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The Future of Practice Growth Starts Here

Setting the tone

Siobhan Hiscott

Group managing editor

January is more than just the first page of the calendar – it's a launchpad for your whole year. For practice owners, it offers something relatively rare: a clean break and a clear opportunity to reset direction, sharpen focus and build momentum before the year gathers pace.

How you use this month will often dictate the rhythm, results and resilience of your practice for the rest of 2026.

The most successful practices don't drift into the new year. They meet it with purpose. January is the ideal time to move from reactive management to intentional leadership. That means stepping back from the chair, even if it's just briefly, to work 'on' the business rather than just in it. Reviewing performance data, patient trends, marketing effectiveness, and team productivity now will allow you to identify quick wins and long-term priorities while energy is high and distractions are comparatively low.

Of course, momentum isn't built through grand plans alone; it comes from visible, early action. Small but meaningful changes – refining patient communication, tightening workflows, investing in team training or clarifying roles – can create a sense of progress that compounds over time. When your team sees

direction and confidence from leadership, motivation rises and culture strengthens. Clarity is contagious!

January is also the month to be bold – to evolve instead of coasting. Whether it's exploring new technologies, expanding services, strengthening your brand presence, or improving the patient journey, the first few weeks of the year are the perfect window to test, implement, and refine. Waiting for the 'right time' rarely builds success – trying to proactively make it the right moment is a different story.

Want the proof? Look at our Private Dentistry Award winners on page 38 in this issue. Each of those entries proves that a winning strategy is more than just a document; it's a discipline. One that requires priorities, ownership, measurable outcomes and consistent communication – and this is the month to set those foundations in place. Plan your quarterly targets.

Align your team. Define what 'thriving' looks like in real numbers, real behaviours, and real patient experiences.

Whatever you do, start somewhere – because a solid step forwards in January beats a good idea in February.

So, don't let this opportunity slide back into the routine. Use it to lead, to plan, to energise and to act. Start now, be deliberate, and make this the month that transforms your entire year. The future of your practice is waiting.



Contents

11

North of England Dentistry Show

What you can expect from the 2026 North of England Dentistry Show

16

Opinion

Chris Barrow details how dental leaders will win in 2026

18

How I Did It

Naiz Khan explains how he and Natalia Agalakova's 'yin and yang' approach to business created a new benchmark for modern dentistry within a spa-like setting at Nuyu Dental & Aesthetics

22

Small is beautiful (but can be problematic!)

Lucy Walker and Charlotte Malagoni explain how to overcome the challenges of tight spaces when designing a bijou dental clinic



18

28

A blueprint for success

Does having a proven business model make it easier to open a second dental practice? Moj Dehghanpour has the inside edge

30

Embracing the digital transformation

Investing in connected dentistry today sets practices up for success in the future, says John Dargue

Regulars

- 3 Lead editorial
- 46 Industry innovations
- 48 In the hot seat with Kit Spears

Spotlight



NORTH OF ENGLAND DENTISTRY SHOW

Coming to Manchester on 13 February, three of the North of England Dentistry Show speakers give a preview of the conversations they'll bring to the stage. In this issue, we hear from Jin Vaghela and Kish Patel on page 12, and James Goolnik on page 14.

A photograph of a man with a beard and short hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and light-colored trousers, sitting in a wooden chair. He is holding a baby wrapped in a light-colored blanket. The background features a window with a grid pattern and dark curtains on the left. The scene is lit with warm, natural light.

42

32

Habit change that sticks

Rana Al-Falaki explains how to nail your new year resolutions with a sustainable approach to habit formation

34

Your 2026 business plan

Mark Topley explains why your team is the key to hitting your targets this year

37

A double-headed beast

Zoe Close discusses how the differing roles of leaders and managers support each other

38

Presenting the winners

Revealing the 2025 Private Dentistry Awards winners and highly commended in all their glory

42

Babies and business plans

What parenthood taught David Drew and Keely Thorne about family life and sustainable clinic success

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

GROUP MANAGING EDITOR

Siobhan Hiscott

siobhan.hiscott@fmc.co.uk | 01923 851758

CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER

Tim Molony

tim.molony@fmc.co.uk | 07595 282680

MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER

Ivana Perkins

ivana.perkins@fmc.co.uk | 07760 887016

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Glenn Baxter, K-Marcelyne McCalla

CONTENT DIRECTOR

Guy Hiscott

CONTENT

Rowan Thomas and Lucy Veal

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Julie Bissett

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BDS LDSRCS (Eng), is the clinical director and founder of The Perfect Smile Studios and Advanced Training Institute in Hertford. He is on the council of the BACD.



VINNIE ATTARIANI

BDS, owns an award-winning practice in Leamington Spa. She has developed her career in general dentistry, while also specialising in cosmetic dentistry with a particular interest in facial aesthetics. She is a member of the BACD.



SUBIR BANERJI

BDS MClinDent (Prostho) PhD MFGDP (UK) FICOI FICD, has been in private practice in London for more than 30 years and is the programme director for the MSc in Aesthetic Dentistry at King's College London Dental Institute.



COLIN CAMPBELL

BDS FDS RCS Ed, is a specialist in oral surgery. He is clinical director of The Campbell Clinic and director of The Campbell Academy.



ANDREW CHANDRAPAL

BDS MFGDP(UK) DPPS (Bris), is practice principal at Bourne End Dental and UK programme director for the Californian Centre for Advanced Dental Studies.



SIMON CHARD

BDS, co-owns Rothley Lodge Dental with his wife Dr Meghan Chard. He is a past president of the BACD, lectures nationally and is a co-founder of Parla toothpaste tabs.



RACHEL DERBY

BDS MS, is an award-winning dentist and a partner and founder of Chapel Dental in Buckinghamshire. Rachel is a past president of the BAPD.



MERVYN DRUIAN

BDS (Rand) DGDPRCS (Lon), is one of the pioneers of cosmetic dentistry. He is one of very few UK dentists to be on the distinguished AACD President's Honour Role.



ELAINE HALLEY

BDS (Edin) MFGDP (UK), is principal of Cherrybank Dental Spa Ltd.



SUNIL HIRANI

BSc BDS FDSRCS FDS(Orth) RCS Eng MOrth MSc, is a specialist in orthodontics and practice principal of Smilelux, a dedicated orthodontic practice in Milton Keynes.



MARTINA HODGSON

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.



NEEL JAISWAL

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



SAM JETHWA

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



ANGELA LY

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



HANNA MIRAFTAB

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



ASHISH B PARMAR

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



KISH PATEL

BDS MSc, is a director at Smile Clinic Group and director of Smile Dental Academy. Having successfully completed training in Invisalign in 2011, he offers a range of clear and cosmetic orthodontic treatments.



KREENA PATEL

BDS, is a specialist in endodontics. She taught on the specialist endodontics programme at Guy's. She works at Brigstock Dental Practice and Oaktree Dental Practice. Kreena runs an online endo course, The Endo Course.



MANRINA RHODE

BDS, is principal of DRMR Clinic in Knightsbridge. She also runs DRMR Academy with a mentorship programme, online course and in-person course on porcelain veneers. She has completed more than 14,000 porcelain veneers over 22 years.



JASON SMITHSON

BDS (Lond) DipRestDent RCS (Eng), qualified at the Royal London Hospital in 1995, achieving a number of awards.



KOMAL SURI

BchD, owns Smile Design Dental Practice. The focus of her work is aesthetic and restorative dentistry.



PROFESSOR PAUL TIPTON

BDS MSc DGDP UK, is a specialist in prosthodontics, president of the British Academy of Restorative Dentistry and an internationally renowned dental lecturer.



ANDREA UBHI

BChD, is principal of the referral practice, Andrea Ubhi Dentistry, in York. She is also chair of the charity Asha Nepal, supporting survivors of trafficking.



SIR NAIRN WILSON

CBE DSc (hc) FDS FFGDP (UK) FFD FKC, is emeritus professor of dentistry at King's College London. He was previously dean and head of King's College Dental School (2001-2010), dean of the Faculty of Dentistry RCS Edinburgh (1995-1998), and president of the GDC (1999-2003).

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Are you ready for a new conversation?

The 2026 **North of England Dentistry Show** is coming to Manchester – find out how it's going to make professional development social, memorable and fun

The rate of change in dentistry has never been higher – which is why the 2026 North of England Dentistry Show (NOE) has been revamped to help clinicians navigate what comes next.

With technology, patient expectations and the pace of innovation accelerating faster by the day, dentistry is at a crossroads. NOE 26 will bring those conversations together under one roof.

Stepping beyond the boundaries of a traditional exhibition, this year's event will help the profession navigate rapid change and explore the innovations, mindsets and models shaping its future.

On 13 February in Manchester's AO Arena, global leaders, hands-on innovators and practitioners driving progress will take to the stage – all united by the belief that dentistry is ready for a new conversation.

MIGUEL STANLEY: KEYNOTE SPEAKER

At the heart of the day sits keynote speaker Dr Miguel Stanley – one of global dentistry's most respected and recognisable voices.

Founder and clinical director of the White Clinic in Lisbon, Miguel has spent more than two decades championing a simple but uncompromising principle: that there are no shortcuts to exceptional care.

His clinic has built a reputation for ethical, precision-led dentistry, attracting some of the world's most discerning patients and inspiring colleagues across five continents.

At NOE 26, he will deliver a keynote that feels particularly resonant for the UK. Miguel will explore the dangers of cutting corners and the rising need for 'revision dentistry' – correcting outdated or harmful work to restore health, trust and long-lasting aesthetics.

He will then chart how digital technologies, advanced biomaterials and AI, when applied with responsibility and purpose, can elevate clinical outcomes and transform the patient experience. The result will offer a candid, aspirational roadmap for clinicians who want to practise dentistry that is genuinely future-proof.

PROGRESS WITHOUT REPETITION

Across the day, other sessions will examine what it really means to move dentistry forwards.

Robbie Hughes will look ahead to dentistry in five years' time – where new technologies and materials make patient expectations easier to meet.

Ian Buckle will explore how digital dentistry still relies on timeless fundamentals: occlusion, function and the discipline of getting the basics right. While Martina Hodgson will show how digital orthodontics elevates communication, predictability and patient experience.

Elsewhere, James Goolnik will lead a panel discussion on diagnostics and new models of personalised healthcare.

Meanwhile Professor Avi Banerjee's panel session will champion a shift towards prevention, team-based practice and a more expansive role for therapists and hygienists.

NOE 26 will also present dedicated experiential zones that let delegates test, feel and explore the innovations shaping modern practice:

- Feel At Ease with Bupa Dental Care
- AI Lounge powered by Pearl
- Restorative Revolution Theatre powered by Midas.

Smile Clinic Group's Jin and Kish will close the day by hosting the 'weekend warm-up' – where the lights go down, and the music goes up!

A NEW CONVERSATION

Dentistry needs a new conversation – and NOE 26 is built to start it. Blending global insight, targeted expertise and practical demonstrations, the day aims to offer clarity on the technologies worth adopting, the skills worth investing in and the mindset shifts that will define the next decade of practice.

Dentistry cannot meet tomorrow's demands with yesterday's thinking, and NOE 26 will bring the fresh perspectives and models of care needed for progress. So, if you're looking to strengthen clinical decision-making, explore emerging technologies, rethink your business model or simply reconnect with the profession, Manchester is the place to be.

Sign up for free today at www.dentistry.co.uk/noe.

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‘Adapt or die’

Jin Vaghela and **Kish Patel** discuss rebuilding the dental back office on technology for better growth

At this year's North of England Dentistry Show, Dr Jin Vaghela and Dr Kish Patel will explore how technology, AI and smarter systems are transforming the 'back office' of modern dentistry. In this article, they talk through the shift they've seen across their own 17-clinic group – and why growth now depends more on foundations and workflows than spreadsheets.

When Jin and Kish bought their first practice aged 23, the back office looked very different. With a key reliance on people, scaling meant increasing admin headcount in line with ambition. But for Jin and Kish, whose Smile Clinic Group is rapidly expanding, that model no longer holds.

‘If you want good-quality growth, you simply can't do it the way we used to,’ Jin explains. ‘The whole landscape has changed – for groups and single practices alike. And one of the biggest drivers is tech and AI.’

The pair argue that growth depends on adapting to the times: using technology to reduce admin at the centre while putting more trained people on the ground, where patients need them most.

‘We're a healthcare business first,’ says Kish. ‘So everyone in a practice should be clinically trained and focused on patients. Tech should support that, not drag team members into spreadsheets and marketing admin they don't need to do.’

EIGHT PILLARS AND SOLID FOUNDATIONS

Before talking about specific tools, Jin and Kish insist on a more fundamental point: every practice, whether a single

site or a 600-site group, needs strong foundations.

‘Everyone wants to build the empire and fly the flag,’ warns Jin. ‘But without solid foundations, that flag is going to collapse. The whole building is going to collapse!'

‘That's why we talk about the eight pillars of dental growth. They're universal: every practice needs them.’

Those pillars are underpinned by the right systems – and importantly, someone who owns them. Early in their journey the pair were doing everything themselves: finance, operations, marketing, clinical oversight. But as they grew, the realisation was born that scale only becomes possible when:

- Systems are standardised
- The right tech is in place
- A named owner is responsible for each platform
- Everyone else is trained on it.

