set timeframes
- Mistakes are mentors: every setback carries the seed of future mastery.

Q How does aligning with core values impact a dentist's long-term success and satisfaction?

A Aligning with core values is the ultimate source of sustainable success. Even success feels hollow when our work is disconnected from our deepest values. However, when we align our careers with our truest inner compass, we unlock energy, creativity, and inspiration that no external reward can replicate.

For me, the value of psychological empowerment has been a guiding star. By integrating coaching, mindfulness, and emotional healing into my dental practice, I have created a career path that feels deeply authentic. Every dentist must ask themselves what values make them

feel most alive, inspired, and fulfilled. When you align your practice with these values, dentistry becomes not just a job but a legacy.

Q What simple daily gratitude practices can dentists incorporate to shift their mindset and reduce stress?

A Gratitude is not a naive positivity exercise; it can help rewire the mind for resilience. It is a powerful neurological retraining that reshapes the brain for optimism, creativity and joy. Simple practices include:

- Gratitude journaling: write three things you're grateful for at the end of each day
- Silent gratitude walks: reflect on your blessings while walking in nature
- Pre-challenge gratitude: before any stressful event, pause and mentally list your blessings
- Expressive gratitude: verbally thank colleagues, patients, and loved ones often and sincerely.

Over time, gratitude strengthens emotional resilience, reduces stress hormones and fosters a mindset that sees opportunities rather than obstacles.

TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE ALONE DOES NOT GUARANTEE FULFILMENT

FINAL THOUGHTS

Dentistry is far more than technical proficiency. It is the art of human connection, leadership through service and healing in its purest form. But to lead, heal and serve at the highest level, we must empower ourselves mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

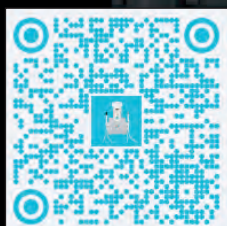
By investing in our psychological wellbeing, aligning our work with our highest values, building emotional resilience and practising daily gratitude, we transform not only our careers but our very experience of life.

When we empower ourselves, we inspire our teams, uplift our patients, nurture our families and leave a legacy far greater than any clinical success alone could offer.

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Revisiting Ollie & Darsh

Private Dentistry catches up with **Daz Singh**, Ollie & Darsh co-founder, about the trials and tribulations of the last 17 years – and looks forward to the future



Back in 2010, *Private Dentistry* shone a spotlight on Ollie & Darsh – a bold, new practice making waves in the heart of Liverpool.

Led by founders Dr Daz Singh (Ollie) and Dr Sudarsh Naidoo (Darsh), alongside their dynamic business manager Suzy Gorman, Ollie & Darsh burst onto the scene in 2008 with an unapologetically modern approach to dentistry. It was clear from the outset that this was a practice with a fresh perspective, not just on how a dental practice should look, but on how it should feel to the people it served.

Awarded Most Attractive Practice at the 2009 Private Dentistry Awards, Ollie & Darsh's boutique-style interiors, bold

orange and brown colour scheme, cutting-edge equipment and focus on exceptional patient comfort was instantly recognised.

Fast forward to today, and that commitment to innovation, patient care and all-around excellence has grown from strength to strength. Over the last 17 years, Ollie & Darsh has continued to evolve, investing in new technology, expanding services, and developing a national reputation for quality dentistry with a personalised, boutique experience.

We catch up with clinical director Daz to find out how the practice has evolved since those early days, the driving forces behind its continued success, and what the future holds.

Q Can you tell us about your background and what initially drew you to dentistry?

A Dentistry for me was always a combination of art, science and patient care. I wanted a profession where I could have a real, tangible impact on people's lives, not just in terms of health, but also in confidence.

I studied dentistry at Liverpool, and very early on, I was drawn to aesthetic dentistry and orthodontics because of the transformational results you could deliver. There's something special about helping someone smile freely and confidently for the first time in years. That's what really pulled me in, and that motivation has stayed consistent throughout my career.

Q You opened Ollie & Darsh at a young age. What inspired you to take such a bold step?

A I think I've always had an entrepreneurial streak. When I looked around at practices early in my career, I knew I wanted to create something that offered a different kind of experience, something more boutique, with an emphasis on patient relationships and aesthetic results.

Liverpool city centre felt like the right home for it, surrounded by businesses, culture and vibrancy. Starting Ollie & Darsh wasn't just about clinical dentistry; it was about creating an environment where people felt welcomed, heard, and part of something aspirational.

It was bold, yes, but I knew that by putting the patient first, the rest would follow.

Q What role did mentorship play in your early career, and who were your biggest influences?

A Mentorship has been the foundation of my growth, not just in dentistry, but as a leader, too. I actively sought out training from internationally respected clinicians, attending courses both in the UK and in the USA.

Working alongside professionals at the top of their game changed the way I viewed dentistry. It wasn't just about drilling and filling; it was about the full patient experience, about striving for excellence in every interaction.

Beyond the clinical skills, mentors taught me about leadership, communication, and running a practice. These are things you can't necessarily learn at university, but they're essential for long-term success.

Q What have been the biggest challenges in your career so far, and how have you overcome them?

A Starting a business from scratch always brings its fair share of challenges. I had to learn not just how to be a better dentist, but also how to run a

business, build a team, and manage the pressures that come with leadership.

One of the biggest lessons was learning how to delegate and trust the people around me. No one succeeds in isolation, and I'm fortunate to have built a team that shares the same values and commitment to care.

Dentistry itself constantly evolves, too, so keeping pace with new technologies and treatments while running a practice is demanding, but also exciting.

Q What drives your passion for dentistry, and how do you stay motivated?

A Honestly, it's the patients. Seeing first-hand how much a beautiful, healthy smile can transform someone's self-esteem is a privilege. That never gets old.

I'm also someone who thrives on personal growth, and dentistry gives you endless opportunities to refine your craft. There's always a new skill to learn, new technology to embrace, or new challenges to face. Plus, I love teaching and mentoring others now, I get as much satisfaction from helping colleagues grow as I do from seeing patients happy with their results.

Q What advice would you give to young dentists starting out in their careers?

A My advice is to find mentors, invest in continuous learning, and don't neglect the human side of dentistry. It's easy to focus solely on technical skills, but building relationships with patients is what sets a good dentist apart from a great one.

Also, don't be afraid to take calculated risks. Starting Ollie & Darsh was a risk, but it was worth it because we had a clear vision of what we wanted to build.

Lastly, always remember that dentistry is a career where learning never stops, the more you invest in yourself, the better the outcomes for your patients and your business.

Q How has technology impacted the way you practise dentistry?

A Technology has completely elevated the way we deliver care. Modern dental equipment, including the A-dec 500 Pro delivery system, has been a game-changer for both comfort and efficiency. Ergonomically, it allows me and my team to work comfortably



throughout the day, which reduces fatigue and strain.

Thanks to the A-dec+ app, the integration of digital workflows – from diagnostics through to treatment planning – has streamlined our processes, improved accuracy, and ultimately enhanced the patient experience. Patients expect a certain standard now, and technology allows us to deliver that consistently.

Using connected systems like the A-dec+ app adds that extra level of control and efficiency to how we manage treatments.

