

DE | MAGAZINE

DENTIST ENTREPRENEUR ORGANIZATION

Organic Growth

Within the last calendar year, Lollipop Dental has more than doubled its revenue. Owner Dr. Mary Pham shares the keys to their success.

How to Double Growth
Through Doctor-Partner Alignment

Getting Your Practice from
\$1.5 Million to \$5 Million

The Future of
Evidence-Based
Dentistry



DENTRIX ENTERPRISE™

Connect Your Data Across Locations.

Dentrix Enterprise offers the centralized control you need to standardize procedures and increase profitability for your DSO or group practice. Its robust and scalable database connects all your dental offices — unifying as many unique providers and sites as needed.

Learn how Dentrix Enterprise can benefit your DSO. Visit DentrixEnterprise.com/DEO

“One of the biggest benefits of using Dentrix Enterprise is how we are able to offer centralized support for our 10 offices.”

HILLARY SMEDLEY | VP OF OPERATIONS
GENESIS DENTAL & ORTHODONTICS

Contents > July/August : 2022

DEO | MAGAZINE
DENTIST ENTREPRENEUR ORGANIZATION

MANAGING EDITOR

Graham Garrison
ggarrison@sharemovingmedia.com

SENIOR EDITOR

Daniel Beard
dbeard@sharemovingmedia.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Pete Mercer
pmercer@sharemovingmedia.com

CIRCULATION

Laura Gantert
lgantert@sharemovingmedia.com

ART DIRECTOR

Brent Cashman
bcashman@sharemovingmedia.com

EDITORIAL BOARD

Dr. Eric Roman, DEO

Rachel Shipley, DEO

Hilda Gonzalez, DEO



PUBLISHER

Jake Puhl
jacobpuhl@deodentalgroup.com



SALES EXECUTIVE

Amy Cochran
acochran@sharemovingmedia.com
770.263.5279

DEO Magazine is published six times a year by DEO Dental Media LLC

If you would like to subscribe, please contact us at the above numbers or address.

DEO Magazine is published six times a year by DEO Dental Media LLC, 501 Congress Avenue, Suite 150, Austin, TX, 78701. Copyright 2022 by DEO Dental Media LLC All rights reserved. If you would like to subscribe or notify us of address changes, please contact us at the above numbers or address.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to info@dentalgrouppractice.com.

Please note: The acceptance of advertising or products mentioned by contributing authors does not constitute endorsement by the publishers. Publishers cannot accept responsibility for the correctness of an opinion expressed by contributing authors.



Organic Growth

Within the last calendar year, Lollipop Dental has more than doubled its revenue. Owner Dr. Mary Pham shares the keys to their success. > pg 34

Ready. Set. Grow!.....2

The Instrumental Role of DSOs in Dental Education

Dental schools and dental support organizations (DSOs) are joining forces, providing students a comprehensive real-world view of the dental industry..... 4

3 Essential Data Points That Will Turbocharge Your Marketing.....6

Thinking Forward Exciting times ahead for group dentistry..... 8

Doubling Dental How to double growth through doctor-partner alignment. 10

Getting Your Practice from \$1.5 Million to \$5 Million How to successfully transition into the next stage of revenue for your business..... 16

Heartland Dental and Emerging Group Dentistry How providing a world-class experience for dentists has led to organizational growth.... 22

The Future of Evidence-Based Dentistry Evidence-based dentistry is more than just looking at data. It's looking at individual patient needs..... 28

Exploding vs. Imploding How to leverage today's market conditions for growth while elevating your team..... 32

3 Trends Driving DSO Success Successful dental groups are incorporating technology that makes it easier to schedule patients, pay for services, and return for future treatment 42

Emerging Groups To Watch Select Dental Management: Doctor retention, patient retention and practice growth go hand in hand 44

Burch Dental Partners: Revitalizing the notion of what a DSO can be 48

Kessel Run Management: Pushing the envelope of what a dental organization can do 52

Resolute Dental Partners: Building a positive team culture 56

This is not a family. This is a team.....60

Best Ways to Pay an Associate64

Ready. Set. Grow!

By Jake Puhl

What a difference a year makes! 365 days ago the DEO team took their final virtual bow and started preparing for this year's live Growth Summit. Firing on all cylinders, the goal was to deliver not just a live experience, but an entirely new format with content to knock your socks off! And as I write this, I can confirm: they delivered!



The 2022 DEO Growth Summit debuted double the content and offered attendees the opportunity to “choose their own adventure,” by curating two unique environments whereby attendees could learn from DEO experts, who were teaching DEO’s intellectual property, a curriculum that focuses on the first operating system created just for growing dental companies; or listen to the industry’s top DSO leaders as they shared their experiences and lessons learned along their entrepreneurial journey to grow their organizations. Read more about the Growth Summit on page 8!

You may not have noticed that we have a recurring feature story in every issue titled, “Emerging Group Spotlight.” We pull back the curtain on one group and do a deep dive into what that organization is doing differently to achieve growth and success. As we were planning the content for this issue, one group just didn’t seem like it accurately represented all of the amazing growth happening in the industry, so we decided to kick it up a notch and spotlight four Emerging Groups instead of only one! In this issue we featured:

- > Dr. Jeffrey Burch and Burch Dental Partners are revitalizing the notion of what a DSO can be.
- > Elliot Zibel of Select Dental Management explains how doctor retention, patient retention, and practice growth go hand in hand.
- > Dr. Kyle Hale and Kessel Run Management have turned a very pro-dentist owner, dentist-led, and dentist-driven organization into a profitable business with structure and potential for growth in the future.
- > With years of experience solving clinical problems, Dr. Gregory Toback and Resolute Dental Partners have expanded into solving problems for a growing company.

I can’t wait for you to dig into this issue! I hope you’re as inspired and motivated as I was from these pages. From our cover story about Dr. Mary Pham and the phenomenal growth that her organization, Lollipop Dental, has produced, to stories about how to build your foundation or tools to help you along the way, this entire issue is dedicated to helping you grow. I hope you enjoy it!

Cheers!

Jake Puhl



Open Data Warehouse

Next Level Business Intelligence



Open Data Warehouse



Standardizing data models across multiple PMS



More than 150 out-of-the-box solutions



Best-in-class reporting in real time, customizable



Highly scalable, grows with your business

VS

Building Your Own Data Warehouse



Average cost \$30,000/location



9 to 12 month avg. build out



Clunky reporting that may not meet needs



On-prem solutions require maintenance & do not scale

For more info: tab32.com

The Instrumental Role of DSOs in Dental Education

Dental schools and dental support organizations (DSOs) are joining forces, providing students a comprehensive real-world view of the dental industry.

BY ANDREW SMITH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE ASSOCIATION OF DENTAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS (ADSO)



With the growing influence of the DSO model, and changes in what today's dental students want out of a dental career, the landscape of dentistry is shifting. We are witnessing a future of dentistry that invites innovation and collaboration to benefit patient health and a workforce that supports employee growth.

According to the American Dental Education Association, 30% of dental school seniors plan to join a DSO-supported practice, up from 12% in 2015. The reason for this growth is that DSOs offer recent dental graduates cutting-edge tools, soft-skill trainings that improve patient and employee experiences, and leadership initiatives. Students have found this to be true as they are collaborating with and learning from DSOs while in dental school.

As the entire industry looks to expand access to oral healthcare

and elevate dentistry, ADSO members are leading thoughtful initiatives with dental schools to train and prepare the next generation of practitioners. I interviewed several ADSO members about their trailblazing programs that expose dental students to new technology and professional development.

Recently, in North Carolina, High Point University's (HPU) new dental school received a \$32 million donation from the Rick and Angie Workman Foundation. Dr. Rick Workman is the founder and Executive

Chairman of Heartland Dental, a DSO partnering with over 1,600 practices nationwide.

As the third dental school in the state, the Workman School of Dental Medicine will increase dental education opportunities, and, in turn, address the statewide dental health professional shortage. HPU graduates will influence health access and equity while gaining a more comprehensive understanding of their dental career choices.

"Our students will be encouraged to pursue careers of their interest," said Dr. Jazmin Cromartie, Director of Student Admissions and Engagement, and Assistant Professor of General Dentistry at HPU. "Our immersive clinical experiences will allow students to better understand the benefits of collaborating with DSOs."