Kish explains: ‘If you have that base in place, you can add four, five, 10 practices quickly because the model is already embedded. Without that, you're just firefighting.’

But their model for building this base is admittedly unusual: they operate with no practice managers in the traditional sense. Instead, every site has a clinic lead – someone clinically trained, with strong people skills.

Kish agrees: We realised when we looked at our practice managers, or clinic leads, there was a certain personality type that went with it. They're often “yellow” personalities – “people people”. They want to be out there connecting with others.’

And when you put these individuals in front of a laptop to manage finances, argue the pair, you're wasting their skill

N.O.E. 2026
Dentistry SHOW



sets – but keep them in front of people where they can put those skills into play, and the practice will thrive.

'This is something we're quite passionate about,' admits Jin. 'If you're in the practice, you need to be clinically trained. What we found is that those most phenomenal practice managers always had a clinical background.'

Those without a clinical background are often moved into central support roles where their skills can be better used. It's a system built on having the right people in the right roles, which in turn strengthens culture.

'As a result of doing this, the culture within the team is a lot stronger,' adds Kish. 'The clinic leads take our culture, values and vision, and implement them on the ground. Without them, without our teams on the ground, all of this head office and support function would not be working.'

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY

There's excitement around AI, but Kish and Jin also urge caution: enthusiasm shouldn't outpace due diligence.

'You need to be very careful about what kind of AI you implement,' says Jin. 'Take AI receptionists. Two or three years ago everyone rushed to roll them out, but most people didn't look properly at GDPR or data security.'

Their message is simple: the tech you choose must be secure, must fit your business needs, and – critically – must integrate.

A CRM that doesn't talk to your PMS is pointless. A compliance platform that isn't linked to HR is inefficient. And if you have 15 logins to complete a task? It's the digital equivalent of 15 staff members doing it manually.

'What you need is one login, one ecosystem,' explains Kish. 'A system that communicates across platforms, giving you the data you need to make decisions.'

They've spent four to five years reviewing 'every system and software out there', feeding back to developers and adapting tools to fit dentistry. The result is a set of

integrated, AI-supported workflows now proven across DSOs and corporates – and which they'll be sharing at the North of England Dentistry Show on 13 February.

The reasoning behind all this is: these workflows aren't about shiny tech for its own sake. They're about a seamless patient journey.

'We've been through every single system,' laughs Kish. 'We've given feedback to a lot of the tech and AI companies out there. They probably loved us and hated us at the same time!'

'But we're doing it for the better of the profession, so that whatever systems we use, we can shout about, talk about, and actually show what we're doing with them.'

EMBRACING CHANGE

Asked what the biggest mistakes are in the current landscape, they don't hesitate: leaders are too afraid of change.

'If your business is doing well today, that might not be the case in five years,' says Kish. 'What we always say is, don't be scared of change. Adapt to the change that your business will need – not now, but in five years' time.'

'Embrace it,' agrees Jin. 'What we see often is business leaders not changing: they're not learning new skills, new techniques, new leadership skills.'

'But change is inevitable. The only time you're not changing is when you're dead – so it has to happen.'

They recall advice from US counterparts running 1,200 to 1,500 practices: start small, but start somewhere: 'Once you start, there's a chain reaction. Everything follows.'

Or, as they put it more bluntly: 'adapt or die'.

The North of England Dentistry Show will take place on 13 February at AO Arena in Manchester. Register for your free place at www.dentistry.co.uk/noe.

How diagnostics are redefining dentistry

'Is personalised healthcare the future of dentistry? It's already here,' says **James Goolnik** – and diagnostics, he argues, are the key to unlocking it

For more than three decades, Dr James Goolnik has watched dentistry evolve in waves: the rise of adhesive dentistry, the whitening boom, the veneer revolution, digital scanning, the slow integration of sleep medicine and now AI. But nothing, he argues, has the potential to reshape the profession as profoundly as diagnostics.

For James, this isn't simply the next trend on dentistry's innovation conveyor belt – it is the gateway to a different kind of practice altogether.

He speaks with the relaxed certainty of someone who has tested a theory on himself first. After selling his long-established practice and launching a squat, he has rebuilt his approach from the ground up.

'Optimal dental health,' he explains, 'is about understanding how the mouth affects the entire body – and how the rest of the body shapes what we see in the mouth.'

That conviction underpins his work. It also places him among a small but growing group of clinicians who believe dentistry's future lies not in procedures, but in personalised care built on better data. James' profile means his voice carries weight, but he is clear he is one of many pushing in this direction.

FROM SYMPTOMS TO SYSTEMS

James' starting point is simple: traditional practice models rely heavily on what patients tell you or what you can see. 'Most people still come in wanting pain fixed or a smile improved,' he says. 'But if they're exhausted, stressed, not sleeping, or living with chronic disease, that context matters. Dentistry can influence all of it.'

He is bullish about this shift – and unapologetically so. For him, dentistry has spent too long treating symptoms in isolation. The emerging science of microbiomes, inflammation, stress physiology and vitamin D pathways, he argues, gives dentistry a bigger role than it has historically claimed.

He concedes that not every dentist will agree with every detail, but the direction of travel is becoming impossible to ignore. 'Patients already expect personalised health,' he says. 'They track their sleep, their heart rate, their glucose. They're used to metrics. They want the same in dentistry.'

It is here that diagnostics become essential. They do not replace clinical judgement, but they change the conversation – often dramatically.

METRICS THAT MOTIVATE

James returns repeatedly to the power of showing patients their own data. Some want photos; others prefer a clear explanation. But for many, he says, seeing live microscopy clips of their own biofilm or receiving a clear numerical score for inflammation or demineralisation is transformative.

'People don't get excited about brushing,' he laughs. 'But they do get excited about progress. They want to see where they are now and whether they've improved.'

Phase-contrast microscopy, AI-assisted radiographs, saliva diagnostics and digital scanning all feed into this. Individually, they are useful; collectively, they create a personalised baseline – a starting point from which change becomes measurable.

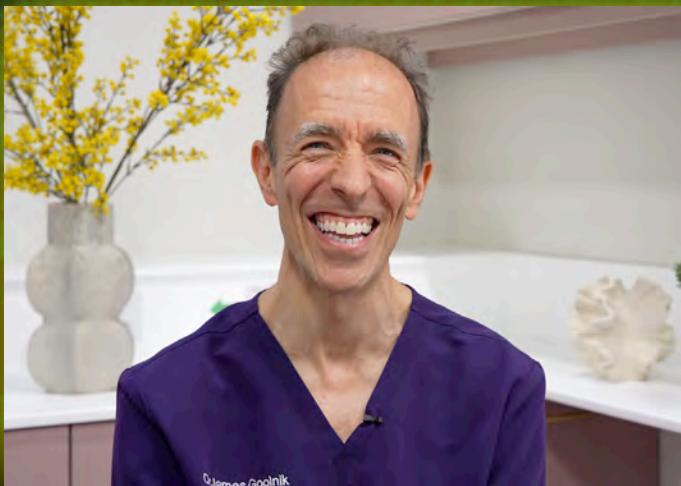
James frames this not only as good patient communication, but as essential motivation. 'If someone spits blood in the sink every day, they think it's normal. When they see it under the microscope or see a bleeding score in black and white, it stops being normal.'

The impact, he says, is tangible. Better adherence. Longer-term engagement. And a meaningful dent in the revolving door of recurring decay, chronic gingivitis and parafunction.

A PRACTICE BUILDER – NOT A GIMMICK

Critics of diagnostic-heavy practice often raise the same question: will the treatment really change? James is pragmatic here. Some tests are too expensive for the outcome they

N.O.E. 2026 *Dentistry SHOW*



influence. But when diagnostics meaningfully improve patient buy-in, refine treatment pathways or reduce uncertainty, their value becomes clear.

Salivary analysis, for instance, can help identify high-risk patients who cannot snack frequently; and AI-assisted radiographs can reveal early demineralisation that can be reversed with targeted remineralisation protocols rather than a drill. In addition, implant patients could benefit from vitamin D testing – something he insists is well supported by evidence – and HbA1c checks can help identify pre-diabetic patients who may never have connected oral symptoms with systemic disease.

James knows these views won't be universal, and he's quick to acknowledge that some tools are, in his words, 'marketing BS'. But separating the useful from the flashy is part of the journey. And, for general practice, he believes the benefits are clear: improved outcomes, stronger patient loyalty and a unique selling point in an increasingly crowded marketplace.

THE MINDSET SHIFT

Behind every example James gives lies a bigger argument: dentistry is changing because the people dentistry serves are changing.

Patients are already living in the era of personalised health – and dentistry, he believes, risks becoming the weak link if it fails to adapt. 'People come in asking about microbiome tests, creatine, sleep data, or supplementation,' he says. 'If we dismiss it outright, we sound out of touch.'

For James, this shift begins with clinicians themselves. He talks about dentists wearing wearables, monitoring their own biomarkers or exploring sleep pathways – not because it is fashionable, but because understanding your own data builds empathy and confidence. From there, it expands naturally into teams: healthier, more resilient staff; fewer absences; stronger shared purpose.

And then, inevitably, it flows outwards to patients.

'It's very hard to help someone on a health journey if you're not on one yourself,' he says. The personal and professional are intertwined – a theme that resonates strongly throughout the North of England Dentistry Show.

COLLABORATION OVER ISOLATION

One message James returns to repeatedly is that dentists do not need to become experts in everything. Instead, they need networks.

Personalised diagnostics in dentistry: common examples

1. Saliva microbiome analysis – assessing bacterial profiles linked to caries, periodontal risk or systemic inflammation
2. Phase-contrast microscopy – showing live biofilm activity to help patients visualise disease processes
3. AI-assisted radiography – highlighting early demineralisation, bone changes or caries patterns not always easily visible to the human eye
4. Digital scanning and 3D imaging – providing detailed baselines against which change can be monitored over time
5. Simple in-practice biomarker tests – such as vitamin D finger-prick tests or HbA1c checks that support treatment planning and flag wider health concerns.

A holistic practice does not pretend to be a sleep clinic, a nutrition centre or a mental health service. But it does acknowledge where oral and systemic health intersect – and builds relationships accordingly.

Sleep physicians. Osteopaths and chiropractors. Nutritionists. Functional medicine doctors. Physiotherapists. Even GPs who take an interest in metabolic health. These collaborations, he says, are not a niche curiosity but a practical necessity. They enhance patient care, drive referrals in both directions and reinforce dentistry's position within wider healthcare rather than on the fringes of it.

'We are part of the health team,' he says. 'If we see chronic inflammation, stress, sleep issues or nutritional red flags, we should be guiding patients toward answers – not just giving them a mouthguard and hoping for the best.'

A PROFESSION AT A CROSSROADS

James believes that dentistry is entering a new era. Not every practice will move at the same pace, but the fundamentals are shifting:

- Patients expect personalised care
- Diagnostics are becoming cheaper, faster and more accessible
- AI is changing both treatment planning and communication
- Evidence linking oral and systemic health continues to grow. In this context, he argues, diagnostics are not optional extras. They are the bridge between dentistry as a technical service and dentistry as an essential component of whole-body healthcare.

'This isn't the future,' he says. 'It's happening already. The only question is whether we adapt early or play catch-up.'

The North of England Dentistry Show will take place on 13 February at AO Arena in Manchester. Register for your free place at www.dentistry.co.uk/noe.

A winning year

The bottle is half-full and rising, says **Chris Barrow**. Here's how dental leaders will win in 2026

So here we are, another year is upon us and, as usual, there are those who want to suggest that the bottle is half-empty. Internal challenges being presented include:

- Patient impatience
- Clinicians who want to drop days
- Team members who lack resilience
- Disillusioned practice managers
- Recruitment, retention and remuneration
- White space
- Admin and compliance
- PMS that doesn't work properly
- Digital marketing that isn't producing enough of the right leads
- That will never work here – our community/patients/clinicians/team will not like it.

External issues also come into play, and include:

- The budget 2025
- Politics
- Access to NHS dentistry
- The cost of living
- The CMA investigation into private dentistry pricing.

Then there are those who prefer to think that the bottle is half-full – and filling. They see possibilities and opportunities in:

- Intraoral scanners: driving extreme business growth through precision and enhanced patient communication
- The digital TCO: elevating patient engagement and building trust for your 2026 practice
- Dental therapists: empowering teams to drive profitability and practice freedom
- 3D printing: reclaiming control, reducing overheads, and enhancing patient care
- Smile simulation: boosting case acceptance and exponential growth through visual transformation
- Guided dentistry: the blueprint for predictable profit, freedom, and medico-legal safety
- AI X-ray diagnosis and treatment planning: providing comprehensive insights and communication excellence
- The chairside revolution: delivering same-day restorations for an elevated patient experience

- The Open AI revolution: forging digital dominance and strategic patient acquisition
- The magical hospitality revolution: delivering unreasonable hospitality (it was American restaurateur Will Guidara who said: 'Service is what we do. Hospitality is the way we make people feel when we do that thing').