Q What does the future hold for you?

A I'm always looking ahead, both personally and for the practice. The plan is to continue growing Ollie & Darsh, expanding the services we provide while making sure that quality and patient care remain at the heart of what we do.

We're also committed to embracing advancements in dental technology to stay at the forefront of modern dentistry. Beyond that, I'll continue mentoring and hopefully inspiring younger dentists who are just starting their journeys.

It's about paying it forward, making sure that the next generation of dental professionals have the same opportunities I did, if not more.

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Shortlist reveal!

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YOUNG DENTIST

London

- Chiara Burgio
- Azharuddin Chauhan
- Simmi Daryani
- Baresh Eyrumlu
- Ameen Furat
- Jordan Frankgate
- Nikhil Kanani
- Sarina Kiani
- Crystal Marruganti
- Hartej Matharu
- Anne-Marie Mercer
- Mihir Nanavati
- Yewande Oduwale
- Wiktor Pietraszewski

Midlands

- Rehan Ahmad
- Zeeshan Chawdhri
- Nida Kamal
- Hassan Kanani
- Zahra Khaja
- Harsha Mane
- Anna Najran
- Simarpreet Panesar
- Nayan Patel
- Simon Rana
- Zunezo Sadiq
- Nitin Sharma
- Sammy Singh Sarai

North East

- Mehreen Alam
- Marco Gaias
- Conal Gallagher
- Paul Midha
- Hamed Safaei
- Hisham Saqib

- Salman Siddiqi
- Qurat Ul Ain (Annie)
- Saman Yazdifar

North West

- Romana Ahmed
- Arnold Gangaidzo
- Ben Gregory
- Rhys Gwyn
- Roshanay Javed
- Iswarya Kalyan
- Alexanne Martin
- Stewart McLean
- Mahesh Popat
- Awaz Sharief
- Rhys Ward
- Sam Wu

Scotland and Northern Ireland

- Olivia Arthur
- Matthieu Dash
- Nicola Gallagher
- Sam Lockhart
- Sebastian Mylchreest
- Mary Catherine O'Dolan
- Peter O'Keefe
- Gary O'Neill
- Michael Rowland
- Adam Shahzad
- Caitlin Watson

South East

- Raheel Aftab
- Raffaele Cedrola
- Sam Cope
- Shivam Divani
- Faris Elsayad
- Ali Ghomeshi
- Zohaib Hassan

- Kishan Lakhani
- Ajay Mehta
- Fadheelah Nadeem
- Victoria Ojetunde
- Jagdish Patel
- Preya Ragu
- Sonia Rajput
- Kiran Shankla
- Tarun Singh Nagpal
- Sonia Soopen
- Dilan Taylor

South West and Wales

- Amy Baers
- Marco Cascone
- Stephanie Dodds
- Rajvir Dutt
- Lily Ferreira
- James Hurst
- Yihang Leng
- Devin Mandalia
- Giovanni Martino
- Riaz Sharif
- Josh Sharpling
- Aisha Sheikh
- Laurie Stumper

WEBSITE OF THE YEAR

London

- Brightside Dental
- Covent Garden Dental Spa
- Denstudio
- Dental by Design
- Dental Smiles London
- Envy Smile
- London Orthodontic Clinic
- My E20 Dentist
- Network Dental
- One Dental (Vendo Digital)

- Origin Orthodontics
- Pall Mall Dental
- Pearl Dental & Aesthetics Centre
- Serio Dental
- Shiraz Khan
- Skon Dental
- Treehouse Dental

Midlands

- Allsopp Dental
- Allsopp Smiles
- Belwell Dental
- Brookside Dental
- Corve Street Dental
- East Midlands Orthodontics
- Everysmile Leicester
- Halesowen Dental
- Kettering Dental and Implants
- Pear Tree Dental
- Signature Orthodontics
- Smiles Ahead
- The Dental Clinic

North

- Advance Dental Care
- Bonsai Dental
- Carisbrook Dental
- Crafted Dental
- Dental Icon
- Dr Rez Dental
- Freedom Smiles
- Ghyllmount Dental Practice
- Greenside Dental Care
- Hampton Dental Care
- La Belle Dental Clinic
- Neo Orthodontics
- Scottish Denture Clinic
- The Grove Practice
- Vici Dental Leeds

South East

- Apex Endodontics
- Bespoke Dental
- Bizhan Shokouhi
- Didcot Dental Studio
- Floss & Smile
- Kent Orthodontics Designed & Developed by The Invisible Orthodontist
- Kreate Dental
- Love Teeth Dental
- Moltons Dental & Aesthetics
- Naidu & Naidu Dental Surgeons
- Smile Clinic Group
- St Albans Smile Studio
- The Dental Works

South West and Wales

- Abbey Mead Dental & Implant Clinic
- Crescent Dental
- Fusion Dentistry

- Inspired Dental Care Exeter
- Laffan Dental Care
- Myodental
- Nuyu Dental and Aesthetics
- Thornhill Dental Centre
- Worcester Street Dental Practice

TREATMENT OF NERVOUS PATIENTS

London

- Battersea Park Dental
- Denstudio
- Devisha Patel
- Douglas Miller Dental Practice
- Happy Kids Dental
- Mouth Dental
- Razan Hussein
- Serene Dental and Facial Aesthetics
- Toothbeary
- Wimpole Street Dental Clinic

Midlands

- Aspire Smiles
- Avenue Dental
- Clear Smiles
- Everysmile Leicester
- Halesowen Dental
- Rock Dental
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- The Dental Barns
- The Whitehouse Dental Practice
- Willows Dental & Implant Centre

North

- Advance Dental Care
- Auckland Cosmetic Dental Clinic
- Dental Icon
- Dentistry on the Clyde
- Dentistry on the Square
- Dr Rez Dental
- Iswarya Kalyan
- Links Dental Practice
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist
- Queens Drive Dental
- Slateford Dental Care
- Taylored Dental Care
- The Waterside Dental Clinic

South East

- Abi Dental
- Amy Scarbro
- Beatty Dental
- Broadwater Dental Clinic and Findon Dental Clinic
- David Neal Dental
- Enanee Dental Practice
- Ferry Dental Centre
- Graystone Referral Centre
- Hampshire Dentists
- Iconic Smiles
- Kaly Gengesarwan

- Love Teeth Dental
- Oxford House Dental Practice – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Park Street Dental Clinic
- Smile HQ
- St James Clinic
- Tanvi Bagtharia

South West and Wales

- Brynteg Dental Tenby
- Cheltenham Spa Dental
- Contemporary Dental
- Dalia Hassoun
- Fusion Dentistry
- Inspired Dental Care Exeter
- Thornbury Dental Wellness Clinic

CHILD FRIENDLY PRACTICE

- Basingstoke Orthodontics
- Denstudio
- Dr Mali Dental Clinic
- Graystone Referral Centre
- Halesowen Dental
- Happy Kids Dental
- Henley Dental
- Love Teeth Dental Kids
- Miswak Dental
- MK Smiles – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist
- Toothbeary
- Willows Dental & Implant Centre