Offering another perspective on partnerships is the UCLA School of Dentistry, which has collaborated with seven DSOs over the past four years through their Community-Based Clinical Education (CBCE) program. CBCE strives to enhance students' education while increasing access to care for underserved populations. Dr. Lisa Nguyen, Associate Director of CBCE, says the program provides students a rare,

yet authentic glimpse into dentistry beyond the classroom.

“Giving students different experiences in practice models allows them to see the possibilities for practicing dentistry,” Dr. Nguyen said. “In CBCE rotations, students are able to heighten their experiences in practice management and understand how different types of practice models handle staffing, billing, electronic health records and patient care.”

Dr. Nguyen’s colleague, Dr. Bill Piskorowski, Associate Dean of CBCE, added, “We have doubled our graduate’s restorative services, tripled their surgical experiences and

increased their endodontic services by 70 percent. Most importantly the program has enhanced students’ ethic of caring.”

Dental schools are renewing the way they prepare students for the start of their careers, and DSOs are taking note, greeting graduates who chose the DSO path with a thoughtful culture and lived-out values.

Pacific Dental Services’ creed that people are their greatest asset prompted them to create PDS University where their employees can enroll in clinical, business and leadership courses. Smile Brands, another DSO, lives out their “Never Stop Learning” mindset through a

year-long virtual CE curriculum and crafts a culture where every candidate is assessed based on current capabilities and appetite for continued growth.

The future of dentistry lies in the careful thought we put into developing new dental support teams and today’s students. We achieve this by providing them with advanced clinical trainings, continuous education, mentorship and by opening the door to the vast array of opportunities in the field. With both DSOs and dental schools engaged, we’ll enhance access to oral healthcare and ensure continuous learning for dental teams. ■

CONFIDENCE + PEACE OF MIND

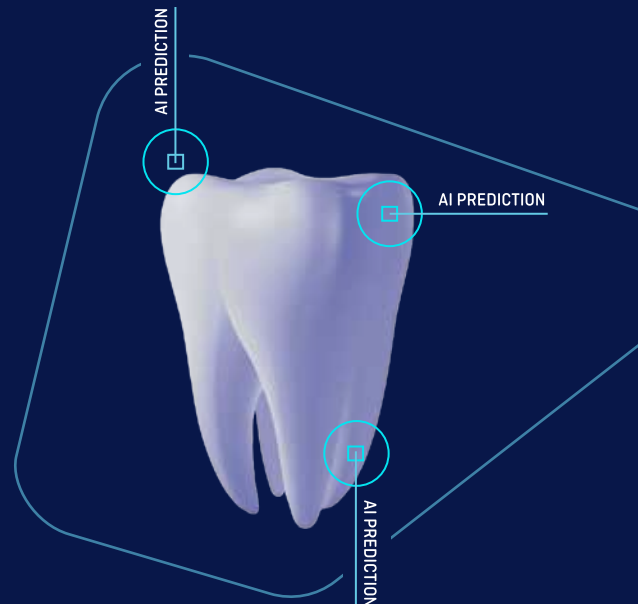
The new standard of transparency and ethical care in dentistry is here.

- Improve diagnostic capabilities
- Enhance patient experiences
- Optimize practice workflow

BOOK YOUR DEMO TODAY.



Transforming Dentistry Through AI



WWW.VIDEA.AI

*Videa Caries Assist FDA 510(k) clearance achieved on 04/21/2022

3 Essential Data Points That Will Turbocharge Your Marketing

Did you know that the difference between success and failure in dental marketing comes down to one essential thing – that your dental practice probably isn't doing?

If you want to separate yourself from the pack and develop a steady, consistent new patient pipeline, you'll need to take a step that they don't teach in dental school.

What are we talking about? Tracking and measuring your marketing data.

Now, you're probably thinking, "Hey, wait a minute. We collect new patient data. Right?"

Wrong.

Sure, you've got records. You know how many new patients come through your doors each week. If you work with a marketing company, they may even present you with monthly reports stuffed full of arcane figures like click-through rate or ad impressions.

But are you measuring the SUCCESS of your marketing? Almost certainly not.

Here's a question to ask yourself: do you know how well each step of your marketing funnel is performing? How much are you spending to generate an opportunity and convert them into a new patient – and how good are you at convincing them to keep coming back for routine checkups and cleanings?



To get clear answers to those questions (and open the floodgates of new patient growth) you'll need to track 3 key data points.

1 Cost per Opportunity (CPO)

How much does it cost to get a potential new patient to call your practice asking about an appointment (contacting you via chat or email counts too)? CPO measures your top-of-funnel performance – like your ad campaign, website, and social media.

2 Cost per Acquisition (CPA)

How much does it cost to bring a real live new patient through your doors? CPA builds on CPO by including not just your top-of-funnel costs, but your conversion costs. If your call

team is only converting 50% of your marketing calls, for example, then your CPA could be double your CPO.

3 Average Time to Appointment

Did you know that most dental practices make new patients wait a week or more for an appointment – and that the longer a new patient waits, the less likely they are to actually show up? By tracking your average time to appointment, you can start moving that number downward and plugging a big hole near the bottom of your marketing funnel.

Since we're having such a good time, let's throw a bonus data point on the table: your recare rate. After all, you know that consistent, recurring patients are worth their weight in gold. Be sure to track how many of your new patients show up for future appointments. That number holds the key to establishing predictable long-term revenue.

Marketing is More Fun with Friends!

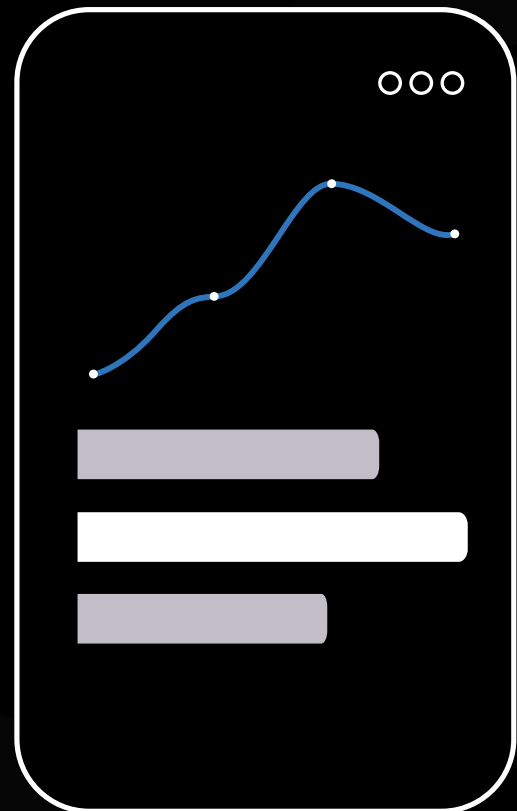
If you'd rather perform back-to-back extractions than tackle data-driven marketing alone, meet your new friends at SMC. We'll give you the efficient, predictable new patient growth you need – scaled to fit the size of your group and with NO long-term contracts.

Open the new patient floodgates today at smcnational.com! ■

Want more new patients **WITHOUT** increasing your monthly ad budget by even \$1?

Stop winging it and start measuring.

We'll **track** your entire marketing process from start to finish and **optimize** for peak performance.



You'll see full waiting rooms and get more bang for your buck.

Thinking Forward

Exciting times ahead for group dentistry. : By Laura Bowles, DEO

The DEO Summit 2022 was an incredible time of learning and connection. There was a palpable buzz about the exciting times ahead for group dentistry and the dental industry at large. The Summit, held June 9-11, at the Phoenician Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, brought together dental entrepreneurs, dental leaders, and industry partners from around the country. Ample networking opportunities were offered and for the first time ever the event featured 2 tracks, a Training and Mastermind track.



Each year the Summit brings successful dental entrepreneurs together to focus on how to successfully grow a dental company. Attendees learned trends to plan for; gained impactful strategies for growth through de novos and acquisitions, hiring, increasing business profitability, optimizing associate relationships, effective communication strategies, and more; heard from successful dental entrepreneurs about what to and not to do; discovered innovative dental industry solutions; and much more.

Keynote and DSO industry pioneer Steve Bilt, CEO of Smile Brands, shared hard-won wisdom like: “You send messages all the time by what you do, not by what you say”; “Start every meeting with your mission and you’ll find miracles”; and “Know the pain points in your organization and be transparent about them with your team.”

DEO Partners Josey Sewell and Dr. Eric Roman took a deep dive into DEO MAP, the first operating system created just for dental entrepreneurs of growing dental companies, with a variety of different sessions on how to guide growth through systems and processes that work with a happy, healthy team.