A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

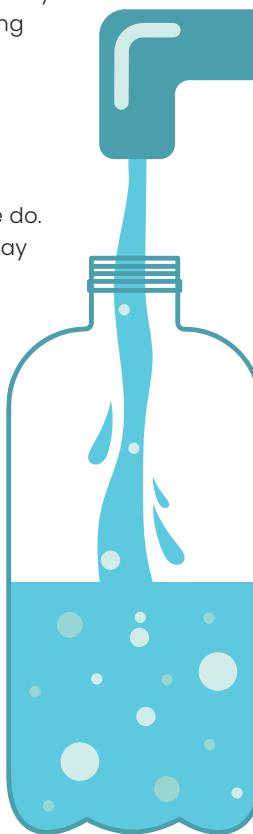
I will not shy away from addressing the challenges we encounter, just as I have consistently faced every challenge throughout my 32 years of working with dentists. Nevertheless, we proceed with our responsibilities, consistently taking all necessary measures to mitigate the risks associated with these challenges.

And then we focus our energy and enthusiasm on the opportunities.

I am going to suggest that, as 2026 opens, we have more opportunities than at any time I can remember – the combination of digital workflow and AI-driven business systems will mark 2025 in the history books as a year in which everything changed, forever.

Why? Technology and AI don't replace people; they automate routine tasks, freeing us to focus on more engaging work.

In 2026, you will have more time – use it wisely.



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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. Escrivano, 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/perio-workshop/past-workshops/perio-workshop-2014/>

Nuyu Dental & Aesthetics

Naiz Khan explains how he and Natalia Agalakova's 'yin and yang' approach to business created a new benchmark for modern dentistry within a spa-like setting

For us, Nuyu started as more than just an idea; it was the chance to create a space that reflected our values, our partnership, and the future of modern dentistry.

I've always been driven by momentum, turning ideas into action and refining them along the way. Natalia brings the perfect balance, applying her characteristic precision and foresight to every decision. Together, that combination became Nuyu Dental & Aesthetics: a place where dentistry is elevated into an experience.

SHAPING UP

We used to live on the very road where Nuyu now stands. Back then, the site was home to a Blockbuster Video store, but every time we walked past, we imagined what it might become.

The soaring, double-height space was perfect for transformation, and we added a mezzanine to keep it open and light while creating space for staff areas and our Nuyu Gym. It has also created room for further expansion, with additional surgeries and treatment rooms ready to be developed as we grow.

Today, just minutes from Cheltenham's centre with ample parking, it is a dental clinic that feels more like a private lounge. Securing the site wasn't easy. The landlord's team, used to multinational tenants, questioned me in

a panel interview. I laid out the scale of our investment, a state-of-the-art clinic that would never sit empty. By the end, they said I had sold myself well. That was the moment Nuyu became real.

Building work began in September 2024 and, after months of dust and delays, we opened on 28 May 2025. Over budget, yes, but the quality speaks for itself.

We collaborated with Alex at Decadent on planning, sourcing materials, and designing custom cabinetry, including the reception desk and coffee bar. The company also supplied and installed dental equipment, cabinetry, worktops, concierge desks, plant equipment, X-ray

systems, scanners, decontamination rooms, dental chairs and the lighting.

UPLIFTING AND NATURAL

From the Aquaveil waterfall and dandelion chandeliers to the coffee-bar concierge desk, every detail was carefully chosen to set the tone.

Patients check in on tablets, relax with warm lighting and furniture from Boconcept (finished in medical-grade, wipeable covers), and even enjoy a four-metre digital display wall showing nature scenes and treatment highlights. Dentistry feels less clinical, more uplifting, and naturally calming for anxious patients.

The same thinking shaped our surgeries, which are large and airy, helping patients feel comfortable rather than enclosed, with large screens so dentist and patient can review treatments together.

We chose Belmont Eurus chairs in ivory with folding leg rests, more like armchairs than dental units. As well as desirable aesthetics, we knew the company's reputation for durability. Our scanning suites use the latest Itero Lumina technology, with CBCT imaging and Sprintray 3D printers integrated into the workflow. AI-powered systems support radiograph analysis, helping us achieve greater precision.

Every team member has a Nuyu-issued phone and Bluetooth earpiece, using the Microsoft Teams Walkie Talkie

Step inside...

THE PRACTICE

Nuyu Dental & Aesthetics
64 Winchcombe St
Cheltenham
GL52 2ND

TELEPHONE

01242 339233

WEBSITE

www.nuyu-dental.co.uk

INSTAGRAM

@nuyu.dental.cheltenham



The ethos

At Nuyu Dental & Aesthetics, dentistry is not just about treatment; it is about how the team makes patients feel. Compassion, personalisation, and empowerment shape every interaction. With AI diagnostics, digital smile design, and a beautifully curated space, the team empowers patients to be active partners in their own health. For Nuyu Dental & Aesthetics, dentistry is a lifestyle-enhancing experience, and the team is redefining what modern care can be.



The team

DIRECTOR & LEAD IMPLANT AND COSMETIC DENTIST

Dr Natalia Agalakova

DIRECTOR & DIAMOND APEX INVISALIGN PROVIDER

Dr Naiz Khan

CLINICAL CARE COORDINATORS

Ellie Cooke, Chelsea Meats

CONCIERGE & CLINICAL CARE SUPPORT

Laura Walker, Ellen Nokes, Kiaya Moroney, Phoebe Mills

DENTAL NURSES

Bethany Adkins, Cerys Redfern, Ruby Soule, Victoria Bennett, Kasia Furze

DENTISTS

Dr Alex Part (special interest in orthodontics), Dr Shazia Parveen (general and cosmetic dentist), Dr Tinashe Nhova (cosmetic restorative dentist), Dr Jake McDonnell (general and aesthetic dentist)

DENTAL THERAPIST

Imogen Johnson

DENTAL HYGIENISTS

Rema Miah, Jocelyn Harding, Amy Hull

app to coordinate instantly and maintain a seamless patient journey.

That journey is central to everything. Instead of a front desk, patients are welcomed at the coffee bar by one of our concierge and clinical support team, all of whom are qualified dental nurses trained in radiography and digital workflows. They guide patients from scans to consultation rooms, where private conversations feel natural and unhurried.

Alongside them, our clinical care coordinators manage the more complex treatments such as implants, Invisalign, composite bonding, and advanced restorative cases, ensuring patients always feel supported through every stage.

TREATMENT OFFERING

Our services grew quickly as patients connected with our aesthetic dentistry, digital precision and welcoming environment.

We also offer appointments beyond five days a week, including Saturdays and Sundays soon, too.

As a Blue Diamond Apex Invisalign provider, I knew aligners would be the heartbeat of our first months. A six-week campaign brought nearly 200 consultations.

Natalia, meanwhile, leads our Smilefast Centre of Excellence composite bonding work and fully digital implant treatments using Straumann systems.

Our social media presence, managed by Dentapix, and our website, designed by Dentopia, gave us the platform to showcase Nuyu's difference from the start. Together, these services have made Nuyu known for both aesthetics and precision.



Looking ahead, we are adding sedation and expanding our wellness arm with the Nuyu Gym, where personal training links health and aesthetics.

Soon, patients will also meet our AI concierge, available 24/7 for bookings and information, complementing the warm conversations our team is known for.

UPDATED DENTISTRY

Ultimately, Nuyu is about raising standards. We have designed a space that feels welcoming, calm and exclusive, a place where advanced technology meets genuine care.

We want dentistry to feel visual and engaging for patients, bringing them into the process and showing them what we see, while adding accuracy at every stage.

Patients tell us Nuyu feels more like a members' club or spa than a dental practice. That is exactly the point. We wanted to challenge the outdated view of dentistry as cold and clinical. What stands here today is proof that it can be so much more.

Who was involved?

Design and build, equipment supply and installation
Decadent

Chairs and treatment centres
Belmont

Website, marketing and social media
Dentopia and Dentapix

Small is beautiful (but can be problematic!)

Lucy Walker and **Charlotte Malagoni** explain how to overcome the challenges of tight spaces when designing a bijou dental clinic

Space is at a premium in the UK – using it to its full potential to create a functional yet welcoming and visually appealing dental environment requires careful planning.

Changes in 2020 to the Use Classes system have made it easier to open a dental clinic on the high street. However, retail space is often limited in size, and designing a dental practice within a compact area comes with unique challenges.

To maximise the usability of limited square footage, strategic interior design becomes essential. Building and regulatory requirements can also significantly impact this process, demanding innovative solutions when limited options are available.

Space-saving multi-functional furniture, built-in storage solutions, and the use of light, mirrors and open-plan layouts are increasingly popular techniques. Success then lies in striking a balance between practicality and aesthetics to ensure any space feels open, efficient and inviting – despite its physical constraints.

Zoom in a little further, and clinical settings also need to find that balance. Inherently intense, with practitioners and patients in close proximity, it

is essential to create a welcoming atmosphere, as the environment can still feel overwhelming, even for the happiest of patients.

The challenge then – particularly when creating a small boutique practice – lies in finding that 'sweet spot' – aesthetic appeal and practical functionality. It is a tough call.

Interior designers Lucy Walker and Charlotte Malagoni are well-versed in the challenges of dental practice design. With numerous award-winning clinics in their portfolio, they share some tips on how they approach creating a small but perfectly designed space.

NEEDS AND MUST-HAVES

Begin by assessing the specific needs of you and your practice, including the required number of treatment rooms, the type of reception area, and the necessary administrative space. Investigate the possibility of integrating additional storage areas within existing recesses or beneath stairs, utilising both high and low ceilings to maximise valuable space.

This strategy ensures that seating and walkway areas remain unobstructed. Creative design solutions encompass multi-functional furniture, wall-mounted storage, and compact modular units. Custom-

built cabinetry can optimise storage without occupying additional floor space, while floor-to-ceiling storage can effectively leverage vertical space.

Design features such as sliding doors or foldable partitions can also facilitate flexible spaces that adapt for various uses. Consider incorporating digital solutions, like electronic patient records, to minimise the need for physical storage.

MODULAR CHAIRS AND SOFAS

When space is limited in reception areas, opt for dining chairs over accent or armchairs to accommodate more seating and enhance the flow.

Additionally, the design of the reception desk can be modified to save space. Curved edges can improve the flow around the desk, while narrowing the desk in certain areas without compromising the Designated Disability Allowance (DDA) elements is also a possibility. For instance, we often

recommend placing printers in the TCO's room to reduce the size of the reception desk, as they generally require a significant depth.

The location of the reception desk must comply with privacy requirements, too. Placing patient chairs away from the desk is critical to ensure that screens remain hidden



Lucy Walker and Charlotte Malagoni

Interior designers Lucy and Charlotte established Walker Malagoni, an interior design practice, in 2010. They design boutiques and modern spaces that people talk about – stand-out experiences that help raise the value of your dental clinic. For more information, visit walkermalagoni.com.



Curved edges can improve the flow around the desk



Wall finishes, lighting, signage and art play a vital role in corridor areas



Keep brand and tone consistent throughout the practice

while still allowing the front of desk to observe all patients entering the waiting area. This fosters a positive relationship between patients and clinicians.

BRANDING AND THEMES

From the outset of any design process, branding and signage are paramount, and any space, however small, should accommodate these principles. Accommodating this in a small clinic requires an innovative, cohesive and space-efficient approach that enhances the brand while maintaining a clean and welcoming environment. Designers should therefore collaborate closely with you to understand your brand identity, desired tone and message.

Incorporating branding elements, such as colour schemes, logos and themed décor, is essential. The interior design must reflect your values, ensuring a cohesive patient experience that reinforces the practice's identity.

Custom features such as branded reception desks or distinctive wall art enhance the overall impact of a brand.

PATIENTS AND JOURNEYS

The patient experience extends beyond the reception area, and their journey from the waiting area through corridors and into surgeries should be taken into account.

In corridor areas, wall finishes, lighting, signage, and art play a vital role due to the limited space for furniture and potential cost savings.

Altering the paint tones on ceilings and walls, particularly around doors, enhances the transition between different areas and zones. Variations in colour tones also enable compliance with regulations. For instance, there must be a significant colour difference between walls and doors, as well as between their architraves. This allows us to improve the practice's aesthetics while maintaining compliance.

This principle is also applied to stairs. We ensure adequate differentiation on the stair nosing tread, enabling us to strategically utilise colours and textures while keeping the brand and tone consistent with the rest of the practice.

BUDGETS AND CONSTRAINTS

With budgetary constraints, we prioritise the reception area as a potential focus for increased investment. We recognise that high street practices aim to attract the attention of passers-by and encourage them to enter. Reception desks act as focal points, and unique and bespoke designs catch the eye.

Lighting can enhance aesthetics both during the day and at night, especially in shorter daylight hours, and also highlight a clinic.

Fabric selections are vital. We collaborate with reputable fabric houses that offer a wide variety of patterns and colours, while ensuring compliance with commercial regulations. All design decisions should first be submitted to the CQC

to ensure adherence to all standards and approval for inclusion in a practice.

HIGH-TECH AND LOW FOOTPRINT

Integrating modern technology solutions is a priority for many practitioners. Equipment such as digital X-ray systems or patient management software must seamlessly integrate into the design, necessitating sufficient power outlets, data ports, and a layout that supports workflow without disruption. The technology should enhance the patient experience, making processes smoother and more efficient while maintaining aesthetic appeal.

One of our earliest design practices focused heavily on creating an ethos similar to that of an Apple store. It eliminated the traditional reception desk and replaced it with pods that facilitated check-in, image capture, and scanning upon arrival at the surgery. The practitioner aimed to design a forward-thinking, technology-driven and lab-style dental practice.