CHARITY OR COMMUNITY PROJECT

North

- Anam Sadozai
- Arran Dental Care
- Bupa Dental Care Long Eaton
- Dream Smiles Dental
- Farah Elnaqa
- Henley Dental
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Smile Hub Dental Clinic
- Taylored Dental Care
- The Magic Dentist
- Wajiha Basir

South

- Ajay Mehta
- Angus Pringle
- Better Lives Foundation
- Bupa Dental Care Leighton Buzzard
- Denstudio
- Kingston Dental Clinic
- Sakina Syed
- SGA Dental
- Taverham Dental Health Clinic

NEW PRACTICE**London**

- Calm Dental
- Denstudio
- Dr Mali Dental Clinic
- One Dental
- Park Royal Dental Clinic
- Siha Dental | Facial
- Skon Dental
- Yourdental Wellness

North

- Ashfield Dental Clinic
- Aura Dental Clinic
- Aurora Dental Solihull
- Circ Dental
- Crafted Dental
- Cronton Dental
- Dental Icon
- Dream Smiles Dental
- Lancashire Smiles
- Lume Dental
- Mapperley Dental Studio
- Smile Stylist Hale Barns
- The Dental Barns
- The Dental Place Warwick

South

- Claris Dental
- Fenstanton Dental
- Findon Dental Clinic
- Love Teeth Dental New Malden
- Modern Arts Dental
- Nightingale Dental Centre
- Nuyu Dental and Aesthetics
- Palm Dental
- Pine Dental & Aesthetics
- South Wales Specialist Oral Surgery and Dental Implant Centre
- The Wellington Clinic Reigate
- Thornbury Dental Wellness Clinic

MOST IMPROVED PRACTICE**London**

- Balham Smile Clinic
- Chelsea Dental Clinic
- Denvolve Dental & Aesthetics
- Hampstead Dental Studio
- Serio Dental
- Woodberry Down Dental Practice

North

- Accrington Dental Suite
- Advance Dental Care
- Aspire Smiles
- Auckland Cosmetic Dental Clinic
- Bright Orthodontics
- Halesowen Dental
- Meliora Dental
- Mexborough Dental Surgery
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice

- Smile9
- The Croft Dental & Implant Practice
- The Dental Wellness Centre
- Tovey and Little

Scotland and Northern Ireland

- Aberdeen Orthodontics, in collaboration with The Invisible Orthodontists
- Castlebawn Dental Bangor
- The Hollies Dental Practice

South East

- Ascot Dental Suite
- Ash Lane Dental Suite
- Beech House Smile Clinic
- Bespoke Dental
- Causeway Dental Practice
- Cobbins Brook Smile Clinic
- Dalmeny House Dental
- Earley Dental Practice
- Greenleaves Dental Practice
- Harrow Smile Clinic
- Kingston Dental Clinic
- Marlow Dental Centre
- Pearl Dental & Aesthetics Centre
- Ripley Dental
- Staffa Lodge Smile Clinic
- Watford Smile Clinic
- Wembley Orthodontic & Aesthetics

South West and Wales

- Ashbury Dental Care
- Broadshires Implant & Aesthetics Dental Practice
- Dartmoor Dental
- Kaa Dentals
- Martock Dental Practice
- Plymouth City Centre
- Victoria House Dental Surgery

REFERRAL PRACTICE**London**

- Kai Dental
- Serio Dental
- Ten Dental Clapham
- The Cosmetic Dental Gallery
- The Perio Centre

North

- BPI Dental
- Bright Orthodontics
- Centre of Dental Excellence
- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Dental Icon
- Ghyllmount Dental Practice
- Rock Dental
- Scottish Centre for Excellence in Dentistry
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- The Grove Practice

South

- Abbey Mead Dental & Implant Clinic
- Causeway Dental Practice
- Cuffley Smile Clinic
- Didcot Dental Studio
- Graystone Referral Centre
- Guildhall Dental
- Love Teeth Dental
- Orchard Orthodontics
- Oxford House – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Smile HQ
- South Coast Dental Specialists
- Wellington Dental Practice

DIGITAL PRACTICE**North**

- Advance Dental Care
- Aspire Smiles
- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Clavell-Bate & Nephew
- Dental Icon
- Dr Rez Dental
- Henley Dental
- Springmount Dental & Aesthetics
- The Dental Barns
- The Dental Place Warwick
- Trinity Dental
- Willows Dental & Implant Centre

South

- Beatty Dental
- Denstudio
- Didcot Dental Studio
- Emicare Dental & Spa Centre
- Love Teeth Dental
- Nuyu Dental and Aesthetics
- Skon Dental
- Smile HQ
- Taverham Dental Health Clinic
- Ten Dental Clapham
- The Briars Dental Centre
- The Wraysbury Clinic
- Thornbury Dental Wellness Clinic
- Woodborough House Dental Practice
- Zen House Dental

DENTAL TECHNICIAN

- Deepa Bharakhda
- Jenna Ellis
- Jinesh Patel
- Nicole Straw
- Anna Veil

CLINICAL DENTAL TECHNICIAN

- Craig Broughton
- Spencer Greening
- Richard Harrison
- Steve Morris

DENTAL HYGIENIST

London

- Amanda Adamous
- Raissa Caroci
- Gelareh Haghi
- Mareih Hashemi
- Asmeen Hossenboccus
- Sejal Patel

North

- Jacqui Armstrong
- Kirsty Bliemeister
- Laura Brettle
- Lauren Chipman
- Maria Firdaus
- Poppy Irvine
- Dal Kalsi
- Diane Rochford

South

- Daisy Bryant
- Charlotte Bryson
- Victoria Louise Corner
- Alison Craig
- Helen Ford
- Jocelyn Harding
- Syeda Amera Hussaini
- Louise Minkler
- Udit Patel
- Catherine Teear

DENTAL THERAPIST

North

- Gemma Cowen
- Jessica Crawford
- Holly Hubery
- Olivia Parada
- Jasmin Ritchie
- Kendra Smith
- Lynsay Stewart
- Yvonne Wainright-Stringer
- Rida Zainab

South

- Abbas Ali Jagani
- Sophie Beard
- Camila Calife Ribeiro
- Shannon Flack
- Amy Mesilio
- Karenn Rocio Helmrichne Davila
- Zuzanna Sadura
- Esme Stewart
- Stephanie Treacher

London

- Yaro Dvorakevych
- Amrit Kaur
- Lorena Pivoda
- Tania Rahela
- Robbie Stewart
- Shakhnoza Tosheva

RECEPTIONIST

North

- Mary Holroyd
- Cheryl Knight
- Erin Lawton
- Grace McGrady
- Kate Moran
- Kate Ratcliffe
- Faye Vaughan
- Tay Wyr

South

- Shauna Rebecca Church
- Courtney Evelyn-Liardet
- Rachel Hewlett
- Katie Holt
- Hannah Neale
- Ravjot Neta
- Catarina Pita
- Gail Prior

PRACTICE MANAGER

London

- Zohra Doust
- Deborah Henry
- Gilette Raffaut
- Paula Ryan
- Moonisha Verma

Midlands

- Sarah Aldridge
- Natalie Doughty
- David Drew
- Patrycja Galonzka
- Claire Hewer
- Lamia Murray
- Sham Padda
- Christopher Rogers
- Kerry Whittaker
- Maria Witt