Jon Acuff, an INC. Top 100 Leadership Speaker and 7x NYT Bestselling Author, gave a fan-favorite presentation about how to rewrite the negative thought “soundtracks”. Here’s just some of what he said that stuck with attendees: “One of the greatest mistakes is assuming all your thoughts are true”; “Ask these questions about your thoughts: 1. Is it true? 2. Is it helpful? Does it push us forward or pull us back? 3. Is it kind?”; and “Great teams: 1. Ask questions. 2. Suggest new ideas. 3. Admit they are wrong.”

It was a powerful weekend with lots of “aha moments” and fun enjoyed at the Phoenician Resort, in historic downtown Scottsdale, and amongst the beautiful Arizona surroundings.

The DEO team thanks all the generous speakers and panelists who gave their time and expertise: BJ Stucki; Dr. Jeff Burch; Dr. Kyle Hale; Elliot Zibel; Dr. Dipesh Patel; Dr. Mary Pham; Dr. Tim Richardson; Dr. Dave Janash; Dr. Steve Broughton; Dr. Francis Oh; Andrew Tralongo; Jon Acuff; Dr. Tarek Aly; Phil Toh; Dr. Dwight Peccora; Dr. Maryam Beyramian; Dr. Ravi Patel; Dr. Josh Renken; and Dr. Peter Kelly.

Also, the Summit would simply not happen without the support of incredible sponsors and industry partners. The DEO is grateful for their continued support.

Planning is in full swing to make DEO Growth Summit 2023 even bigger and better. It will be June 8-10, at the Manchester Grand Hyatt, in sunny San Diego. Get in early and register now at <https://deodentalgroup.com/summit-summer>. ■

DEO **GROWTH** SUMMIT 2023

TEACHING DENTAL LEADERS TO GROW SUCCESSFULLY

San Diego

California



SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 8-10, 2023

Manchester Grand Hyatt

The most powerful event in group dentistry!

Doubling Dental

How to double growth through doctor-partner alignment : By Dr. Clifton Cameron, Chief Dental Officer of Lightwave Dental, and Justin Jory, CEO of Lightwave Dental



Dentistry is a team sport. A dentist cannot maximize her clinical production without a fully engaged and coordinated team. For a dental practice to double its growth, dental leaders must train, motivate and engage their teams. A dental group cannot grow without strong local leaders at each and every practice that “get it, want it, and have the capacity to do it.”¹

Lightwave Dental was founded upon a core belief that dentists are the natural leaders of the dental practice and our job is to help them, and their teams, reach their personal, professional, and financial goals. Dentists, whether you like it or not, you must become a leader. As much as you would like to delegate it or outsource it, the reality is that local, daily leadership in your practice will inevitably fall on your shoulders.

Lightwave believes our role as a management partner is to help facilitate and maximize your leadership potential as a dentist. For that reason, we now refer to Lightwave as a Dental Leadership Organization. Lightwave doubled its growth several times during our five year history, growing from 8 to 76 locations across Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Alabama. We have learned many

Photography credit: Kevin Kleitches

things about the key ingredients for truly exceptional dental practice performance.

So, how does a dental practice owner double growth in this current environment?

When Dentists and their Teams are the No. 1 Customer

Legendary management consultant Peter Drucker once said, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”² At Lightwave, we believe that if we take great care of our dental teams, they will provide excellent care for their patients. We always tell new members of the Lightwave team that dentists, and by extension their teams, are the No. 1 customer at Lightwave. During our growth journey, Lightwave developed a success formula to guide our growth which boils down to the following:

Focus + Motivation + Teamwork = Success

In a dental practice, there are three key fundamentals for developing focus within your dental team. First, you must set clear expectations with detailed job descriptions and checklists detailing every task required for the job. Second, you need to explain and publish your goals. Your office goals for the week or the month should be published in a visible location, such as on a whiteboard in the employee breakroom. Additionally, most successful practices have a meeting cadence to create accountability that includes a daily huddle, a monthly team meeting, and periodic one-on-one interviews.

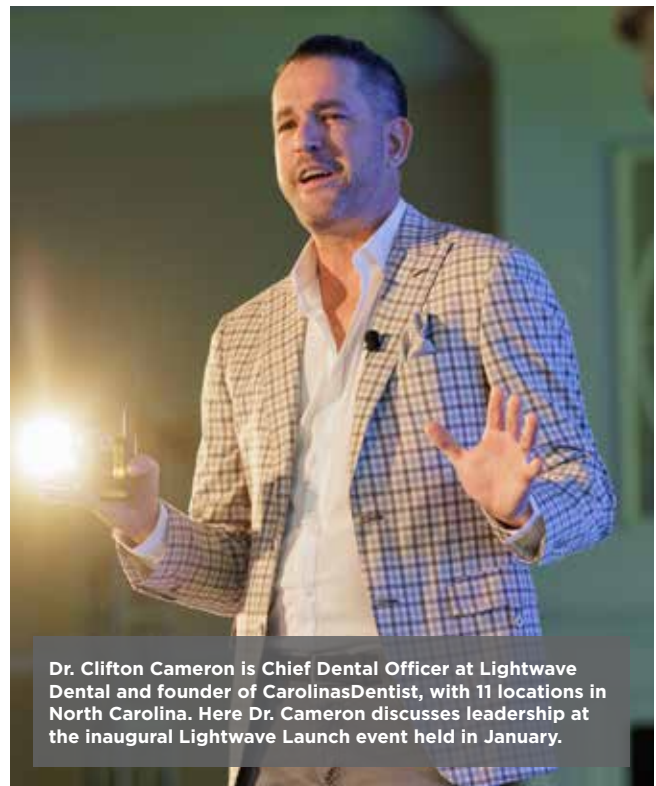
One of the easiest and most affordable ways to motivate your team is to provide regular positive recognition. There are three simple ways to do this: express gratitude spontaneously, praise your team members publicly in your team meetings, and provide awards for exceptional contributions on a periodic basis (quarterly, bi-annually, or at least annually). Another way to motivate your team is create experiences for fun and happiness by planning low-cost activities and celebrating personal milestones. You can also offer financial incentives like bonuses, prizes, and rewards for the behaviors you want to encourage in your office.

It falls upon leaders to develop a common set of values to guide how we work together and to develop positive relationships that foster good team chemistry. A core values statement should be posted in the office publicly

for all to see. It is critical that practice leaders hire and fire based on core values. We also need to nurture positive and meaningful relationships among team members. This is why it is important to plan social activities inside and outside the office. Teamwork is most likely to thrive when team members truly care about each other on a personal level.

Team Engagement Surveys

In today’s labor market, there is nothing more valuable than internal referrals for open positions. Therefore, the ultimate measure of success is whether your employees would recommend your practice (or dental group) to other professionals in their network. At Lightwave, we built an internal survey based on our Team Health Formula (Focus + Motivation + Teamwork = Success). We have 16 questions with answers on a 10 point scale (1-10) in our surveys, and it takes an average of eight minutes to complete each survey. We send these surveys out to all employees every six months, and we analyze the results in painstaking detail. If you listen, your team will lead you to a successful outcome.



Dr. Clifton Cameron is Chief Dental Officer at Lightwave Dental and founder of CarolinasDentist, with 11 locations in North Carolina. Here Dr. Cameron discusses leadership at the inaugural Lightwave Launch event held in January.

Aligning the doctor-partner relationship

Dr. Paul Homoly once said, “The greater the complexity of care you offer, the greater the demand for your leadership.”⁵ Dentists must embrace leadership or they will never reach their full potential. The biggest challenge for dental practices today is that so many doctors have a fixed mindset focused internally. Rather than that “me first” mindset, the leadership growth process requires reorienting that thought process to focus outward – to a growth mindset. That level of transformation requires trust in the collective, trust in the team around you.

In the iconic movie *Forrest Gump*, Tom Hanks’ character says, “Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re gonna get.” The same is true with patients,

each one is different. However, most dentists bring one approach to the practice and spend their days trying to fit a square peg into round hole. The most effective dentists learn to adapt to each patient and adjust their approach based on the patient’s needs and circumstances. At Lightwave, we use a combination of continuing education and personal coaching to help dentists develop leadership skills in their patient interactions to maximize their potential as a clinician.