WORK HUBS AND RELAXATION

Don't neglect the staff areas. We strongly encourage principals to allocate a budget for this purpose to establish a designated workspace. Ensure that the staff areas provide an area for dining and relaxation, and consider incorporating work hub areas. Integrate the brand's identity into this space to achieve a balanced and reflective work and staff flow.

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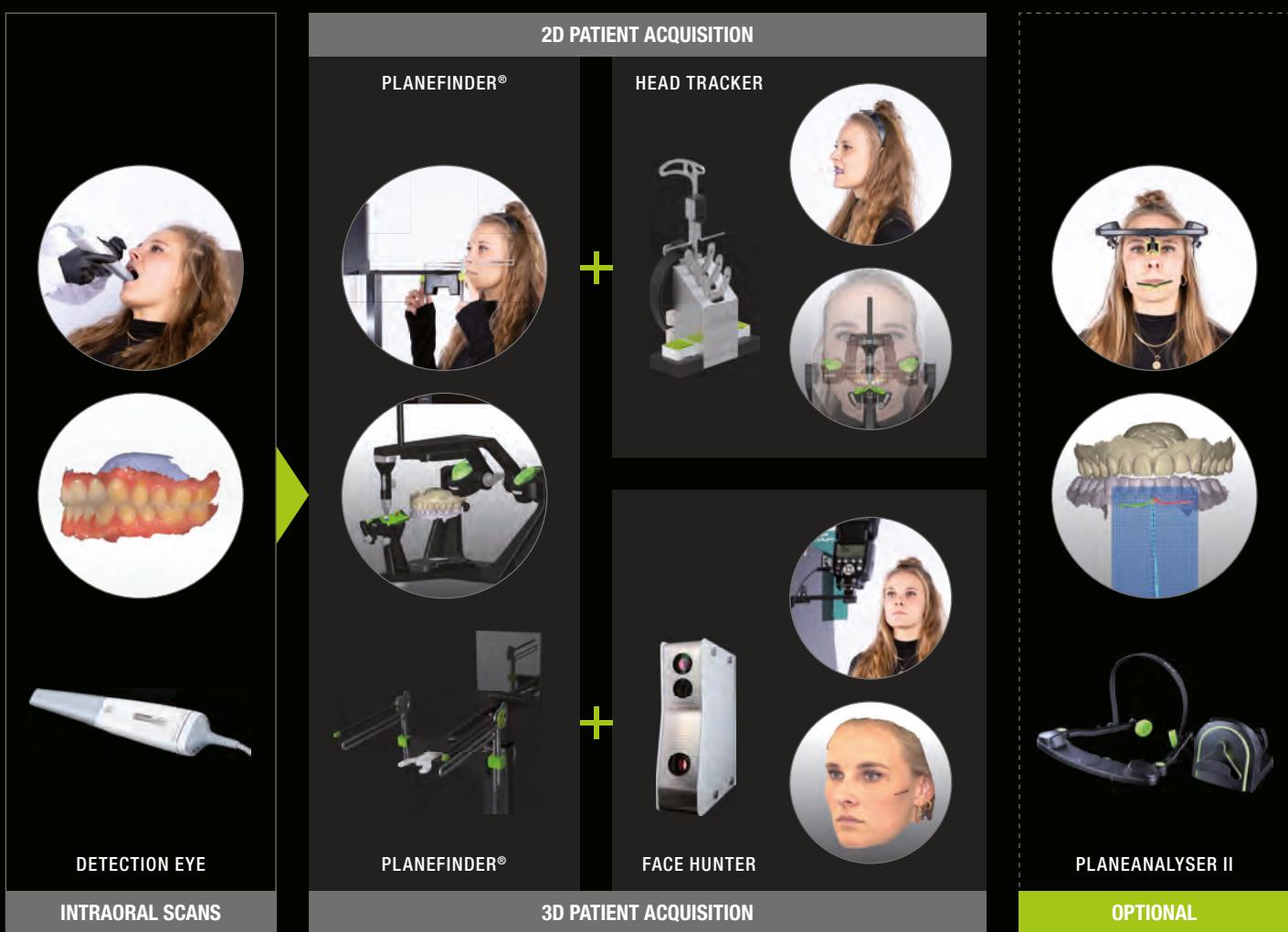
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A blueprint for success

Does having a proven business model make it easier to open a second dental practice?
Moj Dehghanpour has the inside edge

Opening a new dental clinic in an area bustling with fresh foot traffic can be a smooth process if you have prior experience.

This is especially true in cities where urban postcodes often share similar characteristics – from prestigious shopfronts and cultural amenities to demographics and socio-economic factors. Arguably, this makes it easier to tailor an approach in a new location to meet expectations and demand.

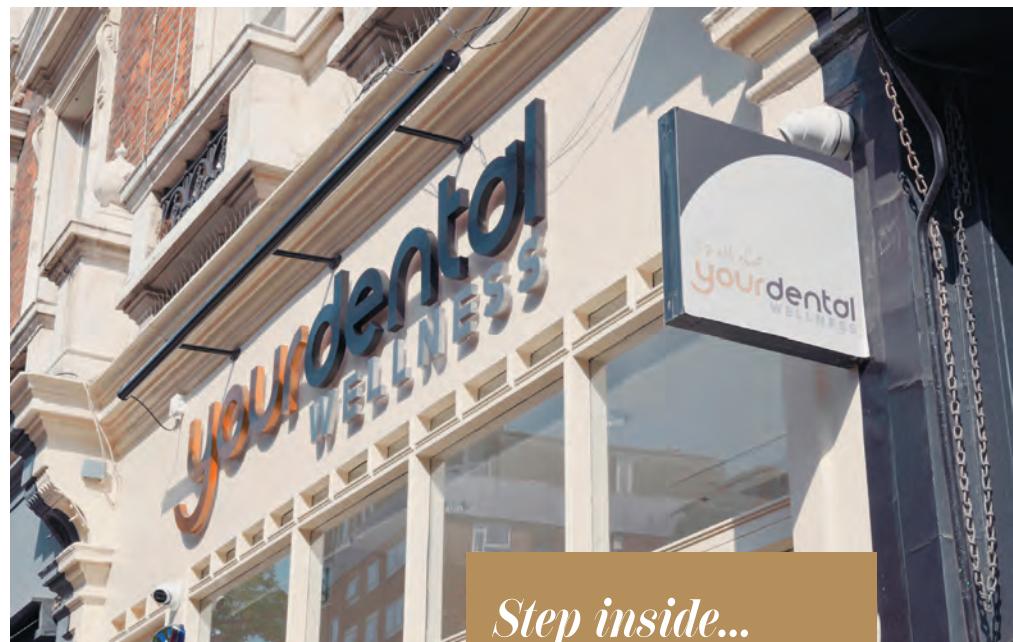
However, true success lies in the ability to both leverage the advantages and avoid pitfalls, while recognising that each pocket of potential has nuances that distinguish it from what went before.

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Mojtaba 'Moj' Dehghanpour, a Londoner whose life experiences have spanned north and west London, took on the challenge of brand expansion. Today, he manages thriving clinics in both cardinal points of the capital compass – and has navigated it well.

His first venture was in July 2023, when the Yourdental Wellness brand was launched on Upper Street, Islington, a lively thoroughfare in north London.

This vibrant, artsy neighbourhood has slowly undergone gentrification over time, and the decision to open in N1



Step inside...

THE PRACTICE

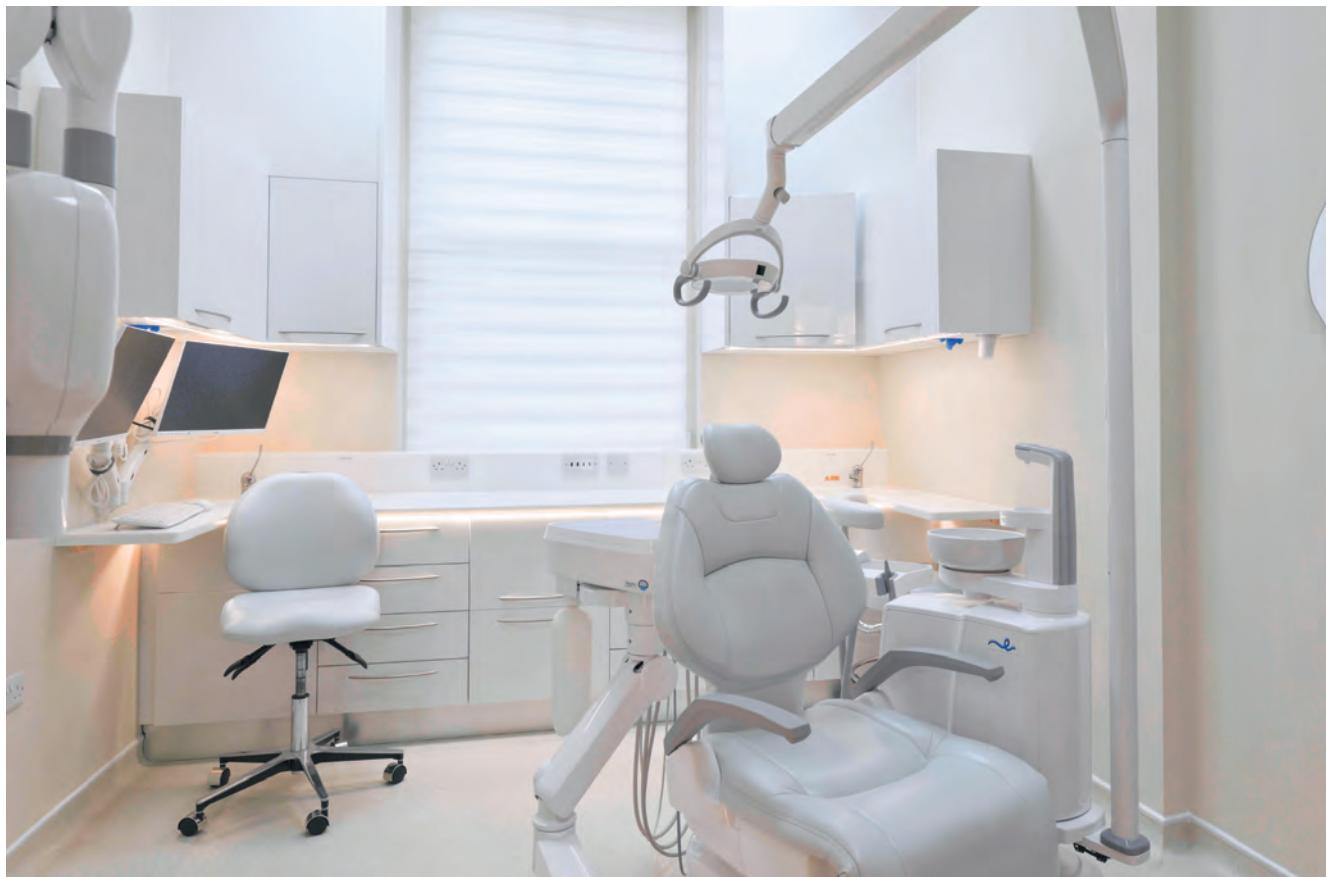
Yourdental Wellness Maida Vale
 12 Clifton Road
 London
 W9 1SS

TELEPHONE

020 7123 8497

WEBSITE

www.yourdentalwellness.co.uk



The appeal is evident in its high-end appearance but, more importantly, in the delivery of genuine, complementary treatments that attract specific clients to its doors. Dentistry, yes, but also skin and wellness treatments delivered in a unique environment.

Once confident he'd struck gold with this magic formula, Moj was ready to move forward – and westward – to Maida Vale.

BROTHERS – AND A SISTER SITE

Opening in March 2025, this second Yourdental Wellness is situated in the equally vibrant postcode of W9. Charming streets and small businesses, along with Little Venice on its doorstep, made this the perfect twin to Islington; the former optician site an ideal blank canvas for Moj and the build team to reimagine the space.

Its appearance reflects the aesthetic of its north London sister site, encompassing the look, feel, colour palette – and, of course, the premium-sounding name. Even the surrounding independent shopfronts share a similar vibe.

Moj explains: 'The Islington practice experienced enormous growth quickly. We began with only two surgeries in 2023 and we completed five surgeries by the end of last year.'

'The model operated effectively, and in terms of branding and marketing, it was successful. The plan was always to expand the brand to a second site, and Maida Vale ticked the boxes.'

'My brother (an endodontist) and I wanted to open a practice together. Maida Vale would allow me to oversee both practices and also have a partner on-site to help. That was the rationale – having the owners present on site.'

'We grew up not far from there, in St John's Wood, so we're

familiar with the area. It's a favourable location in terms of patient demographics and demand, too. The only challenge was that, although there are many residential buildings, there were few commercial units available. However, we came across the site and were fortunate enough to acquire it.'

Once again, Moj chose a high street location.

'The site was previously a premium optician. In terms of challenges, we had to strip out the unit completely. We did encounter difficulties, such as damp and other issues that are common in basement projects. It is a ground-floor and basement unit. We started with two rooms, but have since extended into a third, and there is capacity for a fourth.'

He also had to seek planning permission for the project. He explains: 'There were residential neighbours involved, so we had to find some workarounds for our ventilation systems being placed outside. And as anyone familiar with dealing with the council and planning applications knows, that's always a significant hurdle in itself. But we ticked all the boxes, and luckily, everything got approved. Logistically, it's quite close to home, meaning both sites are an easy commute – and within a short journey of each other. This allows us the flexibility to interchange resources if needed.'