North

- Charlotte Armitage
- Vicky Beacher
- Jennifer Ingleed
- Marie Johnston
- Jennifer Jones
- Valeria Pirlog
- Joanne Shaw
- Lauren Toms
- Clare Weston

South

- Dora Akinjagunla
- Angeline Anderson
- Emma Ayres
- Rhydian Davies
- Caroline Delaney
- Kelly Harnett
- Becky Harris
- Beth Hawkins

- Weronika Korkosz
- Nicole McLean
- Alex McWhirter
- Tara Medway
- Jennifer Morgan
- Leah Seaton
- Lauren Tritton

DENTAL NURSE

London

- Armela Dukaj
- Hesti Katarina
- Nicoleta Mihai
- Leah Omosule
- Rebecca Silver
- Parinaz Taheri
- Jyoti Tamang
- Lukasz Toczek

Midlands

- Adeel Ahmed
- Leanne Andrews
- Shahida Begum
- Karima Ewida
- Vandana Kanda
- Rebekah Martin
- Jessica Powis
- Gemma Price
- Louise Thompson

North

- Christopher Bustard
- Rhiannon Drummond
- Kelly Hamill
- Thomas Jefferson
- Adelle Mills
- Mediah Mohsin
- Emma Powell

South

- Alex Baker
- Alfie Clare
- Noor Ul Ain Chaudhry
- Lorna Cullum
- Julie Driver
- Lisa Hilton
- Natalie Keeling
- Chloe Keeling
- Verity Newnham
- Gemma Platts
- Aeowen Pleece-Drake
- Joanna Richards
- Hayley Roberts
- Charlotte Trow

PRACTICE BRAND AND DESIGN

London

- Aura Dental London
- Balham Smile Clinic
- Dentist by the Green
- Denstudio

- Denvolve Dental & Aesthetics
- Miswak Dental
- Park Royal Dental Clinic
- Siha Dental Facial
- Skon Dental
- Smiles and Smiles
- The Cosmetic Dental Gallery
- Woodberry Down Dental Practice
- Yourdental Wellness

Midlands

- Aurora Dental Solihull
- Clear Smiles
- Every smile Leicester
- Halesowen Dental
- Henley Dental
- Springmount Dental & Aesthetics
- The Dental Barns
- The Dental Place Warwick

North

- Bright Orthodontics
- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Crafted Dental
- Cronton Dental
- Dental Icon
- Dr Rez Dental
- Dream Smiles Dental
- Greenside Dental Care
- Lume Dental
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist

South

- Abi Dental
- Ash Lane Dental Suite
- Bespoke Dental
- Cobbins Brook Smile Clinic
- Cuffley Smile Clinic
- Harrow Smile Clinic
- Hydean Dental Practice
- Love Teeth Dental
- Marlow Dental Centre
- Moltons Dental & Aesthetics
- Nuyu Dental and Aesthetics
- Palm Dental
- Pine Dental & Aesthetics
- South Wales Specialist Oral Surgery and Dental Implant Centre
- Staffa Lodge Smile Clinic
- The Dental Works
- Watford Smile Clinic

TEAM OF THE YEAR

London

- Balham Smile Clinic
- Battersea Park Dental
- Denstudio
- Denvolve Dental & Aesthetics
- Douglas Miller Dental Practice
- Miswak Dental
- Platinum Dental Care

- Serio Dental
- Siha Dental Facial
- Ten Dental Balham
- The Dental Lounges
- White Dental and Cosmetic Rooms
- Wimpole Street Dental Clinic
- Woodhouse Dental Practice

Midlands

- All Saints Dental
- Aspire Smiles
- Avenue Dental
- Clear Smiles
- Etwall Dental Practice
- Every smile Leicester
- Halesowen Dental
- Helix House Orthodontics
- Henley Dental
- Hereford Dental Implant Clinic
- Rock Dental
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Springmount Dental & Aesthetics
- Teeth & Face
- The Dental Spa & Skin Clinic
- Willows Dental & Implant Centre
- Worcester Street Dental Practice

North

- Advance Dental Care
- Baycliff Dental & Implant Surgery
- Bright Orthodontics
- Brunner Court Dental & Implant Practice
- Dr Rez Dental
- Dream Smiles Dental
- Honour Health Jesmond
- Honour Health Stanley
- Lancashire Smiles
- Lismore House Dental Practice
- Taylored Dental Care
- The Croft Dental & Implant Practice
- Trinity House Dental Care
- Vici Dental Leeds

Scotland

- Dentistry @ No3
- Dentistry on the Clyde
- Dentistry on the Square
- Hamilton Dental Centre
- La Belle Dental Clinic
- Links Dental Practice
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist
- Orchard Road Dental Practice
- Oris Dental & Implant Studio
- Scottish Centre for Excellence in Dentistry
- Slateford Dental Care
- St Andrews Dental Care
- St Vincent Smile
- The Gentle Touch

South East

- Beech House Smile Clinic
- Bespoke Dental
- Biggleswade Dental Centre
- Billericay Dental Care
- Caversham Heights Dental Practice
- Cheam Village Dental Studios
- Cobbins Brook Smile Clinic
- Complete Smiles
- Cuffley Smile Clinic
- Edward Byrne Associates – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Harrow Smile Clinic
- Hydean Dental Practice
- Kalon Dental
- Love Teeth Dental
- Measham Dental
- MK Smiles – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Oxford House – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Red Lodge Dental Surgery
- Rochester Lodge Dental Practice
- St James Clinic
- Staffa Lodge Smile Clinic
- Stradbroke Dental & Implant Clinic
- Watford Smile Clinic
- Wilson House – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Woburn Sands – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Woodborough House Dental Practice

South West and Wales

- Abbey Mead Dental & Implant Clinic
- Ashbury Dental Care
- Broad Street Dental Surgery
- Broadshires Implant & Aesthetics Dental Practice
- Brynteg Dental Practice Tenby
- Cheltenham Spa Dental
- Contemporary Dental
- Dentistry on the Grove
- Evolve Dentistry
- Inspired Dental Care Exeter
- Thornbury Dental Wellness Clinic
- Wellington Dental Practice
- Wyndham House Dental

PRACTICE PRINCIPAL

London

- Sulaman Anwar – Serio Dental
- Sandeep Bahra – White Dental and Cosmetic Rooms
- Jana Denzel – Denstudio
- Shraddha Innani – Manor Park Dental Practice
- Harman Kler – Miswak Dental
- Christian Mehl, Raul Costa and Jennifer Boardman – Wimpole Street Dental Clinic

- Anna Olczak – Tooth
- Ayesha Patel – Dentist by the Green
- Nissit Patel – Progressive Dentistry
- Neil Shah – Woodberry Down Dental Practice

Midlands

- Aditi Anand – Halesowen Dental
- Dan Bagga – Aspire Smiles
- Bobby Bhandal – Avenue Dental
- Malcolm Campbell – Springmount Dental & Aesthetics
- Andrew Farr – Broad Street Dental Surgery
- Gurprit Jandu – Teeth & Face
- Nida Kamal – Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Chetan Mathias – The Dental Place Warwick
- Anoup Nandra – Rock Dental
- Henna Rana – The Melton Clinic
- Carolyn Renton – Ashfield Dental Clinic