Outside of the operatory, it is imperative that dentists learn to lead their teams. As the complexity of the care you provide increases, your team needs to learn new skills for presenting, treating, and billing your complex procedures. As a dentist, you cannot avoid practice leadership, it



Lightwave Dental CEO Justin Jory speaks with Dr. Corey Mullen of CarolinasDentist at the inaugural Lightwave Launch, a leadership event held this past January.

inevitably falls on the shoulders of clinicians to teach and coordinate the actions of the dental team. If your dentists have a “clock-in and clock-out” mentality, your practice will struggle to double its growth. However, if your dentists have leadership skills and an ownership mindset, combined with a healthy team that is focused and motivated, then your practice will double every couple of years. The real challenge for any leader is putting all the pieces together.

Execution is the Key

At Lightwave, we are blessed to work with many dental practices that have grown from a startup office to over \$5 million in collections. Some do this over 20 years. Some dentists do this in five years. James Allen once said, “You are the master of your thought, the molder of your character, and the maker and shaper of your condition, environment, and destiny.”⁴ The difference between those that excel and those that fail is their ability to apply what they learn. Turn clock-in, clock-out dentists into practice owners. Rally your dental team with focus, motivation, and teamwork. Listen and apply their feedback, and you will be the next one to take your startup practice to over \$5 million in collections in five years. Above all, remember that culture eats strategy for breakfast, so take care of your people and they will take care of your patients. ■

1. Wickman, Gino. *Traction: Get A Grip On Your Business*. BenBella Books, Inc., 2011.
2. Phrase first appeared in a trade journal. Moore, Bill and Rose, Jerry. *PIMA's North American Papermaker: The Official Publication of the Paper Industry Management Association*, 2000.
3. Homoly, Paul, DDS. *Making It Easy For Patients To Say "Yes."* Online Program, 2022.
4. Allen, James and Allen, Marc. *As You Think*, 2nd Edition. New World Library, 1998.

Lightwave Dental CEO Justin Jory, and Chief Dental Officer Dr. Clifton Cameron doubled growth several times over a 5-year period. Founded in 2016 with eight distinct practices, Lightwave grew to 12 locations in the first year and 20 locations shortly after with \$45 million in collections. By 2019, Lightwave doubled in size to \$98 million in collections across 40 offices. Lightwave finished 2021 with 72 practices and \$190 million in collections. The team more than doubled to 1,800 team members up from 800 in 2021. Putting people first and enabling doctors to own and lead is creating new opportunities at Lightwave. For more information, visit www.lightwavedental.com, email info@lightwavedental.com, or find us on Facebook or LinkedIn.



A review platform worth smiling about

Birdeye is the #1 review platform designed to help local dentists outrank and outperform their competition on search.



Book a demo:
<https://birdeye.com/dental/>

© 2022 Birdeye Inc.

The only patient finance partner you need.

A simple, single-application credit solution.

There's no longer a need for providers to turn away patients, offer multiple finance solutions, or try to manage in-house payment plans. PrimaHealth Credit is a completely customizable financing solution that finally gives providers exactly what they need: one application for prime and subprime borrowers with instant decisions, high approvals, and real-time reports.



- ✓ Most patients are approved.
- ✓ One application for prime and subprime.
- ✓ On-demand, real-time reports.
- ✓ Enrollment is easy.

Go to PrimaHealthCredit.com to schedule a demo!



Dashboard Reports **▼** Payment Calculator Help Center

Key Metrics Report

LOCATION	TREATMENT TYPE	PROGRAM TYPE	FROM	TO
All ▼	All ▼	All ▼	12/26/2021	1/27/2022



More care, for more people.



Getting Your Practice from \$1.5 Million to \$5 Million

How to successfully transition into the next stage of revenue for your business. : By Emmet Scott, CEO, Community Dental Partners

Starting a practice is hard work, but it might be more difficult to grow your practice to the next stage of revenue. That \$1.5 million to \$5 million hurdle is particularly difficult for any young dental practice – a phase of growth that many refer to as the “emerging entrepreneur.” The idea with this transition is that you are moving into the role of a business owner, which is never an easy transition.

After working with Community Dental Partners for over a decade, I have developed three principles that you can leverage to help you over that \$1.5 million to \$5 million hurdle. These are ideas that are meant to inspire you to take that next step in growing your business and developing yourself further as a leader. Here are the three major principles that will help you to elevate your practice from \$1.5 million to \$5 million.

Understanding your patient avatar drives your decision making

A critical component to the success of any dental practice is focusing your initiatives on your customer base. Who do you want to serve? What’s important to them? What do they care about? It’s easy to get bogged down on things like having the right DSO documents and how to make certain structures work, but I think this is the foundation



for any good dental practice. Understanding the patient avatar from the beginning will make that jump from \$1.5 million to \$5 million much easier.

When we started, Dr. Chad Evans, Co-Founder and Clinical Chair of Community Dental Partners, hadn't even opened a dental practice yet. He was working as an associate at another practice, but he had a vision for what he wanted to build. We had to map the patient avatar out on a whiteboard, based around his experience as an associate. A lot of dentists these days have the tools to sort of cheat this system. Using your practice management system data, you can look at the details of who is walking through your front door and laser focus your services on that majority demographic. Offering general services for everyone is never a bad thing, but you could be much more effective by homing in on the services that your customers are constantly coming in for.

A lot of people treat entrepreneurship as a sort of mission to Mars. Pushing for innovation is ambitious and not the wrong approach, but you will have more success with focusing on the consistency of the experience for

#1 CLOUD-BASED PRACTICE
MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

The All-in-One for All Your Locations

Group Practices + DSOs

- Anywhere, Anytime Access
- Centralized Operations
- Role-Based Security
- Modern Patient Experience
- Custom Reporting & Analytics
- World Class Cybersecurity
- 24 / 7 / 365 Customer Care



Schedule your private, personalized
DEMO TODAY



888.910.HERO
go.curvedental.com/deo



the customer. Consistency with your customer service is critical. Remember, the customer is the boss, and you are there to meet their needs.

Decide what your growth path is

When it comes to the growth path of your practice, you have a few choices to make. Each of these choices comes with their own separate choices down the road. But starting off, you need to decide how exactly you want to grow. Do you want to do acquisitions? Or do you want to do a de novo strategy?

No one path is wrong, it just necessitates different strategies. With the de novo strategy, you will likely already know your patient avatar type. For an acquisition approach, you might be better at growing a practice and supporting that practice as the customer

It's also important to remember that "hero" culture is only going to take you so far. You cannot sustain being the sole driver of your business long-term, and you shouldn't want to. Building a dental practice takes a ton of work, and you are going to need the help of your team to pull it off successfully. Build your team and grow revenue for the practice through them. Find ways to double down on what's working and totally shed what isn't.

Maybe you have a different skillset when it comes to the growth path. Some dentists decide "I can work on getting funding" which can be your own growth path.

Whatever it is, you need to decide how you are going to bring value to the table. The most important thing to remember is that your growth path doesn't have to be linear. There are seasons to growth, and it isn't always going to be easy. You get to decide the vision.

Prioritize standard operating procedures over new technologies

Our CTO at Community Dental Partners, Michael Irvine, will often say that all technology does is accelerate whatever system you have in place. If you have a bad system and you buy some technology to throw on top of that, you are just going to exacerbate the problem. Before you try to solve all your problems with new technology, finalize some standard operating procedures that you think are really meaningful. Technology can be an incredible tool, but much of it is not designed to solve everything. People solve problems, software automates the solutions.

Instead, focus on creating a consistent experience for your patients and your team. Introduce standardizations to your practice to ensure consistency at every touchpoint, from the front desk to the hygienists. Standard operating procedures will last longer than any piece of technology or equipment you can buy. They are also highly malleable – if one isn't working, throw it out and find one that will. You won't get that same flexibility with technology. ■

Partnership Considerations for DSO Owners

By the Skytale Group

Choosing the Right Partner

As our businesses develop and add more locations, scaling culture, work ethic, and patient care can be difficult. When we can't be everywhere at the same time, we wish to duplicate aspects of ourselves. It's in these situations where we consider including someone else as a partner.

A partnership should be considered a tool for long-term investment into the growth of your business. You'll need time to evaluate the personality, professionalism, and patient care that can help you retain value in your practice when you are not there. While partnership can be a retention tool to keep a valuable doctor in your business, you want to be sure you retain the right individual.

Mitigating Risk in Your Partnership

Partners will want a seat at the table and a sense of control. Be proactive and set the boundaries at the genesis of the partnership.

Define a partner's limits of control, responsibility, and financial commitment. All will impact the quality of your partnership. If imbalance is felt by either party, it will deteriorate the relationship. Ask yourself: Is this someone I can work with, depend on, and respect for years to come?