OPTIMISING SPACE

As with any challenge, it is always wise to draw on the lessons learned from past ventures. And when it came to the design, Moj now had a better understanding of how to maximise space and what types of rooms or surgery sizes worked best.

'Small tweaks in details such as chair positioning, cabinetry layout, and the location of the patient restroom within the practice, along with other considerations, made a significant difference.'

'We also knew, for example, that certain chairs are effective, which is why we have a mix of Belmont treatment centres – some with folding leg-rests (the Eurus S6) to help make the rooms feel more spacious and less cluttered, and the Eurus S8s, which are more traditional full-length chairs.'

'We gained experience in Islington by determining which chair suits particular surgery sizes, and this was helpful. They are highly comfortable, especially when enhanced by the ultra-soft upholstery, and look sleek and stylish.'

As with his Islington practice, and common to many London properties, space comes at a premium, so every inch counted.

'It's about finding ways to optimise the use of that space, maximise functionality, while also ensuring practicality and staff- and patient-friendliness,' Moj says.

'In line with our existing branding and design, we aimed to maintain a sleek, contemporary look, incorporating a non-clinical, spa-like communal area, while keeping the clinical spaces patient-friendly yet professional.'

Warm-coloured wooden doors and feature mirrors separate the treatment rooms. TVs, scented diffusers and other amenities make the space more inviting and less conventional.

Moj says: 'Much of what we have created at Yourdental Wellness Maida Vale was thoughtfully considered during the design of the Islington practice, making it a seamless experience. However, in addition to learning what worked, we were also in a better position to understand what didn't and how it could be improved.'

'The project also presented its own set of challenges, but we were able to address them effectively. You never know what to expect with new builds – so hope for the best and prepare for the worst.'



Meet Moj and Morteza

Moj Dehghampour has a special interest in restorative and cosmetic dentistry. He takes referrals for tooth wear and full-mouth rehabilitations. Moj has credentials from all three UK royal colleges, and more than 13 years of experience in dental implants.

Morteza Dehghampour is a specialist endodontist. He takes referrals for complex root canal treatment procedures, diagnosis of dental pain, dental trauma injuries, and endodontic surgery. Morteza teaches endodontics to junior dentists across the UK.

MOVING WITH THE TIMES

Looking ahead, plans are underway to develop the brand and expand services across London, but Moj is keeping this to himself for now. One thing he does understand, however, is the need to evolve.

'The dental market is changing, and patients are now paying attention to what their money delivers, particularly the overall patient journey. They value their experience not only during treatment but from the very first contact, whether it's a phone call or an email. We observe this trend across various sectors, including hospitality, hotels, spas, and retail, with a focus on delivering excellent service and customer experiences.'

'As a dental professional and business owner, I am dedicated to optimising this for everyone who walks through our doors. It fosters trust and confidence in the care they receive.'

'When patients see a clean, modern practice equipped with cutting-edge technology, comfortable chairs, and reliable equipment, it reassures them. Therefore, it is vital to excel, not just clinically, which remains paramount, but also in the environment where treatment takes place.'

Embracing the digital transformation

Investing in connected dentistry today sets practices up for success in the future, creating a framework that's ready for both dentists and patients in our increasingly digital landscape, says **John Dargue**

The dental industry is going through an exciting digital transformation. We're seeing everything from improved workflows and better diagnostics to enhanced communication with patients and smarter equipment monitoring.

Technology is truly changing the way modern dental practice's function. At the heart of this change is connected dentistry, where digital tools, treatment equipment and data come together to create practices that are not only smarter but also more efficient and focused on patient care.

These connected systems can help streamline procedures, minimise downtime and elevate the quality of patient care, all while supporting the long-term growth and scalability of a practice.

WHY CONNECTIVITY MATTERS

In the past, dental practices have mostly depended on digital tools for keeping records, imaging and planning treatments. But when it comes to actual procedures, the equipment often works in isolation. Dental chairs, delivery systems and diagnostic devices usually don't 'talk' to each other, which can hold back workflow efficiency and data integration.

That's where connected dental equipment comes in. These modern

systems offer real-time insights into how everything is performing, automatically notify staff when maintenance is needed, and make it easy to update software or integrate new devices without having to replace major hardware. This creates a proactive environment that streamlines management, especially in busy practices or those with multiple locations.

Treatment rooms are the beating heart of any dental practice, and bringing digital technology into this space can make a huge difference. Today's advanced delivery systems and chairs come equipped with touchscreen control panels, serving as central hubs that show handpiece settings, instrument usage, and procedural preferences in real-time.

For instance, when a dental professional uses a connected scaler or handpiece on an A-dec 500 Pro package, they can instantly check RPM, torque and intensity settings. They can also save and quickly recall presets for specific procedures or individual dentists, which cuts down on chairside set-up time and enhances workflow consistency. The end result is a smoother, more efficient experience for patients and less strain on the dental team.

FUTURE-PROOFING PRACTICES

One of the standout advantages of connected systems is their ability to scale. Open software platforms make it easy for practices to add

new devices like cameras, electric motors, and 3D scanners as needed. This concept of 'future-proofing' means that your equipment stays relevant as technology advances, which helps avoid expensive replacements and keeps practices ahead of the curve.

Remote monitoring features take efficiency to the next level. With cloud-connected platforms, practice managers and service providers can keep an eye on equipment from a distance, track usage trends, get early alerts about potential problems, and ensure consistent performance across various locations.

By centralising control, practices can run operations more smoothly, reduce disruptions, and uphold high standards of care.

BENEFITS AND PERKS

Connected dental systems provide data-driven maintenance solutions that make life easier for practice managers. With built-in diagnostics, automated checklists and service alerts, issues can be tackled proactively instead of waiting for them to become problems. Often, software updates can be done remotely, bringing new features, better security and improved compatibility with other devices, all without interrupting patient care.

This data-centric approach not only boosts operational efficiency but also extends the lifespan of equipment, safeguarding the practice's investment and allowing



John Dargue

John entered the dental industry in 2011, progressing through sales roles in clinical workflows, account management, and clinical affairs before joining A-dec in 2021.

BY ADOPTING DIGITAL TOOLS AND INTERCONNECTED SYSTEMS, PRACTICES CAN FOSTER SMARTER, MORE FLEXIBLE ENVIRONMENTS THAT PROMOTE BOTH PRACTICE EXCELLENCE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



the team to concentrate on patient care instead of dealing with tech troubles.

The perks of connected dentistry extend beyond just the dental team; patients reap the rewards too. With connected systems, procedures become quicker and more precise, which means less time spent in the chair and shorter wait times. Dentists gain confidence from real-time displays of instrument settings, while integrated digital tools help patients grasp their treatment plans and track their progress.

For patients, this blend of efficiency, comfort and clear communication leads to a more positive and reassuring experience, fostering long-term loyalty and trust in their dental practice.

GETTING STARTED

Making the shift to a connected practice doesn't have to feel daunting. The first step is to evaluate the digital capabilities of your current equipment and see if any upgrades or replacements are needed. It's also important to look at software roadmaps to ensure your equipment can adapt to future innovations and work well with other digital systems.

Support and service play a vital role too. Platforms that offer remote diagnostics, automatic alerts, and cloud-based monitoring can help staff manage technology smoothly without any hiccups. Practices should also think about the size

and layout of their practice to figure out how much visibility and control they need across different rooms or locations.

While there are many manufacturers providing connected systems, some solutions, like the A-dec 500 Pro package paired with the A-dec+ platform, illustrate how connectivity can be effectively integrated into a real-world dental practice. Tools like these combine ergonomic design, digital integration and real-time diagnostics, showcasing the tangible benefits that connected dentistry can offer.

THE CONNECTED FUTURE OF DENTISTRY

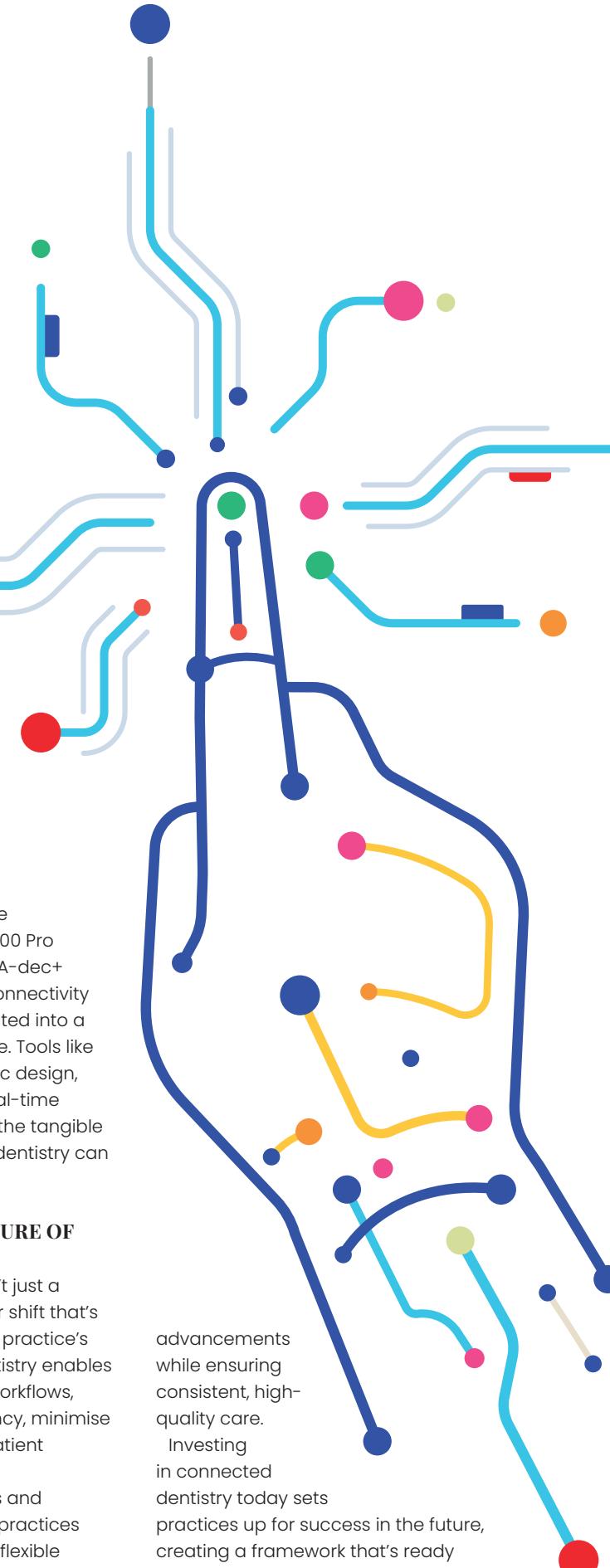
Digital transformation isn't just a passing trend; it's a major shift that's changing the way dental practice's function. Connected dentistry enables practices to streamline workflows, boost operational efficiency, minimise downtime and elevate patient experiences.

By adopting digital tools and interconnected systems, practices can foster smarter, more flexible environments that promote both practice excellence and sustainable growth. Whether it's upgrading a single surgery room or overseeing multiple locations, connectivity gives dental teams the edge they need to keep pace with technological

advancements while ensuring consistent, high-quality care.

Investing in connected dentistry today sets practices up for success in the future, creating a framework that's ready for both dentists and patients in our increasingly digital landscape.

For advice on how to integrate connected solutions into the practice, visit unitedkingdom.a-dec.com/find-a-dealer.



Habit change that sticks

Rana Al-Falaki explains how to nail your new year resolutions with a sustainable approach to habit formation

January arrives with the same promise every year: 'This time I'll do things differently.' Gyms fill up, courses get booked, planners get purchased, yet despite the good intentions, many people abandon their new year habits before the end of January. Dentistry is no exception. In fact, the nature of the profession makes sustainable change even harder.

Research consistently shows that most people struggle to sustain new habits. Around 80% of new year resolutions fail by mid-February, with 43% being abandoned before the end of January. Only 9% of people actually stick to their resolutions, largely because motivation alone isn't enough.

It takes, on average, 66 days to form a new habit, which means the short-lived January energy rarely carries people far enough. Add in the fact that the biggest barrier reported is simply 'not having time' (45%), and it's clear why dental professionals, whose days are already compressed and mentally demanding, find sustainable habit change so challenging.

Dentists work in a world of micro-decisions, time pressure and emotional load.

Good habits require consistency, but dentistry often requires endurance.

Add in working across multiple surgeries, unpredictable scheduling, continuous regulatory updates, running late or needing to stay late to write up notes and referrals, and the drive to keep patients happy – it's no wonder so many professionals struggle to stick to habits that support wellbeing and performance.

What's more, most people approach habits the wrong way. We try to change behaviour without changing the beliefs, identity and environment that drive that behaviour. We set goals but not systems around it to secure success.

That's exactly why I created the 'NAIL-IT GREAT SCORER' model to make habit formation sustainable, identity-driven, and aligned with optimal performance.

THE ASSOCIATE WHO COULDN'T STOP WORKING

Let's take the example of Dr A, a highly capable associate dentist working five days a week but dreaming of cutting down to four while earning the same amount.

She wanted more time for courses, space for personal development, proper self-care, and ultimately, better balance and more fun.