North

- Shahad Al-Dabbagh – La Belle Dental Clinic
- Amber Aplin – The Gentle Touch
- Gayathiri Ramani Balasubramaniam – Dental Icon
- Wajiha Basir – Trinity House Dental Care
- Lewis Vernon Butler – Advance Dental Care
- Reza Dilmah – Dr Rez Dental
- Christopher Logan – Slateford Dental Care
- Mohammad Waqas Tahir – Accrington Dental Suite

South East

- Sam Jethwa – Bespoke Smile
- Kaival and Shreena Patel – Kana Health Group
- Kish Patel – Watford Smile Clinic
- Kunal Patel – Love Teeth Dental
- Usha Ramjas – Dental Studio
- Elizabeth Richardson – Basingstoke Orthodontics
- Bim Sawhney – Riverside Dental
- Sonia Soopen – Ripley Dental
- Sheena Tanna – Billericay Dental Care
- Jin Vaghela – Cuffley Smile Clinic
- Jit Vaghela – Staffa Lodge Smile Clinic
- Rebecca White – White Smiles Dental Practice

South West and Wales

- John Barclay – Kandy Lodge Dental Surgery
- Amish Bhayani and Andre Faro Leite –

- Inspired Dental Care
- Vivek Giddani – Abbey Mead Dental & Implant Clinic
- Guto Griffiths – Brynteg Dental Practice Tenby
- Chloe Harrington-Taylor – Hereford Dental Implant Clinic
- Ghaleb Karein – Cheltenham Spa Dental & Implant Clinic

PATIENT CARE

London

- Denstudio
- Dr Mali Dental Clinic
- Platinum Dental Care
- Serene Dental and Facial Aesthetics
- Serio Dental
- Siha Dental | Facial
- Smile Dental Implants
- Smiles and Smiles
- Ten Dental Balham
- Wimpole Street Dental Clinic

Midlands

- All Saints Dental
- Aspire Smiles
- Avenue Dental
- Beacon Dental Care
- Clear Smiles
- Everysmile Leicester
- Halesowen Dental
- Hereford Dental Implant Clinic
- Rock Dental
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Teeth & Face
- The Dental Barns
- Willows Dental & Implant Centre

North

- Auckland Cosmetic Dental Clinic
- Bright Orthodontics
- Brunner Court Dental & Implant Practice
- Dental Icon
- Dr Rez Dental
- Honour Health
- Pearl Dental Queensbury
- Smile Stylist Dental Clinics
- Taylored Dental Care
- Vici Dental Leeds
- The Waterside Dental Clinic

Scotland and Northern Ireland

- Dentistry at Century House
- Dentistry on the Clyde
- Dentistry on the Square
- Hamilton Dental Centre
- La Belle Dental Clinic
- North Down Dental & Implant Clinic
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist
- Queens Drive Dental

- Slateford Dental Care
- The Gentle Touch
- The Hollies Dental Practice

South East

- Abi Dental
- Bespoke Smile
- College Street Dental Centre
- Edward Byrne Associates – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Ferry Dental Centre
- Findon Dental Clinic
- Iconic Smiles
- Love Teeth Dental – New Malden
- MK Smiles – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Orchard Orthodontics
- Oxford House – a part of the Kana Health Group
- The Rickmansworth Clinic
- Wilson House Dental Practice – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Woburn Sands – a part of the Kana Health Group

South West and Wales

- Affinity Dental Care & Implant Centre
- Brixham Dental Practice
- Broadshires Implant & Aesthetics Dental Practice
- Broadwater Dental Clinic
- Cheltenham Spa Dental
- Cheriton Dental Practice
- Cyncoed Dental Practice
- Dentistry on the Grove
- Evolve Dentistry
- Myodental
- Smiles Better Abergavenny
- Symbiosis Dental
- Wyndham House Dental

PRACTICE OF THE YEAR

London

- Balham Smile Clinic
- Chelsea Dental Clinic
- Covent Garden Dental Spa
- Denstudio
- Douglas Miller Dental Practice
- Hampstead Dental Studio
- Park Royal Dental Clinic
- Platinum Dental Care
- Serene Dental and Facial Aesthetics
- Serio Dental
- Siha Dental | Facial
- Smiles and Smiles
- Ten Dental Clapham
- The Cosmetic Dental Gallery
- Wimpole Street Dental Clinic
- Yourdental Wellness

Midlands

- Aspire Smiles
- Aurora Dental Solihull
- Avenue Dental
- Broad Street Dental Surgery
- Clear Smiles
- Helix House Orthodontics
- Henley Dental
- Orthodontic Excellence
- Rock Dental
- Shiraz Endodontic Practice
- Teeth & Face
- The Dental Barns
- The Dental Place Warwick
- The Grove Practice

North

- Auckland Cosmetic Dental Clinic
- Bright Orthodontics
- Centre of Dental Excellence
- Cheadle Hulme Dental & Cosmetics
- Dental Icon
- Dr Rez Dental
- Dream Smiles Dental
- Ghyllmount Dental Practice
- Lancashire Smiles
- Pearl Dental Queensbury
- Smile Stylist Dental Clinics
- Taylored Dental Care
- Trinity House Dental Care
- Vici Dental Leeds

- The Croft Dental & Implant Practice
- The Waterside Dental Clinic

Scotland and Northern Ireland

- Castlebawn Dental Bangor
- Dentistry @ No3
- Dentistry at Century House
- Dentistry on the Clyde
- Dentistry on the Square
- Hamilton Dental Centre
- North Down Dental & Implant Clinic
- Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist
- Queens Drive Dental
- Scottish Centre for Excellence in Dentistry
- The Gentle Touch

South East

- Beech House Smile Clinic
- Bespoke Dental
- Bupa Dental Care Hornchurch
- Bupa Dental Care Leighton Buzzard
- Causeway Dental Practice
- Cobbins Brook Smile Clinic
- College Street Dental Centre
- Complete Smiles
- Cuffley Smile Clinic
- David Neal Dental Eastbourne
- Ferry Dental Centre
- Guildhall Dental
- Harrow Smile Clinic

- Hydean Dental Practice
- Love Teeth Dental – New Malden
- Oxford House – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Smile HQ
- Staffa Lodge Smile Clinic
- The Briars Dental Centre
- Watford Smile Clinic
- Wembley Orthodontic & Aesthetics
- Woburn Sands – a part of the Kana Health Group
- Zen House Dental

South West and Wales

- Abbey Mead Dental & Implant Clinic
- Broadshires Implant & Aesthetics Dental Practice
- Cheltenham Spa Dental
- Cheriton Dental Practice
- Cyncoed Dental Practice
- Dentistry on the Grove
- Evolve Dentistry
- Hereford Dental Implant Clinic
- Inspired Dental Care Exeter
- Kaa Dentals
- North Cardiff Dental & Implants
- Nuyu Dental and Aesthetics
- Plymouth City Centre
- South Coast Dental Specialists
- Thornbury Dental Wellness Clinic



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Transforming Gensmile Dental Group

Asad Rahman shares how an AI-powered diagnostic system has transformed Gensmile's 38-practice network

Gensmile Dental is introducing an AI-powered diagnostic software system that turns complex dental radiographs into clear, visual evidence for patients. The phased rollout follows Dr Asad Rahman's first-hand experience of the software's impact on patient communication and treatment acceptance.