Duties & Responsibilities

When providing an opportunity for someone to share in the profitability of your organization, consider an increase of their obligations.

Permitting input from the partner on all topics will help them feel fully invested in the direction and growth of the organization. The new partner can be used as a fantastic ally to implement change when a leader beside the office manager is required.

There are several choices available when instituting a program to keep a provider vested in the business. Some are equity-based, while others are focused on increased compensation rates, with or without a buy-in.

Collection Rate Partner

Award a higher rate of compensation in exchange for a buy-in. The amount paid by the prospective partner would not be refundable, but in exchange would be guaranteed a higher

compensation rate. Since the break-even of the payment vs. the pay-out would extend over multiple years, this binds the partner to the practice.

Profit Sharing Partner

Gift a share of profits realized by the business. This method states a baseline profitability percentage or dollar amount and pays a portion of the practice's profits over the stated amount.

Consider debt obligations when configuring this method. Debt reduces the profits of the business, reducing the payout a new partner would receive. You want to be sure the partnership is equitable.

Stock Purchase

Sell shares of your practice. Typically limited to the single location where the partner would operate. This is a "forever" deal and requires the long-term commitment of energy, time, and financial resources to be successful. A fully vested partner can be a major asset, but all assets have corresponding liabilities. Consider with care – it can provide a huge incentive, but also create major headaches.

If you would like assistance re-thinking your strategy to partnering doctors in your organization, can benefit from strategic operational consulting, or outsourced CFO services, contact the team at Skytale at info@skytalegroup.com. ■

Comprehensive Cleaning Solutions

Why the right ultrasonic cleaning solution can make all the difference in effective sterilization practices for dentists.



Ensuring that your instruments are clean and ready to go is a huge part of daily operating in any dental practice. The reputation of your practice and the safety of your patients depends on clean instruments at every appointment.

Infection control procedures have always been of the utmost importance for dental care, which is why the ultrasonic cleaning solution is a revelation of sterilization practices. Prior to the use of technologically advanced cleaners like the ultrasonic bath, dentists had to clean all their instruments by hand, a difficult and time-consuming process that hardly provided the level of cleanliness that modern technology provides.

Ultrasonic cleaning uses high frequency sound waves, transmitted

through a solution of water and detergent. As the sound waves pass through the liquid, it causes the formation of microscopic bubbles which are forced to expand and implode, causing an activity called cavitation. This is essentially a scrubbing effect, which gently removes off the surface area of anything submerged in the tank.

Improving the performance of your ultrasonic bath

Because instrument sanitization plays such a pivotal role in the health and wellness of your patients, it's critical to optimize the performance of your ultrasonic bath as much as possible. While it can be effective on its own, implementing the right detergent will

give you and your patients better results. Solmetex has designed the PowerSonic Ultrasonic Cleaning Solution to charge the actions of your ultrasonic bath and instrument washer using nano-oxygen bubbles for instantaneous odor and organic matter elimination.

The PowerSonic Ultrasonic Cleaning Solution effectively removes debris, reduces ultrasonic bath sludge and odor, and inhibits the formation of rust. Even after the cleaning process, PowerSonic works to support bacterial digestion when aspirated into the suction system. Additionally, PowerSonic works to reduce rust formation on your instruments, residue byproducts of decaying wastes, and the oxidation of foul gases.

This cleaner is plant and mineral based, requires no mixing, and the container is storage-friendly for dental practices. The environmentally friendly formulation rapidly removes proteins, lipids, and debris, resulting in clean and sterilized instruments every single time. When you use the PowerSonic cleaner, you are effectively reducing the ultrasonic bath sludge caused by the ultrasonic bath, improving the overall performance of your appliance. ■

Solmetex has focused on manufacturing the most comprehensive eco-friendly line of products to assist dental practices achieve compliance with the ever-changing regulatory mandates affecting the dental industry for over 25 years. Solmetex products help prevent contamination of our waterways and comply with the water safety regulations. The Solmetex mission is to provide safety solutions that Protect Your Patients, Your Practice and Your Community.



Stay on top of your instrument cleaning with PowerSonic™ Ultrasonic Cleaning Solution

**Quick,
effective and
winning by a nose.**

PowerSonic™ Ultrasonic Cleaner is a patented, plant and mineral based, **100% enzyme free**, catalytic cleaner that super charges the action of your ultrasonic bath and instrument washer using nano-oxygen bubbles. The power comes from a naturally occurring technology platform that provides enhanced gas transfers, instantaneous odor elimination, and the breakdown of organic waste to essentially “eat up” any remaining contaminants.

You'll *smell* the difference.

To learn more, contact **Solmetex 877-207-1551** or visit **Solmetex.com**

Heartland Dental and Emerging Group Dentistry

How providing a world-class experience for dentists has led to organizational growth. : By Pat Bauer, President and CEO, Heartland Dental

Dental support organizations are a critical piece of the greater puzzle that makes up the dental industry. As the leading DSO in the United States, Heartland Dental is uniquely aware of the role that DSOs play in the industry. Today, Heartland Dental operates with over 20,000 team members, providing non-clinical, administrative support to 1,600 dental offices and more than 2,400 supported doctors across 38 states.

When I started at Heartland Dental in 1997, we had eight offices, and the perception of DSOs wasn't great because people viewed what we do as "corporate dentistry." At Heartland Dental, we have always considered ourselves a group practice with a focus on getting better at what we do – support doctors.

What makes Heartland Dental stand apart from other DSOs is our complete commitment to improving the lives of our supported doctors. As a doctor-led organization, we place the doctors at the center of all that we do, and Heartland Dental supported doctors have complete clinical autonomy over their practice. Our job is to support them through whatever means necessary to help them achieve personal, professional and financial growth.

Who Heartland Dental is

At Heartland Dental, our vision is "to be a world-class company and



JOIN US!

CANCUN

MEXICO October 26-29

FOR THE **2022 BREATHING WELLNESS CONFERENCE!**

THE **VIVOS**
INSTITUTE™

Earn 16.5 CE Credits

Learn more about the innovative and life-changing treatments for patients suffering from sleep-disordered breathing.

Golf Tournament

Enjoy our beachside golf tournament.

Celebrate!

Celebrate Dia de los Muertos with dinner, dancing, and fun on Friday night!

FEATURED SPEAKERS



Matthew Walker, PhD



Jim Hunter



Ben Miraglia, DDS



Don't Miss Out on This Doctor-Exclusive Event!

Use the promo code **DEOCANCUN**

to attend the conference for FREE* for qualifying doctors!

thevivosinstitute.com/bwc22/

*Preregistration with a \$2 nonrefundable processing fee is required up front. In the event you are a "no call, no show" to the event and do not cancel within 14 days of the event, your card will be charged/debited \$2,795 as a set cancellation fee. If you cancel between September 12 and October 12, you will be charged 50% or \$1,398. If you cancel between August 12 and September 11, you will be charged 25% or \$699. There are no penalties for canceling before August 12. Hotel and airfare are not included.

the leader in dentistry.” Not just a leader – we want to be the standard, the company that people ask, “What is Heartland doing about this?” Our mission is very clear: we support doctors and their teams. We don’t perform any dentistry, we help dentists, and their teams deliver the highest quality dental care and experiences to the communities they serve.

My team and I wake up every morning thinking, “What am I going to do to make our doctors more successful?” It’s a simple approach, but it’s hard to do. Our customers are our supported doctors, but we need to know their customers, the patients, to best support them. The doctors are fully responsible for their customer relationships.

The culture at Heartland Dental is laser-focused on helping doctors succeed. There are so many problems in the industry today, and it’s only getting harder for practitioners at all points in their career. Dentists are coming out of school with \$300,000 worth of debt. How are they going to be able to start a practice? Dental technology is evolving at a rapid rate. How are practitioners going to keep up on these trends? DSOs are a great partner for dentists to help them have a successful career in an industry that’s constantly making it harder for dentists to succeed.

On a mission to support doctors

As the saying goes, “if you’ve met one DSO, you’ve met one DSO.” There are all sorts of support models, different ways for practices to grow. At Heartland Dental, what we want is what doctors want. We want to give



them work-life balance. We want to provide more geographical flexibility. We want more education and career advancement opportunities. We want to support doctors in being their best.