The problem? Even on her day off, she was 'working'. Dealing with emails, planning treatment, doing admin, catching up on webinars... and feeling guilty whenever she wasn't working.

Like many dentists, she had the deep belief that success required constant doing. She wore busyness like a badge of honour. The habit wasn't just behavioural – it was psychological and identity-based.

When she started working with the NAIL-IT team, she said: 'If I slow down, I won't earn money for the lifestyle I want. I don't have time to incorporate healthy habits.'

We started by identifying the habitual patterns that were draining her: overworking, overcommitting, perfectionism, people-pleasing, and confusing productivity with presence.

She didn't need another goal. She needed a system that helped her live differently, not just work differently.

We introduced her to the GREAT SCORER system. It is a model for building habits that last. Not January habits. Not 'when things calm down' habits. But identity-driven habits that change who you are, not just what you do.

THE GREAT SCORER MODEL

Sustainable performance is simply the result of sustainable habits, and sustainable habits are the result of GREAT SCORER...

Goals

Dentists often set big goals but few micro-actions. We broke Dr A's goals into small, achievable habits:

- 10 minutes of self-reflection weekly
- One blocked-out admin session
- One evening a week ringfenced for study.

These small steps reduced resistance and made momentum inevitable.

Regular use

Consistency beats intensity. We built rhythm into Dr A's week, scheduling habits into existing time slots so they became predictable and familiar.



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.nailitdentistry.com for more details.



Environment

Dr A's environment was sabotaging her. Notifications on, laptop always visible, easy access to patient messaging, a head full of limiting beliefs.

We redesigned both her physical and mental environment to support her new identity, including challenging the belief that being constantly available equals being a good dentist.

Avatar

Dr A identified and articulated the exact version of herself she wanted to become – an intentional, balanced, high-performing dentist. Once she named and described in detail that avatar, she began making decisions as that person.

Triggers

We built habit stacking into her routine:

- After logging into her diary, review boundaries
- After finishing a treatment, one deep breath
- When feeling overwhelmed, pause and take a 30-second reset.

The more automatic the trigger, the more automatic the habit.

Support

We created an accountability structure: fortnightly check-ins, written commitment to her goals, and a supportive peer community.

Research shows social accountability increases success rates by up to 95%.

Celebrate

Dentists rarely celebrate themselves. We embedded micro-celebrations

IT TAKES, ON AVERAGE, 66 DAYS TO FORM A NEW HABIT

and weekly wins to reinforce every time Dr A incorporated the habit.

Outlast

We normalised setbacks and built resilience strategies, so Dr A stayed the course when old habits tried to return. If she lapsed, she used her resilience to restart and overcome the self-talk that told her to give up.

Reflect

Each month, Dr A evaluated what was working and what wasn't and made tiny shifts to consolidate on the changes she was making.

Expectation

We prepared Dr A for the reality that evolving habits often mean evolving boundaries and relationships. She learnt to communicate these confidently so that people came along with her on her journey and accepted that her availability would change and also to be supportive of her.

Repeat

Once Dr A's first set of habits became truly effortless, we moved on to the next layer of growth.

THE OUTCOME

Within weeks, Dr A started experiencing shifts:

- She protected her non-clinical day instead of squeezing work into it
- She restructured her workload to match her energy
- She created boundaries with patients and her practice
- She made self-care non-negotiable
- She enrolled in personal development as well as clinical courses
- She increased her productivity without increasing her hours. She confidently reduced her clinical days while maintaining her income because she was finally operating as the person she wanted to become, not the person she'd been conditioned to be.

She changed the habit of being herself by becoming a 'great scorer'.

JANUARY TAKEAWAY

Habits don't fail because people lack discipline. They fail because people lack systems.

If you want 2026 to feel different, use the GREAT SCORER system:

- Choose identity-led habits
- Make them small to start
- Build them into your environment
- Trigger them intentionally
- Celebrate them consistently
- Outlast the discomfort.

When you become a 'great scorer', you don't just stick to your plans, you become the person who thrives because of them.

Your 2026 business plan

Mark Topley explains why your team is the key to hitting your targets

As 2026 rolls in, you might get the sense that this year is going to feel a bit different.

Not because of one big dramatic change, but because a few long-brewing shifts are finally landing at the same time.

The younger end of the workforce is becoming a much bigger presence. Expectations around clarity, development and values are rising. And with living wage and minimum wage increases, the earliest stages of your employee life cycle now matter more than ever. Put all of that together, and it becomes clear that your team – and the culture they work in every day – will make or break your targets this year.

In short, the team you build, the way you lead, and the culture you create will determine whether you hit your targets or miss them.

You can have the best equipment, the sharpest branding, the slickest website, and the smartest marketing funnel. You can negotiate good financial control, restructure your pricing, automate processes, and improve efficiency. All of those levers matter. But none of them will deliver what you want if the people using them are disengaged, inconsistent, or pulling in different directions.



Mark Topley

Mark is a leadership and culture consultant specialising in the dental sector. For more than a decade he has helped practice owners, managers and their teams build workplaces where people thrive and performance follows. For more, visit great-boss.com.

Culture is no longer a soft, nice-to-have. It is the deciding factor. It is the one thing that will either unlock the benefits of everything else you invest in, or quietly undermine them.

This article reveals the three reasons why your team is the key to hitting your targets in 2026.

1. ENGAGEMENT DETERMINES PERFORMANCE

The latest Gallup figures make uncomfortable reading. Around 66% of employees are disengaged. They turn up, they do the minimum, and they rarely go beyond the basics. A further 21 to 22% are actively disengaged. This group works against your goals. They drain energy, disrupt momentum, and take up a huge amount of leadership bandwidth. That leaves only 13% of people in the 'engaged' category – those who genuinely contribute and move the practice forward.

When you look at the numbers, it becomes clear that the performance gap facing most dental practices in 2026 isn't about capability or tools. It's about energy, focus and ownership.

A disengaged team will not deliver the experience, consistency or attention to detail required to



IF THE PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF YOUR PRACTICE DON'T FEEL CONNECTED TO THE WORK OR THE MISSION, THE REST OF YOUR BUSINESS PLAN IS LITTLE MORE THAN HOPE



2. CULTURE MULTIPLIES (OR CANCELS OUT) EVERY INVESTMENT YOU MAKE

Most practice owners enter the new year with a long list of tactical improvements. New chairs, new scanners, new software, new marketing campaigns. These are sensible investments. But without the right culture behind them, the uplift is small and short-lived.

Culture is the multiplier. If you have a team that works well together, trusts each other, communicates, and takes ownership, every pound you spend on equipment or marketing delivers a far higher return. If your team is divided, reactive or inconsistent, those same investments won't create the result you're looking for.

Culture shows up in tiny behaviours: the handover between dental nurses, the way reception handles pressure, how clinicians support each other, how leaders speak about challenges, and how people respond when something goes wrong. These small moments shape the patient experience and either lift or limit your revenue, retention and reputation.

This is why 2026 demands a different approach. You can no longer rely on tools to compensate for cultural weakness. Your culture must carry the weight.

3. THE LAW OF THIRDS: FOCUS ON THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO SHIFT THE WHOLE PRACTICE

Patrick Lencioni's law of thirds is one of the most reliable lenses for understanding team performance. In every team, 20% are engaged and positive, 60% are in the middle and waiting to be influenced, and 20% are disengaged or frustrated.

Most leaders make the same mistake. They spend their time trying to fix the lowest 20%. They chase

poor behaviour, patch over gaps, smooth conflict, and work to prevent disruption. It feels sensible, but it has a dangerous side effect: attention flows to the wrong places.

When you focus on the bottom group, the middle group sees that poor behaviour gets more time than good behaviour. They drift downwards. Your best people feel ignored or undervalued. They drift outwards. Before long, your culture tilts in exactly the direction you were trying to avoid.

The better strategy is to focus on the top.

When you lift, support, coach and develop your best people, they set the tone. They become the standard-bearers. They influence the middle group, who naturally move upwards because they see that contribution and positivity are noticed and rewarded. Meanwhile, those in the bottom 20% begin to feel out of step. Many will improve. Some will leave. Either outcome creates forward movement.

In 2026, when wages are rising and expectations are shifting, you cannot afford to build your leadership approach around the lowest common denominator. The practices that hit their targets will be the ones where leaders place their best energy on their best people.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

If 2025 was the year of adapting, 2026 is the year of consolidation and momentum. The landscape is changing. So is your workforce. The next 12 months will reward practices that take culture seriously, invest in leadership and create environments where people want to do their best work.

Your equipment will help. Your systems will help. Your brand and marketing will help. But the biggest gains will come from the people who greet your patients, prepare your surgeries, deliver your treatment plans, support your clinicians, and carry your reputation every day.

Your team is your strategy. Your culture is your competitive edge. And if you build your 2026 plan with those truths at the centre, you will give yourself the best chance of meeting your targets – and exceeding them.

win in a competitive market. As the younger workforce becomes more established, this gap will widen further. Younger employees expect meaning, connection and clarity. If they don't find it, they switch off quickly.

Engagement is not about making work fun or offering treats. It's about aligning people to a clear purpose, setting standards, giving feedback, and building strong relationships.

If the people at the heart of your practice don't feel connected to the work or the mission, the rest of your business plan is little more than hope.

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A double-headed beast

Zoe Close discusses how the differing roles of leaders and managers support each other

To run a successful practice, there needs to be both competent leadership and good management. Many people make the mistake of believing that they are one and the same. However, this is not the case.

Having worked in dentistry for more than 40 years now, I have been fortunate to see some great leaders and some brilliant managers. What I have come to realise is that the roles of leader and manager do not necessarily need to be fulfilled by the same person. In fact, often, it's better that they're not.

Despite the fact that both roles can be seen as directing a team, their functions are different. Leaving the responsibility for both of these roles to one person can end up being a compromise, resulting in neither of them being fulfilled well.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

So, what is the difference between a leader and a manager? In a dental practice, the leader is usually (but not always) the principal dentist or practice owner. They are the people who have the vision for the practice. It's their role to communicate this to team members and to inspire them to get behind it. The leader's role is to engage the team and ensure each member buys into the vision so that it becomes a shared goal.

Leading is not about getting involved in the day-to-day running of the practice. It's about ensuring the team understands the direction and goals of the practice. For example, if the vision is to offer the best customer experience in the area, then it's up to the leader to ensure everyone understands that.

However, just telling the team that is your aim is not enough. Team members

need to understand the reasons why you believe this is the best way of doing things. They need to be made aware of how this will be of benefit to the business and to patients.

You then need to outline how each team member can play a role in making this vision a reality. When people understand why they are doing something, they are more likely to get behind it and show commitment.

DAY-TO-DAY OVERSIGHT

While the leader needs the overarching vision, it's the manager who supervises the day-to-day tasks and activities that help to fulfil the vision.

However, a manager who has the support of a leader with a strong vision will have a much easier life than one who does not!

Often, the most successful leader/manager relationships are ones where the two complement each other. The leader communicates clearly what their vision is so that the manager can take this vision and translate it into the steps that need to be taken to achieve it. They will then identify the tasks involved and ensure that the right person is allocated to carry them out. They will also have responsibility for monitoring progress and ensuring any corrective measures are implemented if needed.

So, if the vision is to offer patients the best experience in the area, the manager will review the patient journey to look for aspects that may need improvement. This could include looking at inbound calls – are there enough staff to cover busy periods? Does the greeting call handlers use need to be changed? Is the phone system adequate for the practice's needs? As the patient journey often begins online, they may also check the website to ensure it reflects the practice's values.

In addition, changes to the reception and waiting areas may be needed

to ensure patients receive a warm welcome and are comfortable before they go into the dental surgery.

Whatever needs amending, they will be responsible for determining their order of priority and who should carry them out.

However, a really great manager gives their team the opportunity to have an input. As the people 'on the ground', team members have valuable insight about how things can be improved.

By including team members in discussions, as well as getting some great suggestions, they will feel more involved and committed to implementing any changes.

It's worth noting that there can be team members other than the owner who display leadership qualities. Recognising this and giving them some responsibilities can be a terrific boon to the practice and make the manager's life much easier. It's also likely to result in happier, more fulfilled staff members.

SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT

Although there are similarities between leaders and managers, they are fundamentally different. Both require clear communication to articulate what they need from the team, but they work differently with them.

To use an analogy: a leader provides the ultimate destination the practice wants to reach, while the manager plans the route and ensures the vehicle is roadworthy.

The two roles may have different functions, but it would be difficult for one to perform without the support of the other. Recognising this can be the foundation of a great working relationship in any dental practice.



Zoe Close

Zoe is head of sales at Practice Plan. She has more than 40 years' experience in the dental sector.

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Private Dentistry Awards 2025: winners

Announcing the 2025 Private Dentistry Awards winners

On Friday 21 November 2025, the private dental sector came together for the Private Dentistry Awards to celebrate another year of outstanding performance and patient care.

Held at the JW Marriott Grosvenor House Hotel on London's prestigious Park Lane, almost a thousand guests revelled in the luxury of the five-star venue.

The 2025 Private Dentistry Awards received its largest ever number of submissions – with practices and individuals all putting themselves forward for consideration.

This made the judging panel's job the hardest to date, scrutinising every entry, yet the judges commended this year's entrants for the inspiringly high quality of their submissions. Without the considerable and invaluable contribution, not to mention selfless efforts and conscientious scrutiny, of the judging panel, the Private Dentistry Awards would simply not be possible.