Hello Pearl's Second Opinion software analyses radiographs in real time, producing colour-coded highlights that aids dental diagnosis and treatment planning. The tool uses artificial intelligence to analyse dental images to provide an accurate diagnosis and demonstrate the presence of caries, infection, and bone loss. For Dr Rahman, this has changed the way consultations are structured: 'Rather than briefly showing a standard X-ray, I begin with the software-enhanced images. When pathology and healthy tissues are displayed side by side in different colour-code shades, patients immediately understand what is happening and why remedial action is needed. It takes treatment acceptance and consent to another level.'

Dr Rahman first encountered the software two years ago and his initial reservations disappeared once he saw how patients reacted to the software: 'Patients get it straight away. Even in endodontic referrals – where treatment acceptance is usually high – they respond completely differently when they can see the evidence for themselves on the colour-coded overlays.'

TESTING PERFORMANCE

As Gensmile's Clinical Director, Dr Rahman not only leads the group's

clinical strategy and serves on the board, but also continues to work part-time in practice as a dentist with a special interest in endodontics to stay actively engaged in clinical work. 'Because of Hello Pearl, I've achieved the same revenue in two clinical days that I previously achieved in three and a half. The only change has been using the software.'

This impact has helped shape Gensmile's phased rollout, starting with three pilot sites – including a 13-surgery general practice and two specialist referral centres. As Dr Rahman explains: 'We wanted a mix of environments to test performance. In referral centres, where prosthodontic cases require detailed explanation, the software is already proving to be especially valuable. Once the software has been shown to be effective, a phased implementation in other practices in the group has been mapped out.'

Founded in 2015 by CEO Simon Turton, Gensmile's philosophy has never been about owning the most sites, but about building efficient, progressive and well-supported practices. Dr Rahman sees Hello Pearl as an important step in evolving this strategy. He adds: 'Our aim is consistency and quality. Hello Pearl helps us achieve that by giving every clinician the highest level of diagnostic capacity as well as the tools to encourage patient case acceptance.'

Training and support are critical to a successful rollout, and Dr Rahman is particularly impressed with the level of commitment provided by the Hello Pearl team. They provide group-wide introductions to the software, one-to-one clinician training, and on-going access and analysis of usage tracking data. The latter allows Gensmile to identify successful implementers and

early adopters who can act as practice champions and will be central in helping with the planned wider roll out.

Alongside traditional measures such as case acceptance and new patient value, Gensmile also monitors softer outcomes, including patient reviews and clinician feedback. 'If patients mention Hello Pearl in reviews, or clinicians note its impact in their feedback, that is just as important as the numbers for us.'

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Implementing Hello Pearl is only part of the digital transformation being implemented group wide. Gensmile is exploring voice-assisted note-taking and AI-supported documentation to reduce time-intensive treatment planning. 'Dentistry has looked the same for decades – a dentist, a nurse, and a patient in the chair. Tools like Hello Pearl change that dynamic, making consultations more collaborative and diagnosis transparent.'

Dr Rahman believes that implementing a digital strategy creates a clear competitive advantage for Gensmile: 'Most patients will never have seen anything like this before. It demonstrates added value and sets our practices apart in a way that price competition never could.' Dr Rahman views technology adoption as a natural progression for DSOs such as Gensmile: 'It is imperative to ensure our clinicians have the best tools to achieve the best clinical outcomes. Hello Pearl provides us with that. Just as importantly, it helps patients understand and commit to their care in the most responsible way. This is what will ultimately make it transformative for our group.'

For more information, visit hellopearl.com/getdemo.

Clarity that defines a career

Precision and comfort define private dentistry – and for Dr Nick Fahey, Dr Linda Greenwall, Dr Tidu Mankoo and Dr Rhodri Thomas, **Evident's** customised loupes are essential to clinical excellence

DR NICK FAHEY: SEEING THE DIFFERENCE

Implant dentist and prosthodontist Dr Nick Fahey is co-director of Woodborough House in Berkshire and lectures internationally on digital and interdisciplinary care.

Nick describes working without magnification as 'pretty much blind'; but 'if you can see it, you can treat it. Magnification builds confidence, and patients sense that precision.'

Having tried other suppliers, he returned to Evident for fit and service. 'The professionalism and aftercare make all the difference. Customisation protects your body and lets you practise comfortably for decades.'

As an educator, he encourages colleagues to experience the difference for themselves. 'Once you work with true magnification, you never go back.'

DR LINDA GREENWALL: THE POWER OF PRECISION

Restorative and aesthetic dentist Dr Linda Greenwall is a globally recognised leader, author and founder of the Dental Wellness Trust charity.

Linda says magnification is integral to everything she does. 'I could not practise without loupes. They support my posture, improve accuracy and allow me to deliver the precision patients deserve.'

Innovation has advanced alongside her career. 'From early models to today's lighter frames and adjustable magnification, each evolution has made daily dentistry more comfortable and precise.'

Trust is key to her relationship with Evident. 'Their attention to detail, from measuring and posture assessments to aftercare, is exceptional. My husband and son are also dentists, and both use

Evident loupes, which says everything about the trust we place in the brand.'

DR TIDU MANKOO: DESIGNED FOR DETAIL

Windsor-based Dr Tidu Mankoo co-founded the British Academy of Aesthetic Dentistry and is a recognised leader in implant dentistry and education. Tidu has relied on magnification for almost 40 years. 'If you see better, you do better dentistry. Loupes are indispensable for restorative, periodontal and implant work.'

He credits precise customisation for enhancing both comfort and outcomes. 'With Evident, every fitting is exact, from posture to interpupillary distance. Incorporating varifocals into my loupes has been transformative.'

Tidu also values the personal service. 'These are tools you must experience in person. Evident's face-to-face fitting and reliable support give me total confidence in my equipment.'

DR RHODRI THOMAS: BUILT FOR LONGEVITY

Cosmetic and restorative dentist Dr Rhodri Thomas is an award-winning clinician and educator, and founder of the Art of Dentistry training series.

Rhodri views magnification as both a clinical and a business decision. 'From the outset, I realised that cosmetic dentistry demands precision. Margins and contours must be perfect. Magnification is the basis for the quality I want to deliver.'

For him, ergonomics matter as much as optical performance. 'Customised loupes protect my posture and extend my career. If they add even a few extra years of comfortable practice, the return is immeasurable.'



To celebrate 50 years of supporting dental professionals and more than 30 years' supplying loupes, Evident is offering exclusive anniversary savings, including: 15% off premium ExamVision HD or Kepler systems, 15% off ExamVision PowerGo/Total light, plus free prescription lenses worth up to £1,400 and free blue light protection worth £425.

Visit response.evident.co.uk/50-years-offers for more offers and full details.