The biggest challenge is how do we grow the infrastructure? How do we make sure that we have the right people in place to support our growing network of dentists and their evolving needs? These questions are why attracting and retaining world-class talent is a top priority for Heartland Dental. This focus enables us to continue to provide doctors the best support in the industry. Technology is also making a huge difference in dentistry, and with the support of a DSO it is easier to stay informed on new innovations. If you equip your supported doctors with the right technology and provide the necessary training, they will be better positioned to help their patients.

Outdated technology can greatly affect a doctor’s patient care. Employing the proper technology and tools is just as important as employing the proper people.

Finally, one of Heartland Dental’s biggest differentiators is education. We spend about 2.5% of our revenue on education, and we are on track to do about \$3 billion in revenue this year. Some people wonder why Heartland invests so much in training our supported doctors if they can just turn around and leave. We strongly believe that it would be more detrimental if they weren’t trained, and they stayed at Heartland. Our education offerings span beyond the classroom with our established mentorship programs and leadership development opportunities. There is also a lot of informal learning that occurs, and Heartland Dental supported dentists know they have a network of over

1,500 colleagues they can easily connect with if they need help.

At Heartland Dental, we are intent on providing opportunities for you to be the best dentist you can be, which requires a strong desire to keep learning. If you aren't interested in expanding your skill-set – both clinical and non-clinical – to better provide for your patients, Heartland isn't a good match.

Expanding our network of supported practices

When it comes to the practices themselves, we grow through a combination of affiliations and de novos. We know the demographics of successful practices

and use a proprietary system to strategically place practices where there is the greatest need in the community. For de novo openings, we typically build a standalone building: 4,000 to 4,200 square feet, approximately 12 chairs, two to three doctors and have had success with these supported practices ramping up quickly and experiencing exponential growth.

For affiliations, we look to partner with doctors and practices who align with our core values. We know it won't be a successful affiliation if our cultures are not aligned or complementary. We also look for doctors who want to continue practicing for at least two years. This ensures we

understand their practice and can best support their transition.

Another important aspect of the Heartland Dental approach is our locally branded strategy. We believe that our customers, the dentists, don't want a consistent brand. Our branding approach also enables Heartland to help build upon the legacies of practices we affiliate with and stay focused on supporting dentists.

As we look to the future of the dental industry, it's important to recognize the significance DSOs hold in the industry. Dentists need us and we need dentists, so it's critical that we are constantly working to provide them a better experience. ■

Dentistry's #1 AI-Powered Call Tracking and New Patient Conversion Platform

30% INCREASE IN NEW PATIENT REVENUE

60% REDUCTION IN PATIENT ACQUISITION COST

100% TEAM PERFORMANCE OPTIMIZATION

Averages based on customer data



Why Patient Coverage is Foundational to Practice Success

The coverage options patients use to access care is foundational to practice success. It determines everything important to you – from patient visits to treatment acceptance and practice profit.

On one hand, coverage plans provide huge benefits since patients with coverage visit 2-3 times more often and accept 2 times more treatment than patients without coverage. On the other hand, coverage plans create huge issues since reimbursements and profits vary by 50% or more depending on the plan used. Since 75% of patients utilize coverage plans to purchase care, it's imperative to understand how dental plans impact patient behavior and practice performance.

A Weak Coverage Foundation

Unfortunately, most dental practices have a weak foundation. They participate with many PPOs and discount plans that are unprofitable, complicated, and controlled by third parties. These plans get patients in the door but force practices to accept 25-50% discounts, deal with unnecessary hassles, and utilize inferior treatment protocols. They also provide overly complicated terms to patients that are difficult to understand.

Most practices also ignore the needs of their FFS patients. They



assume that FFS patients visit regularly, accept treatment, and pay full price. In reality, FFS patients visit once every 2 years, accept less than half the recommended treatment, and receive average “day of treatment” discounts. Why? FFS patients feel exposed when they visit your office. They are worried about price and feel no one is looking after them. They avoid visits and treatment, and your teams are forced to offer discounts to incentivize treatment.

Strengthening Your Coverage Foundation

Forward-thinking DSO leaders are increasingly implementing membership plans to strengthen their practice foundation by reclaiming control from PPOs, improving FFS patient commitment to care, and increasing practice production and profit.

A membership plan puts you in control. You control everything from designing care plans for the specific needs of your patients to determining the annual subscription price and controlling the fee

schedule. And your patients get access to affordable, high-quality care without confusing terms, annual maximums, or pre-approvals.

A membership plan is the perfect alternative for unprofitable PPOs. By removing the insurance middleman, you can control care and remove unnecessary costs and hassles for your practice and your patients.

Membership plans are also the perfect solution for improving FFS patient engagement. Membership plan patients visit 2-3 times more often, accept 2 times more treatment, and generate nearly 3 times more collections than FFS patients. A patient's commitment to an annual subscription creates a commitment to care, and the savings they receive incentivizes treatment acceptance.

Kleer for A Guaranteed Return

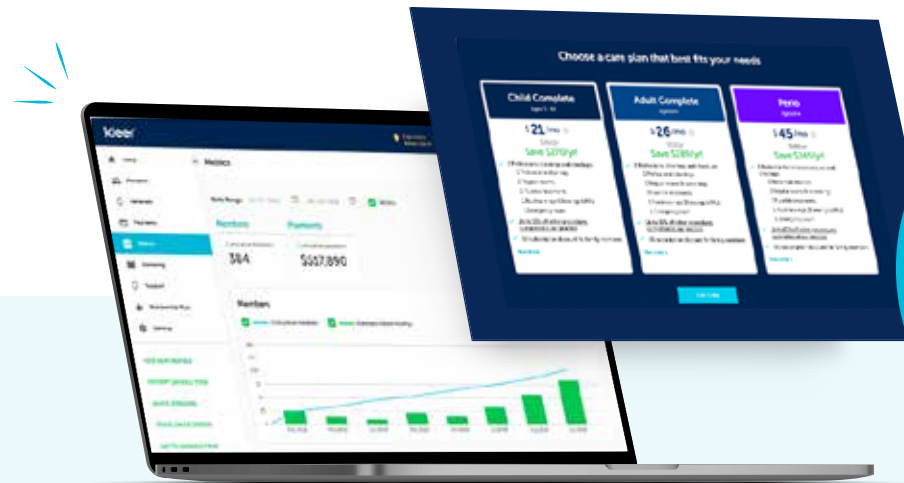
Kleer combines an advanced, cloud-based platform with dedicated and personalized support to ensure your group or DSO has everything you need to easily and quickly design, implement, and professionally manage a successful membership plan. Kleer has implemented membership plans at over 300 group and DSO practices and has a team dedicated to your success.

Learn more about improving patient access to care and building a better, more profitable practice by visiting kleer.com/groups. ■



A better membership plan to fuel results and practice growth.

Whether you've got one location or many, our powerful solution helps you build, manage, and scale a better, more successful membership plan— **driving production, treatment acceptance, and revenue.**



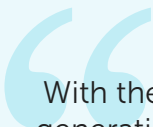
Kleer patients are the best patients!

3X more visits

1.7X more hygiene revenue

2.3X more treatment acceptance

2.1X more production



With the Kleer Platform, I'm able to offer great dental care to all of my uninsured patients while generating incremental and repeatable revenue for our practice. **Kleer has been a great partner and they've delivered an innovative, world class product to the dental market.**

Dr. Lon Kessler, DDS, Founder, Kessler Dental Associates



Custom care plans based on YOUR fee schedules

Easily build care plans to meet the specific needs of your patients, and price them to maximize practice value and ensure competitiveness.



Unmatched support for your success

From implementation to onboarding, training and beyond, our dedicated team of experts is with you every step of the way.



Performance insights and growth strategies

We don't just provide marketing materials — we also work with you to measure plan performance and create growth strategies to ensure your continued success.