Of course, this is also true of the commercial partners – without the generous support of committed and visionary sponsors we would not be able to hold such a grand event at a venue as luxurious as JW Marriott Grosvenor House Hotel.

Congratulations to all the winners, highly commended and shortlisted practices, websites and individuals of the Private Dentistry Awards 2025. Simply to be selected represents a magnificent achievement, which helps set you apart from the competition.

Presenting the exceptional individuals and teams who took home an award!

PRIVATE DENTISTRY AWARDS 2025

WINNERS

PRACTICE PRINCIPAL

London

Winner: Sulaman Anwar, Serio Dental
Highly commended: Harman Kler, Miswak Dental

South East

Winner: Sam Jethwa, Bespoke Smile
Highly commended: Kunal Patel, Love Teeth Dental

South West and Wales

Winner: Chloe Harrington-Taylor, Hereford Dental Implant Clinic
Highly commended: Vivek Giddani, Abbey Mead Dental & Implant Clinic

Midlands

Winner: Dan Bagga, Aspire Smiles
Highly commended: Chetan Mathias, The Dental Place Warwick

North

Winner: Reza Dilmah, Dr Rez Dental
Highly commended: Wajihah Basir, Trinity House Dental Care

RECEPTIONIST

North

Winner: Kate Ratcliffe
Highly commended: Faye Vaughan

South

Winner: Catarina Pita
Highly commended: Shauna Rebecca Church

PRACTICE MANAGER

North

Winner: Jennifer Jones
Highly commended: Vicki Beacher

South

Winner: Emma Ayres
Highly commended: Alex McWhirter

London

Winner: Gilette Raffaut
Highly commended: Zohra Doust

Midlands

Winner: David Drew
Highly commended: Natalie Doughty
Highly commended: Christopher Rogers

DENTAL HYGIENIST

North

Winner: Jacqui Armstrong

South

Winner: Jocelyn Harding

London

Winner: Asmeen Hossenboccus

DENTAL THERAPIST

North

Winner: Holly Hubery

South

Winner: Abbas Ali Jagani
Highly commended: Zuzanna Sadura

London

Winner: Robbie Stewart

DENTAL NURSE

North

Winner: Christopher Bustard
Highly commended: Emma Powell

South

Winner: Alex Baker
Highly commended: Hayley Roberts

London

Winner: Rebecca Silver
Highly commended: Leah Omosule

Midlands

Winner: Gemma Price
Highly commended: Leanne Andrews

DENTAL TECHNICIAN

Winner: Anna Veli
Highly commended: Deepa Bharakhda

CLINICAL DENTAL TECHNICIAN

Winner: Spencer Greening
Highly commended: Steve Morris

NEW PRACTICE

North

Winner: Dream Smiles Dental
Winner: Modern Arts Dental
Highly commended: Lume Dental
Highly commended: The Dental Barns

South West and Wales

Winner: South Wales Specialist Oral Surgery and Dental Implant Centre

London

Winner: One Dental
Highly commended: Yourdental Wellness

CHARITY/COMMUNITY PROJECT

North

Winner: The Magic Dentist
Highly commended: Dream Smiles Dental

South

Winner: Sakina Syed
Highly commended: Angus Pringle

WEBSITE OF THE YEAR

London
Winner: Envy Smile
Highly commended: Serio Dental

South East

Winner: Floss & Smile
Highly commended: Kreate Dental

South West and Wales

Winner: Thornhill Dental Centre
Highly commended: Myodental

Midlands

Winner: Signature Orthodontics
Highly commended: Halesowen Dental

North

Winner: Dr Rez Dental
Highly commended: Dental Icon

PRACTICE BRAND AND DESIGN

North

Winner: Dream Smiles Dental
Highly commended: Crafted Dental

South

Winner: Love Teeth Dental

London

Winner: Siha Dental Facial
Highly commended: Aura Dental London

Midlands

Winner: The Dental Barns
Highly commended: Clear Smiles

CHILD FRIENDLY PRACTICE

Winner: Toothbeary
Highly commended: Love Teeth Dental Kids, Worcester Park

DIGITAL PRACTICE

North

Winner: The Dental Barns
Highly commended: Dr Rez Dental
Highly commended: The Dental Place Warwick

South

Winner: Woodborough House Dental Practice

TREATMENT OF NERVOUS PATIENTS

London

Winner: Devisha Patel
Highly commended: Battersea Park Dental

South East

Winner: Graystone Referral Centre
Highly commended: David Neal Dental Eastbourne

South West and Wales

Winner: Fusion Dentistry
Highly commended: Cheltenham Spa Dental

Midlands

Winner: Shiraz Endodontic Practice
Highly commended: Avenue Dental

North

Winner: Taylored Dental Care
Highly commended: Auckland Cosmetic Dental Clinic
Highly commended: Dr Rez Dental
Highly commended: The Waterside Dental Clinic

MOST IMPROVED PRACTICE

London

Winner: Chelsea Dental Clinic
Highly commended: Balham Smile Clinic
Highly commended: Serio Dental

South East

Winner: Dalmeny House Dental
Highly commended: Ascot Dental Suite

South West and Wales

Winner: Dartmoor Dental
Highly commended: Kaa Dentals

North

Winner: Bright Orthodontics Liverpool

Scotland and Northern Ireland

Winner: Aberdeen Orthodontics in collaboration with The Invisible Orthodontists
Highly commended: Castlebawn Dental Bangor
Highly commended: The Hollies Dental Practice

YOUNG DENTIST

London

Winner: Hartej Matharu
Highly commended: Simmi Daryani
Highly commended: Wiktor Pietraszewski

South East

Winner: Kiran Shankla
Highly commended: Shivam Divani

South West and Wales

Winner: Riaz Sharif
Highly commended: Stephanie Dodds

North East

Winner: Salman Siddiqi
Highly commended: Hisham Saqib

North West

Winner: Stewart McLean

Midlands

Winner: Nida Kamal

Highly commended: Nayan Patel

Scotland and Northern Ireland

Winner: Gary O'Neill

Highly commended: Peter O'Keefe

TEAM OF THE YEAR

South East

Winner: Hydean Dental Practice

Highly commended: MK Smiles, a part of the Kana Health Group

Highly commended: Woodborough House Dental Practice

South West and Wales

Winner: Inspired Dental Care Exeter

Highly commended: Evolve Dentistry

Midlands

Winner: Helix House Orthodontics

Highly commended: Clear Smiles

London

Winner: Battersea Park Dental

Highly commended: Platinum Dental Care

North

Winner: Trinity House Dental Care

Highly commended: Dr Rez Dental

Highly commended: Taylored Dental Care

Scotland

Winner: Ohh! Oral Health Hygienist

Highly commended: The Gentle Touch

REFERRAL PRACTICE

North

Winner: Rock Dental

South

Winner: Graystone Referral Centre

London

Winner: Ten Dental Clapham

Highly commended: The Cosmetic Dental Gallery

PATIENT CARE

London

Winner: Siha Dental | Facial

Highly commended: Platinum Dental Care

South East

Winner: Orchard Orthodontics

Highly commended: College Street Dental Centre

South West and Wales

Winner: Evolve Dentistry

Highly commended: Dentistry on the Grove

Scotland and Northern Ireland

Winner: The Gentle Touch

Highly commended: Dentistry on the Square

North

Winner: Bright Orthodontics

Highly commended: Smile Stylist Dental Clinics

Midlands

Winner: Rock Dental

Highly commended: The Dental Barns

PRACTICE OF THE YEAR

Midlands

Winner: The Dental Place Warwick

Highly commended: Teeth & Face

North

Winner: Dream Smiles Dental

Highly commended: Trinity House Dental Care

Scotland and Northern Ireland

Winner: The Gentle Touch

London

Winner: Serio Dental

Highly commended: Siha Dental | Facial

South East

Winner: Hydean Dental Practice

Highly commended: Smile HQ

South West and Wales

Winner: Dentistry on the Grove

Highly commended: Evolve Dentistry

PRACTICE OF THE YEAR

Winner: Dream Smiles Dental



Babies and business plans

What parenthood taught **David Drew** and **Keely Thorne** about family life and sustainable clinic success

Words: Julie Bissett

David Drew and Keely Thorne are co-owners of The Dental Barns, a dental clinic they see as a 'celebratory destination' tucked within a private courtyard alongside other wellness and lifestyle businesses, situated next to an exclusive wedding venue. They signed the lease on the business just a few days before discovering they were expecting Delilah, their second daughter. Their first, Evelyn, was just 15 months old when Delilah made her entrance.

The couple's approach blends family commitments with strategic business planning, ensuring they meet the needs of their two young daughters while running a successful practice.

David recalls: 'We had to take time out to make it work, so this was built into our plans. We had a run at establishing ourselves for four months before Keely needed to take three months off for a short maternity leave.'

'Since we had barely laid the foundations, we chose not to bring in support from another dentist. This carried too much risk of diverting us from our vision, which was more important than finances at the time, but we managed to keep hygiene running smoothly.'

He admits: 'It's quite exhausting, but you get through it. Setting aside time is crucial, and my best advice is to design a sustainable working week that allows enough time for the business, family, and yourself. Then, review this plan as needed. For example, we adjusted our schedule to accommodate nursery runs and also so Keely could do her first feed with Delilah, starting each day at 10am for the first patient.'

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

MANAGING THE JUGGLE

Given his first-hand experience navigating paternity leave while managing The Dental Barns, here, he shares some insight into how they balance the demands of a new business with the needs of a newborn and a toddler at home.

Teamwork, teamwork, teamwork

The top priority must be safeguarding your energy levels. Sleep is vital; it allows you to accomplish more and make better decisions. Practically, we agreed (possibly controversially) to sleep in separate rooms. If I had a workday, Keely was kind enough to let me sleep through the feeds and other interruptions.

You need to learn to accept help – especially with Evelyn (a demanding toddler at this point), and even more so if family offers to pitch in – just say yes!

Even if it's simply sitting with them while you get work done. You quickly learn what truly matters, what can wait, and which issues (or cans of worms) to keep under control for now.

In our practice, the number one priority was patient perception. We had built a high level of trust, which can be quickly lost. So, the patient's voice always came first: in the inbox, on the call list, and everywhere else. We over-communicated with our existing patients and made new enquiries wait.

Planning was also crucial – whether that was involving contractors, appointments, or other tasks. With reasonable notice, arrangements can be made for your days away from the family and days scheduled to work.

Ditch the mobile

This may be controversial, but I barely answer my phone. I try to plan interactions so I can focus on what's in front of me. I guess it's all about controlling your time. I learned this from managing big teams at Dentalmonitoring. If you answered every 'quick question' call or similar, that's all you'd be doing all day: purely reactive. Over time, this approach has significantly reduced the number of calls that come through, leaving only the patients who genuinely need my attention. I still have calls, but they are planned on my terms.

Be focused in the room

When at home, try to be as present as possible. Even if the kids



PRIVATE DENTISTRY AWARDS 2025

WINNER

At the 2025 Private Dentistry Awards, David Drew took home the trophy for Practice Manager Midlands, while The Dental Barns won Practice Brand and Design Midlands, and Digital Practice North.

seem occupied, that can change in an instant. Getting sucked into a small task (social media, an email or two and so on) can take you right out of the room, and getting sucked back in by demanding youngsters can really affect your mood. Basically, I discovered that multitasking quickly killed my mood, so I stopped, put the phone in another room and focused on the kids.

Make a plan

The biggest challenge in stepping back briefly from a business is the fear of income loss. As the launch was still fresh in my mind, I was confident we could regain that momentum, but this time we had overheads to manage. Additionally, patient perception, or word of mouth, for a new practice was crucial.

The key was careful planning: maintaining strict personal and business budgets, and understanding how long we could sustain ourselves without income. Once we trusted this plan, it freed us from daily stress over bills – essentially placing our confidence in solid financial planning. This approach then gave us the freedom to focus on non-revenue projects that could help us grow. So, we redirected our attention to other projects, including online presence, SOPs, customer journey, and similar initiatives. The website was a major project and a significant undertaking with key deliverables that I enjoyed working on, so I was able to view the break in service more positively.

Considered business model

Partly by luck and partly by design, we've developed a highly flexible business model. We've automated as much as possible and outsourced tasks such as phone calls. We have deliberately kept our team understaffed to maintain contact with agency workers. This

allows us to easily scale our operations up or down. During this period, we stripped everything back to keep costs low. Staff who were already on the books were assigned projects, such as compliance work, turning challenges into opportunities.

Family time

The emotional and mental shift from a structured corporate parental leave to a self-employed one is interesting. In some ways, corporate parental leave is much simpler, with clearly defined boundaries (although not ideal for dads, who currently receive two weeks paternity leave, as of the time of writing, although I believe this is being reviewed).

As the time is so short, you are strict with it – for example: 'I'm only getting 14 days, so I'll make every second count about the family.' As a self-employed parent, it's far more challenging to navigate. You control the amount of time off you take, how you spend it, and the way you ease back into work – which often triggers feelings of guilt. Guilt about being away from the business too much, or guilt for not spending enough time with your family. Doing both simply doesn't work so you need to demarcate your time. Build a schedule with your spouse that incorporates parental leave planning. Discuss and coordinate time off, responsibilities and support to optimise family time.