He values Evident's partnership approach. 'Anyone can sell loupes, but not everyone takes the time to understand how you work and support you over the long term.'

A SHARED VISION

Though their careers span different disciplines, these four clinicians share a belief that magnification is essential for precision, longevity and excellence in private dentistry. Behind that shared vision stands Evident, whose 50-year legacy continues to support dental professionals with tools built for performance, comfort and care.

For guidance on choosing the right magnification for your practice, download the free resource 'A Dental Professional's Guide to Buying the Right Loupe' at response.evident.co.uk/loupes-buyers-guide.

Don't let biofilm celebrate Christmas

Laura Edgar explains why dental practices must treat waterlines before the holidays

Failing to maintain dental unit waterlines before the festive break could lead to serious hygiene issues and potential health risks when surgeries reopen in the new year, warns Aura Infection Control, a leading UK authority on dental decontamination.

Aura's managing director, Laura Edgar, is calling on dental teams to take preventive action now. 'Waterlines can hide unseen dangers. Biofilm can develop quickly, even in new systems, turning what looks like clean water into a potential source of contamination.'

Biofilm can rapidly multiply, increasing bacterial counts far beyond the safe threshold of 100 colony-forming units (CFUs) per millilitre. Studies show that

new waterlines can reach over 200,000 CFUs within days if untreated.

When surgeries are left unused for extended periods, stagnant water and darkness create ideal conditions for bacterial growth. Without proper pre-treatment, practices may return to find water systems harbouring dangerous levels of microorganisms.

Laura stresses the importance of acting early: 'Treating your waterlines before you close ensures a safe and compliant start to the new year.'

Aura Infection Control recommends a proactive approach using its trusted maintenance products. For routine, everyday protection, the company endorses Alpron, while for longer shutdowns, Bilpron is advised as the

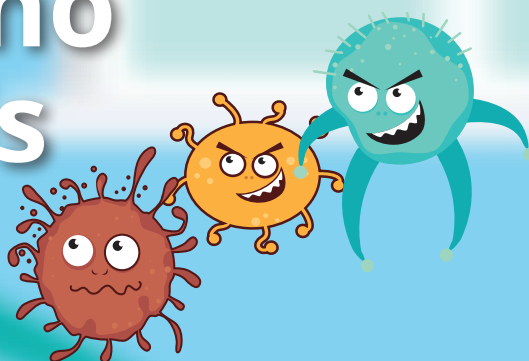
gold-standard solution. Both have undergone extensive clinical testing and are approved by major dental unit manufacturers.

For practices uncertain about their current waterline condition, Aura suggests using the Alpron Biofilm Removal System, preceded by a Red Sampler test to measure bacterial activity.

Laura concludes: 'Patients trust us to deliver hospital-level hygiene standards. Before switching off the lights this Christmas, make sure your lines are filled with Bilpron – and start 2026 with confidence in your infection control.'

Book a free review at www.aiconline.co.uk/dental-decontamination-review.

Be careful who you let in this Christmas



Keep biofilm out this Christmas with Bilpron

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Bilpron is the go-to product for use in dental chairs to prevent biofilm build-up during any prolonged period of non-use. Approved by amongst others, Chirana-Dental, Heka Dental, Planmeca, Ritter, Dentsply Sirona.

Easy to use, just fill your clean water bottle with Bilpron, flush a small amount through each outlet and leave in situ.

It's the last job to do before you switch off the lights and head home for Christmas, safe in the knowledge that Mr. Biofilm won't be spending Christmas in your dental chair.



For friendly, professional advice and to find out more, call our decontamination experts on 01833 630393 or email orders@aiconline.co.uk.

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Scan to learn more about Bilpron



Digital workflow for anti-snoring devices

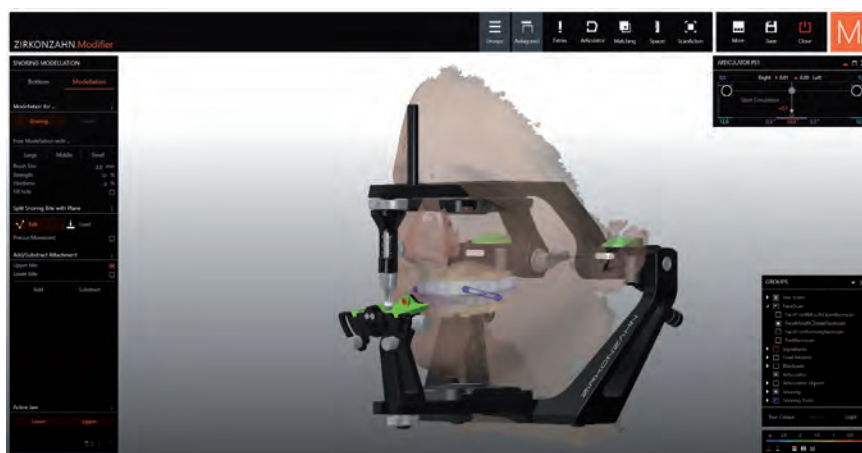
A new therapeutic approach with Zirkonzahn.Modifier

Snororing disorders are often linked to mandibular retrusion and the resulting narrowing of the airway. By holding the mandible in a slightly forward position, patients can experience a noticeable improvement in breathing and sleep quality.

With the new workflow conceived by Zirkonzahn to fabricate individual anti-snoring devices, the therapeutic starting point is no longer a conventional dental impression, but the digital acquisition of the patient's situation via intraoral scanner, Face Hunter 3D facial scanner and the PlaneSystem® method (MDT Udo Plaster, Germany).

After creating the patient case in the dedicated archive software, the subsequent design phase is carried out entirely in Zirkonzahn.Modifier. Zirkonzahn.Modifier is an additional design software complementary to Zirkonzahn.Modellier. The software provides new set-up concepts and extensive individual design options and includes several modules dedicated to model production, mock-ups, bite splints and removable dentures. The workflow for producing anti-snoring devices is an add-on feature to the 'Bite Splints' module and permits designing both the upper and lower splints simultaneously.

In the software, digital articulation and bite raising are carried out first, then undercuts are blocked out and the insertion path is defined. By selecting the 'Snoring' function, the technician can then create all relevant margins and generate the separation plane between upper and lower splints. Anchors are positioned between the lower first molar and the upper canine, then slightly inserted into the bite to ensure sufficient space for the connectors. Finally, a



Digital design of anti-snoring devices in Zirkonzahn.Modifier, permitting the simultaneous design of both the upper and lower splints



Splints milled in Therapon Transpa resin

breathing gap is calculated digitally and incorporated by subtraction in the upper and lower splints between the incisors, in order to optimise airflow during sleep.

Once the design is complete, the splints can be milled from Zirkonzahn's dedicated materials, Temp Premium Flexible Transpa resin or Therapon Transpa. Both materials are available in extra-large blanks with Ø 125 mm, permitting the production of up to four splints in the same milling process.

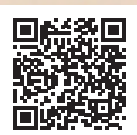
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For more information, visit www.zirkonzahn.com. Alternatively, contact Carmen Ausserhofer (+39 0474 066662, carmen.ausserhofer@zirkonzahn.com) or Jasmin Oberstaller (+39 0474 066735, jasmin.oberstaller@zirkonzahn.com).