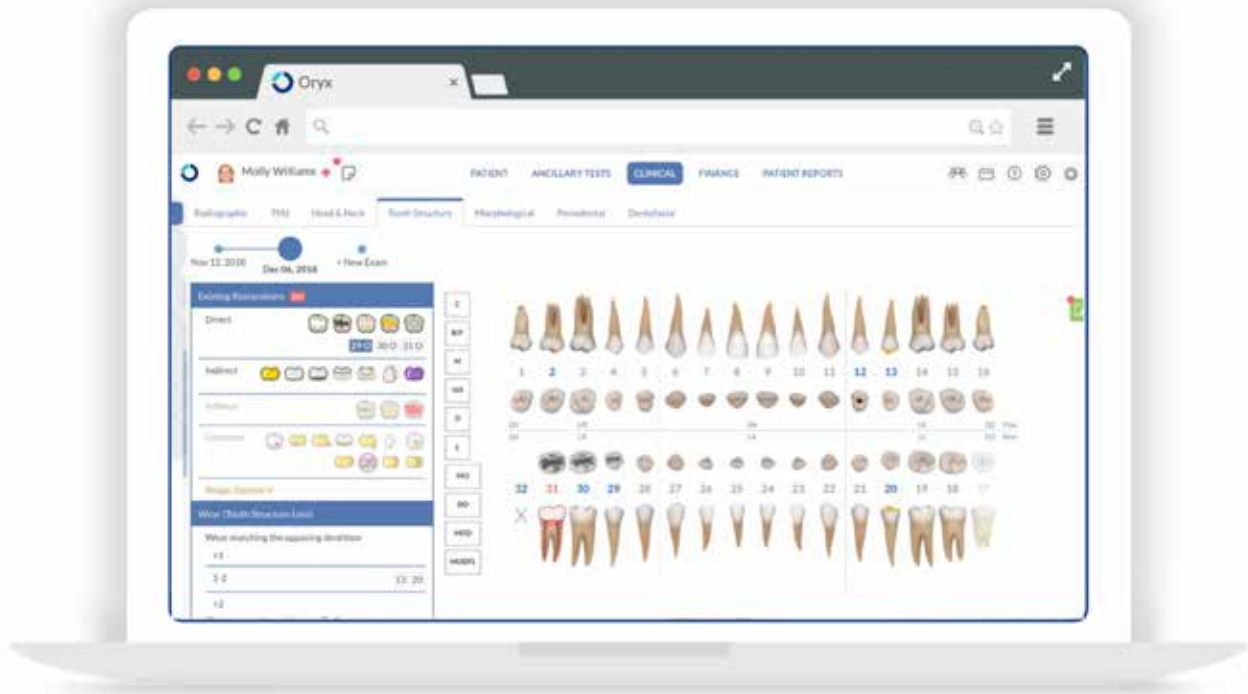
It's better, more affordable coverage for patients. It's easy to manage for your team. It's profitable for your practice. **It's a win-win for everyone.**

Don't wait... start driving practice growth and revenue today!

Learn more at [go.Kleer.com/DEO](https://go.kleer.com/DEO)

The Future of Evidence-Based Dentistry

Evidence-based dentistry is more than just looking at data. It's looking at individual patient needs. : By Dr. John Kois



Innovations and techniques in dentistry are changing all the time. Evidence-based dentistry can also be the future of our industry by restructuring the new normal understanding of the dentist/patient relationship.

One of the things I emphasize at the Kois Center is that the phone should only ring at your business for two reasons: growth (new patients) and praise. If the phone rings for anything else, it's rarely good news. Evidence-based dentistry is more than just looking at data. It's looking at individual patient needs. It's being able to make decisions by weighing your clinical expertise and leveling patient choices that also provide a value proposition. This is not so easy.

In today's market, evidence-based dentistry is about the doctor making informed decisions, based on creating oral

literacy for the patients. The data says that oral health literacy translates into better communication, which translates into better relationships with your patients, which then translates into more dentistry.

How evidence-based dentistry works

It starts with establishing standard operating procedures for your practice. How do you get your organization all on the same page? How do you make it all consistent?

When Starbucks opened in 1971, it was run by three people who knew nothing about coffee. At the beginning, they only sold coffee beans. It took them years to figure out how to implement systems that ensure their customers get a consistent coffee drink, regardless of who serves them. When you see Starbucks now, it looks

totally different from where it started, like many other businesses that evolved successfully.

For instance, the Starbucks' menu is on the wall to let you know what they sell. I think that is simple, and brilliant. How else do you let people know what is available? I've implemented that idea in my practices. What started as a sort of menu with pictures on the wall has led to the big digital monitors that we have now. The idea is that I want people to see what we are doing and value it. If patients are going to value the care they receive, they must understand that you are providing precision medicine – the individualized treatment that will work the best for them.

The future is all about risk assessment and analyzing the data. We're moving from eminence-based concepts to evidence-based concepts which requires standardized data. This also requires an understanding of WHY something has failed (our diagnosis), NOT just merely collecting the raw data on the number of failures. As your organization grows, the people in your organization don't see the same things, even if they are looking at the same things. It's not just about looking at the data, it's about understanding the meaning of the data. This is why the reliance on "Big Data" may be very misleading.

The standardization of data collection is key. One specific technology company, Oryx Dental Cloud-based Software, partnered with the Kois Center to create a solution that facilitates standardized data collection and analysis in minutes. The patient's medical and dental history are completed ahead of the appointment and their risk profile is generated to allow the practice to properly triage the patient. The standard "7-minute exam" automatically generates a report for the patient with evidence-based treatment recommendations. (Figure 1) This improves patient outcomes and quality assurance.

The evolution of the patient relationship

It used to be that "the doctor will see you now." Now, as Eric Topol wrote, the modern paradigm is "the patient will see you now." Patients are moving away from a paternalistic view of the doctor-patient relationship, wanting more involvement. They don't believe the doctor knows best. They are looking for more data, lower cost, and more efficiency. Yet they want human touch. They want everything, but they don't want to follow proper preventive maintenance recommendations.

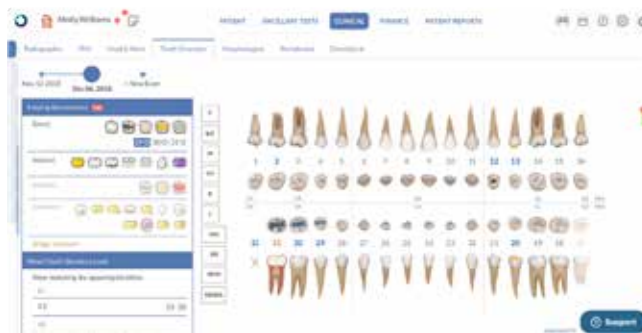


Figure 1: Tooth structure data collection in Oryx Exam module.

It can be frustrating. It's very demanding for the practice, and the need to maintain quality and focus on outcomes in the industry has grown exponentially. This has pushed many practices to leverage technology. New technology can be an incredible tool, but the adoption and adaptation rates can be a significant liability for the practice.

The incorporation of chairside intra-oral scanning technology into your practice offers several benefits to patient communication. The scan is easily delegable (which reduces the burden on the dentist), immediately available to review with the patient, clearly shows them the clinical findings, and is more comfortable and pleasant for the patient than other methods of data collection.



Figure 2: The Oryx tooth structure report generated from exam data.

The needs of the patient have pushed dental practices to change processes. In the same way, I want to change the way patients view the dentist and dentistry: moving away from the “Hitman” who tells them they need a crown to the “Healer” who explains how they can lower the risk of a broken tooth. By using evidence-based care, we can prescribe options for care that show the patient the value in the dentistry, based on their problems. If you have options that are more expensive than others, explain why and what it means for their health. Their understanding of the value of the treatment to them is the key to the evolution of the patient relationship.

Oryx dental software’s patient-friendly risk assessment report is a perfect example of how a dentist should share valuable and educational information with patients. Practices report an increase in case acceptance and referrals because they see the value of an evidence-based personalized report. Precision medicine at its best. (Figure 2)

Becoming the expert of the mouth

A significant part of keeping up with the evolution of the patient relationship is assuring the patient that you are the expert on their mouth. With evidence-based dentistry, you are using data to essentially teach the patient more about their dental health and how their dental history influences their dental health.

For example, when a new patient comes into the office and my preliminary findings indicate stable bone support and no cavities associated with the existing teeth,

it would be easy to assume based on the static data that they are fine and do not need any treatment. However, a proper interview with the patient or a review of their dental history may reveal that certain areas trap food and are a problem. Not all issues can be detected visually, so without this additional data I would have missed the problem if I could not SEE the problem. The patient’s perception is now that I was not thorough in my evaluation. Even if I recover from that particular challenge, the patient now believes that I’m not the expert of their mouth – they are!

The patient’s dental history, a form ignored in many practices, provides critical information about the patient. For example, we may learn about any precautions necessary for successful treatment including allergies to things like chlorhexidine, or fruit allergies that could be triggered by fruit-flavored fluoride. We also learn about prior successes and challenges during previous treatments, which is necessary to predict their risk of future disease and guide treatment choices that will lower that risk. As patients answer the questions on the dental history form they become engaged with their own oral health conditions, often discovering problems they had not been aware of.