Structured approach

Learn to enjoy moments that are a 'perk'. On a 'work' day, you're ahead of schedule, so you step away and spend time with the family while maintaining good energy levels to do so (rather than feeling burnt out in some way) – being in control of that decision and not feeling guilty about making it. It's a wonderful skill to develop.

In short, structure, structure, structure. Define the work-home diary realistically, including night routines, and stick to it. I created a Gantt chart for each month I was on parental leave, which really helped me stay on track, and I also felt a sense of achievement without the 'patient outcome win'.

Reduced stress

We didn't take on anything that would give us headaches during parental leave. We had a plan for each patient, and stopped taking on complex



Balancing parental leave and business ownership: top tips

1. A budget and an emergency fund (that you can trust!) help you sleep peacefully at night. We planned for a three-month parental leave but included a contingency to extend it to six months if necessary
2. Learn to say 'yes' to support – whether it's having family sit with the little ones while you take a break for a few hours or getting some meals prepared. Take it!
3. Assess what resources can be put in place to support operations. Is there anything you can outsource?
4. Prioritise your wellbeing, sleep, and learn to be selfish in this regard – you'll be much better for everyone.

treatments. We were very clear with patients; we lost some, and some waited. We also adopted some tools that really helped. Dentalmonitoring allowed us to have very tight oversight over our orthodontic patients, enabling us to head off issues before they arose.

Additionally, we have a 24-hour call concierge that triages calls, allowing only existing patients who need us to get through. With these things in place, patients were really well looked after. There were a few occasions when we chose to come in, but having the structure and plans in place meant there was energy left over to do so.

Discover more at thedentalbarns.co.uk.



Starting strong in implant dentistry

How modules 1 and 2 of the **Brighton and Sussex Medical School Postgraduate Diploma** create the ideal foundation

Entering implant dentistry can feel overwhelming. With a growing number of short courses and mixed-quality training pathways, many clinicians struggle to find a route that is structured, mentored, and rooted in real clinical practice. Brighton and Sussex Medical School's Postgraduate Diploma offers a solution that stands apart: a university-led, competency-based programme built around progressive skill development, mentorship, and supervised patient experience.

The journey into implant dentistry begins with the first two modules – carefully designed foundation units that give new clinicians essential knowledge, confidence, and clinical framework to begin treating patients safely and successfully.

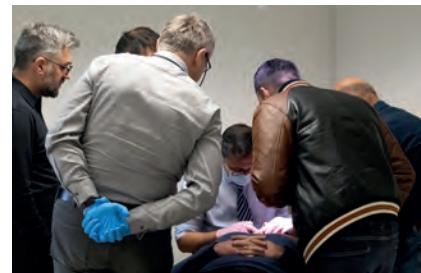
MODULE 1: PATIENT ASSESSMENT, TREATMENT PLANNING AND PRINCIPLES OF SURGERY

This provides the bedrock of safe, predictable practice. Delegates learn how to approach implant dentistry systematically – understanding not just the surgical steps, but the deeper diagnostic and planning principles that underpin long-term success.

Core learning areas include:

- Comprehensive patient assessment
- Radiographic interpretation and treatment planning
- Case complexity assessment and patient selection
- Principles of implant surgery and surgical workflows.

Teaching is delivered through lectures, small-group sessions, simulation and observation of live surgery. The focus is on developing sound clinical reasoning from the very start, ensuring delegates avoid common early pitfalls.



Mentoring is integrated throughout. Delegates receive feedback via competency-based assessments, including work-based evaluations, helping them build practical confidence.

MODULE 2: OCCLUSION AND RESTORATIVE PERSPECTIVES IN IMPLANT DENTISTRY

While surgical training is essential, implant success is ultimately driven by restorative planning. Delivered in collaboration with leading educator Dr Dev Patel and supported by Dean Ward, an internationally respected CDT; an in-depth exploration of occlusal principles and concepts that guide implant treatment from start to finish.

This module aligns with the teaching approach seen in Dr Patel's programmes, focusing on:

- Occlusion fundamentals for implant dentistry
- Prosthetically driven treatment planning
- Aesthetic and functional considerations.

This restorative grounding is critical for emerging implant clinicians. It ensures that before any surgical placement begins, delegates already understand the destination: what the restoration must achieve, how occlusion should be balanced, and how prosthetic design directs surgical execution.



EARLY PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND SUPPORTED CASE ACQUISITION

Clinicians are encouraged and supported to start identifying suitable patients within their own practices.

The faculty assists through:

- Case vetting and suitability review
- Treatment planning mentorship
- Supervised surgical and restorative appointments
- Observation and shared-care opportunities.

Delegates are typically expected to begin managing cases during the first year of their studies, giving them genuine continuity of care. This approach takes clinicians beyond theory, giving them the confidence and capability to transition into independent implant practice safely.

Clinicians can enrol in individual modules or join the full Postgraduate Diploma pathway. To learn more and apply, visit www.bsms.ac.uk/dental.

Completely digital patient data acquisition Zirkonzahn

With the Head Tracker, Zirkonzahn introduces an innovative solution for patient analysis that enables precise, patient-specific determination of maxilla positions, considering all relevant information. Unlike the previous analogue method using the Planefinder, where data had to be digitised afterwards, the entire process can now be performed fully digitally, starting from intraoral scans.

Indeed, the Head Tracker records the natural head position (NHP) and the reference planes digitally, contact-free and without exogenous influences: by means of two modern sensors and the Zirkonzahn.app, it is now possible to capture important data such as maxilla position, ala-tragus planes, and 2D images of the patient's physiognomy, which then serve as an important working basis for the dental technician – all on a smart phone.

The acquired data is then imported in the Zirkonzahn.modifier software and automatically aligned in the virtual articulator, ensuring the positioning of the upper and lower jaw according to the NHP.

Although the system is conceived for stand-alone use, it is recommended to use the Head Tracker in combination with the physical Planefinder.

Webinars are arranged upon request to provide a comprehensive overview of the product. During the one-hour session, an expert will explain how the Head Tracker enables precise and individualized determination of the maxilla position, as well as the advantages of capturing patient data entirely digitally. Data acquisition with the Zirkonzahn.app and subsequent processing in the design software will also be discussed.

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In restorative dentistry, achieving a long-lasting polish and realistic aesthetic is a challenge. Brilliant Everglow from Coltene delivers these exceptional results with ease.



This submicron composite ensures exceptional polishability and long-lasting brilliance, allowing restorations to present a natural-looking and long-lasting gloss that restores patients' confidence in their smiles. Its effective formulation makes clinical handling easier than ever with excellent sculptability and smooth consistency, paired with good wettability to avoid any sticking to the instruments – streamlining workflows.

The versatile shade system offers three translucency options. Brilliant Everglow delivers excellent shade blending and durable brilliance, ensuring faultless integration into the dentition.

With a reputation for innovation and quality, Brilliant Everglow helps streamline daily practice workflows while elevating patient satisfaction.

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New year, new vision A-dec

As dental teams step into a new year and start planning for equipment upgrades or refurbishments, A-dec's dream in 3D tool is here to help dental practitioners turn their ideas into reality with clarity and confidence.

Accessible through the A-dec website, dream in 3D enables users to explore and configure options to design their perfect dental equipment setup in a fully interactive 3D space – choose your chair model, delivery system, monitor mounts, upholstery colour, room layouts and much more, so you can align your A-dec dental package with your surgical vision.



This user-friendly digital tool empowers dentists to explore various options before making any investment decisions. Whether it's comparing upholstery colours, trying out different equipment combinations, or visualising how various setups fit into your practice space, dream in 3D offers a practical, design-focused experience that transforms 'what if?' into something real. It's an essential resource for practices looking to refresh a single surgery or undertake a complete redesign.

The experience becomes even more enriching when paired with a visit to one of A-dec's showrooms: Bracknell, Warrington, and Nuneaton. Each showroom provides hands-on access to A-dec's entire range of dental packages, including the flagship A-dec 500 Pro and the entry-level A-dec 300 Core, allowing you to feel the quality, explore ergonomic features, and see how the equipment fits into real working environments.

unitedkingdom.a-dec.com/find-a-dealer

The School of London: first course dates

Zirkonzahn's first courses scheduled for 2026 – digital full dentures, minimal layering and advanced design options

Located in Canary Wharf, not far from the city centre, the School of London is Zirkonzahn's first facility in the United Kingdom. It is designed to host a showroom as well as a variety of courses covering a wide range of topics – from material diversity and layering techniques to CAD/CAM systems.

While the course offering continues to evolve, registrations are now open for various two-day trainings focusing on digital full dentures, minimal layering, and advanced design options with Zirkonzahn.Modifier.

Digital full dentures

The course on full dentures aims at introducing Zirkonzahn's digital workflow, materials and techniques for the digital production of full dentures. The instructor explains the complete design process from data import to bonding procedures, elaborating on different available methods and possibilities depending on the initial patient situation.

Zirkonzahn.Modifier

The training on Zirkonzahn.Modifier focuses on the most relevant design features and workflows available in the design software, including the use of the Zirkonzahn.App. Participants explore the software's most relevant features and will also see live demonstrations of its use in combination with Zirkonzahn's newest products, such as the JawAligners and the Head Tracker digital facebow.

Fresco Ceramics

In the Fresco Ceramics course, the instructor provides the participant with a theoretical and practical basis for the application of Fresco Ceramics on zirconia restorations, teaching how to achieve different results through the application of the pastes, also used in combination with stains.

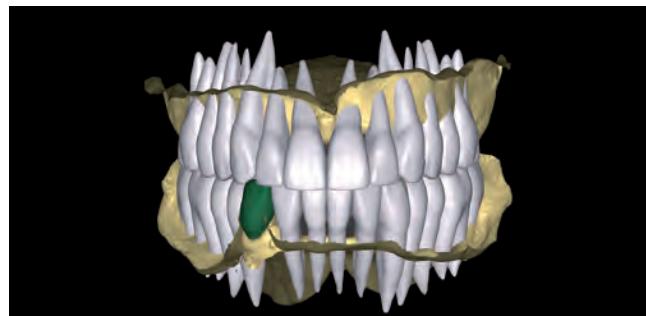
FURTHER COURSE INFORMATION

All trainings are held by qualified dental technicians and include a practical session allowing participants to apply and consolidate their newly acquired skills. All courses are targeted to both dentists and dental technicians and meet the criteria for the GDC's development outcome C. Participation is limited to four participants.

Zirkonzahn®
Human Zirconium Technology



Digital production of full dentures



Workflows and design possibilities with Zirkonzahn.Modifier



Fresco Ceramics application

For more information about the courses, scan the QR code or contact: Martina Milani, +39 0474 06 6653, martina.milani@zirkonzahn.com, Jasmin Oberstaller, +39 0474 06 6735, jasmin.oberstaller@zirkonzahn.com.





IN THE HOT SEAT

Implant dentist **Kit Spears** reveals his guilty pleasure, making a good first impression and being a believer in 'experiences not things'

Q When and where was your last meal out?

A I recently went to an amazing local tapas restaurant called Pulpo Negro with my wife and some friends. Incredible authentic food, great vibes and excellent service.

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

A I've had some patients say I look similar to Jamie Dornan but I'm not buying it! Probably Paul Rudd – generally likeable but slightly awkward, with a good deadpan line.

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

A One of my bosses once told me: 'You only get one chance to make a good first impression.' I have taken that into my consultations to try to make them as

good an experience as possible – allowing ample time to listen to the patients concerns and make the process smooth, informative and comprehensive.

Q What's your guilty pleasure?

A I love music and have an eclectic taste. While I spend my most of my time listening to rock, pop punk and metalcore, my guilty pleasure is that I'm a closet Swiftie!

Q What was the last gift you gave?

A I have just given each of my referring dentists a bottle of English sparkling wine to thank them for their referrals in 2025, and my nursing team gifts for their hard work and dedication this year.

Q Describe your perfect holiday...

A To be honest, it was my recent holiday to Oman with my wife to celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary. Amazing weather, incredible service and so relaxing. Cocktails, beach walks, a massage, coastline stand up paddleboarding and lots of books. Although we did manage to stay active by exploring Muscat and doing dawn yoga!

Q What's your all-time favourite movie?

A My Netflix/Disney+ viewing history would suggest that K-Pop Demon Hunters and Frozen would take the top spots!

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

A Anything by Avicii! My girls love dancing with me to You Belong With Me.

Q What keeps you up at night?

A While I sometimes reflect on how I could have done a surgery better, very little keeps me up at night!

Q How do you unwind?

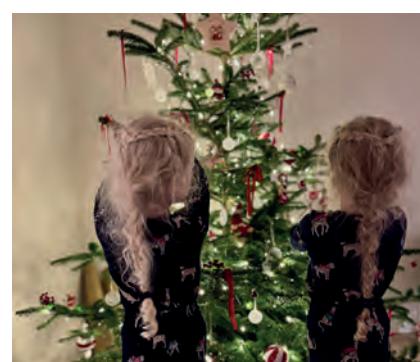
A Taking my two Vizslas, Kuma and Toki, out for a trail run in the countryside around my house.

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

A I'm a practical person so I would probably invest most of it to get the money growing... but I believe in 'experiences not things' so there would definitely be some family holidays too.

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

A My two daughters helping to decorate our Christmas tree.



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