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Resins for milling anti-snoring devices Zirkonzahn

Zirkonzahn's wide range of restorative materials includes two resins for milling anti-snoring devices:

- Temp Premium Flexible Transpa is a transparent resin with improved material properties specific for the manufacture of bite splints. It is characterised by special flexibility and is available in several heights ranging from 12 to 25mm and with diameters of 95, 98 (with step) and 125mm.
- Therapon Transpa is a highly transparent resin for bite splints, orthodontic splints and occlusal splints for bruxism and is suitable for long-term use in the patient's mouth. The material is particularly biocompatible and stable in the mouth. It can be processed and polished easily, it shows low abrasion and is particularly deformation resistant. The high transparency of the resin results in an unobtrusive aesthetic and it is particularly comfortable for patients due to its simple usage and easy cleaning. Blanks are available in diameters of 95, 98 (with step), 106 and 125mm, and in heights ranging from 12 to 40mm, depending on the blank size.

Blanks with a diameter of 125mm allow the production of up to four splints in a single milling process and can be processed in Zirkonzahn's milling units equipped with the extra-large Teleskoper Orbit or Teleskoper Orbit Selflock.

These resin materials are seamlessly integrated into Zirkonzahn's workflow, where the starting point is no longer a conventional dental impression but rather the digital acquisition of the patient's situation via intraoral scanner, Face Hunter 3D facial scanner and the Planesystem method (MDT Udo Plaster, Germany). The design process is then carried out digitally using the dedicated functions of the Zirkonzahn.Modifier software.

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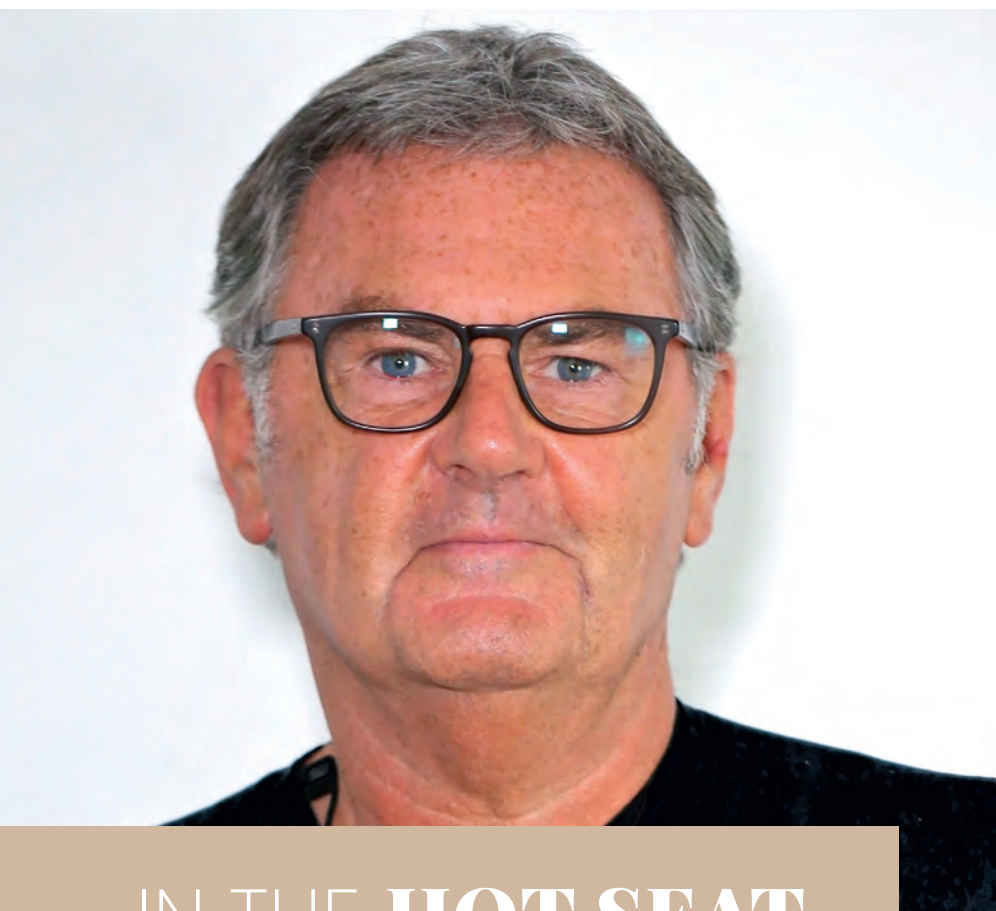
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IN THE HOT SEAT

Professor Paul Tipton, founder of Tipton Training and prosthodontics specialist, shares his love of safari, sunsets and action movies

Q When and where was your last meal out?

A La Famiglia with my beautiful wife, Sharron. It's a local, family-run Italian restaurant in Hale (Cheshire) that's been around for many years. I had a delicious ravioli – simple but perfect!

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

A Probably a young Tom Selleck from his *Magnum P.I.* days. I used to get told a lot back in my youth that I looked a lot like him – I think it must've been the moustache!

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

A From a dental perspective, the best advice I received was to learn occlusion and become fully confident in the area. It is the most important part of dentistry, and if you spend time learning

and grasping this topic, it will stay with you throughout your career. It's time well spent that you'll never regret.

Q What's your guilty pleasure?

A A lovely glass of red Burgundy wine, especially now that the evenings are darker and colder.

Q What was the last gift you received?

A I received the latest Dan Brown novel, *The Secrets of Secrets*, from my wife. I read it recently while teaching in Dubai and would highly recommend it to any Dan Brown fan!

Q Describe your perfect holiday...

A It would have to be Kenya. One week on safari and one week on the beach. Tipton Training held our first course there earlier this year,

so I had the pleasure of going and spending three weeks mixing work with pleasure. I was blown away by the scenery, the safari and the beaches! It was a truly humbling, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

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

A My favourite book has to be *The Da Vinci Code* – another one from Dan Brown... As you can see I'm a fan! My all-time favourite movie is the first *Gladiator* movie from 2000. I'm a big fan of action movies.

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

A Classic Motown or anything by the Rolling Stones.

Q What keeps you up at night?

A Work. I'm a bit of a workaholic, and my brain rarely stops ticking. It's tough to switch off when you run your own business and are so passionate about what you do.

Q How do you unwind?

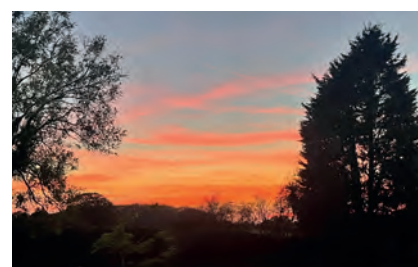
A I'm a massive sport fan, so watching football and cricket helps me unwind. I support Manchester United, even if they're not at their best lately! Cricket has always been my passion – I played professionally for Lancashire before dentistry, and now I regularly watch my eldest play and captain our local team.

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

A I'd take a world cruise for six to 12 months and then reinvest the rest and get back to work!

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

A I captured a stunning sunset over our back garden at home. We live in the countryside and are privileged to get to see amazing sunsets like this on a regular occasion.



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