How long does it take to develop that level of expertise? Once these systems are in place, it is surprisingly quick. Since they have already completed the medical and dental histories, patients arrive at their appointment with increased awareness of possible problems. Self-reported score systems can help your staff understand and communicate the real

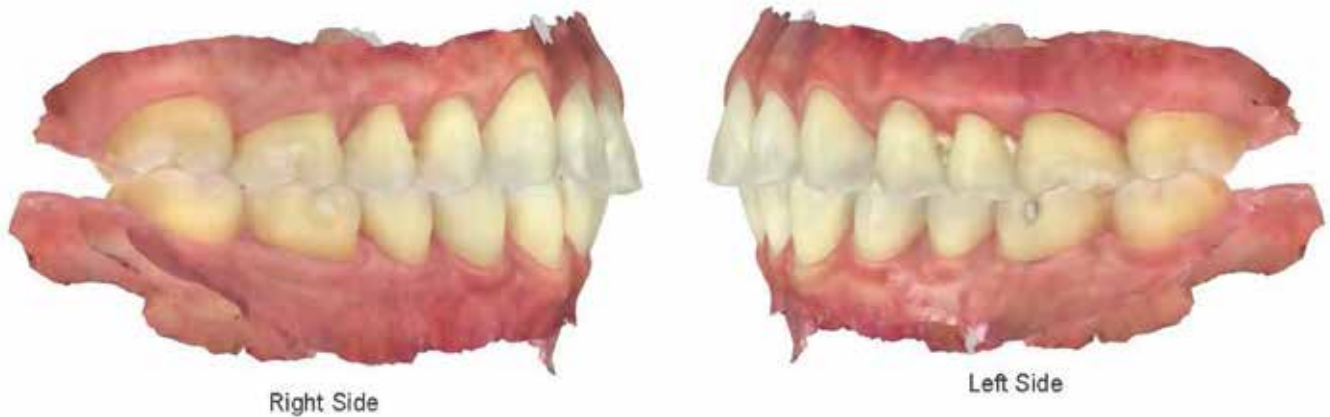


Figure 3: An intraoral scan integrated into the patient’s dental record.

value of what we are doing for the patient. We are in the tooth mortality business and our goal is to have their teeth outlive them. Using data, we can show the patient any indications of risk and outline the steps they can take to lower their risk profile.

Providing precision medicine to your dental patients through the application of evidence-based dentistry is essential to keep your dental practice aligned with modern patient expectations. The use of technology can also improve the consistency and efficiency of your office systems while offering individualized effective patient communications. ■



Dr. Kois received his D.M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, School of Dental Medicine and Certificate in Periodontal Prosthodontics with a M.S.D. degree from the University of Washington, School of Dentistry. He maintains a private practice limited to Prosthodontics in Tacoma and Seattle and is an Affiliate Professor in the Graduate Restorative Program at the University of Washington. In addition, Dr. Kois works with restorative dentists at the Kois Center, a didactic and clinical teaching program, and continues to lecture nationally and internationally. Dr. Kois is the past President of both the American Academy of Restorative Dentistry and American Academy of Esthetic Dentistry and is a member of numerous other professional organizations. He also serves as a reviewer for many journals and is the coEditor in Chief for The Compendium of Continuing Education in Dentistry. Dr. Kois is the recipient of the 2002 Saul Schluger Memorial Award for Clinical Excellence in Diagnosis and Treatment. Additionally, he is the recipient of the 2014 Dr. Thaddeus V. Weclaw Award, which is presented annually to a dedicated educator who embodies the spirit of comprehensive dental care.

For more information about Oryx Dental Software, contact Dr. Rania Saleh at rania@oryxdentalsoftware.com



AI-powered **remote monitoring** that **enables** dental professionals for more of **what matters**

Synchronize the delivery of care **with the need of care, no matter where life takes you**

 **DentalMonitoring**
dental-monitoring.com

Already trusted by 7,500+ practices and 1,000,000+ patients worldwide

DentalMonitoring, Smilemate and Vision are products designed and manufactured by Dental Monitoring SAS, under the DentalMind branding for Health Care Professional (HCP). They are also used by patients under the mandatory supervision of Health Care Professional (HCP). DentalMonitoring and SmileMate are designed to assist HCP in observing remotely intra-oral situations (and monitor orthodontic treatments for DentalMonitoring). Refer to your HCP and/or the Instructions for Use before use. DentalMonitoring product is a medical device (in Europe only), registered as such and holding the CE mark. Vision simulations are generated using artificial intelligence, they are not contractual and may differ from the final results of the patient's treatment. Products availability, claims and regulatory status may differ across countries depending on local regulations. Contact your local representative for further information. AD_COR_AD_001_01_pr_H_US_en

Exploding vs. Imploding

How to leverage today's market conditions for growth while elevating your team.

By J.W. Oliver, Managing Partner for SupportDDS.com



2020 brought changes the world has never seen, and we are confident we will never see again! The facts of 2022 and into 2023 are overwhelming in the hiring difficulties and lack of resources/human capital!

“Every difficulty always presents an amazing opportunity!” - Anonymous

The past two years have seen a great many changes happening world-wide as individuals and companies alike responded to the pandemic and

the fallout that came with it. Problems such as staffing shortages and stressful working conditions at first appeared to be superficial with the annual resignation rate peaking at 42.2 million in 2019. The difficulties appeared to have lessened when the 2020 resignation rate declined to roughly 35.8 million as

people chose to stay at their places of work due to the uncertainty and financial fears brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the work from home phenomenon soon stabilized and created its own challenges within the employment field. With the immediate dangers of COVID-19 having all but disappeared in the USA, the resignation rate rose to an alarming 47.2 million in 2021 and rising.

Staffing shortages are one of the major issues facing the dental industry. Practices saw an overwhelming rise in demand for both health and cosmetic services as soon as the pandemic began to ease, leading to an estimated 25% shortfall in dental staffing. Organizations that refused to take note of and act upon employment issues were the hardest hit. This contributed to the estimated 1.4 million workers in the healthcare industry who voluntarily quit their jobs. While this widened the resource gap, it has proven to be a great opportunity for practices and individuals to “shake things up” and adopt changes that were needed by the dental industry, just not yet embraced. (Ironic how a pandemic became the mother of necessity.)

Remote/Virtual Team Members

One innovative and welcome change is the global expansion of the current resource pool to include highly skilled/educated workers based in different geographical locations through what we’ve termed as “Insourcing”. SupportDDS has leveraged the university educated, “Queen’s English” speaking resources

in Zimbabwe, Africa to make a true global impact in the dental community.

Insourcing is our proven method of solving open/under-resourced positions in dental practices and DSO organizations who might otherwise still be reeling from team member shortages that have been exacerbated during the past 2+ years. It serves as a channel to update traditional working structures to a more innovative/progressive and cost-efficient format that other industries have utilized for decades. Insourcing focuses on getting the right people, in the right seats, working on specific tasks that have been under-resourced by internal teams who can now focus on high priority tasks and duties. This “elevates” your team to focus on the roles that render the highest ROI and guest(patient) care.

Organizations now have the option to streamline their operations with pre-trained/qualified individuals tackling the tasks they were best suited to perform. This is a welcome change to absorb tasks like insurance verifications, EOB’s, billing and collections, scheduling, hygiene recare, bookkeeping, and our all-time favorite Director of First Impressions (new guest/patient calls).

Insourcing brings the ability to find immediately trained and qualified team members, (from initial call to start date in as little as 5 business days), while reducing the overhead and associated compensation costs estimated at up to a 60% savings. This is even a greater savings/percentage when you factor in office space, IT equipment hard costs, healthcare costs, leave time, vacation, etc.

Opportunity for Upgraded Culture

Many factors encouraged more progressive practices to review the work-from-home environments. Dental practices that had traditionally hired team members to report physically to work, now embraced remote options. These organizations became more attractive to team members who may have otherwise left for more flexible working conditions. Apart from virtual working conditions, partial work-from-home scheduling also lessened the stress and pressures that were causing some of the voluntary resignations. These events make one thing clear, traditional working setups no longer work as well as they did in prior decades. People now demand greater flexibility from their employment options, while exercising their power to get the best work-life-balance possible.

The Great Resignation has served to clarify the misconception that money solves all. Skilled workers want to be remunerated in accordance with their qualifications, but many other factors influence their choices; family, stress, faith values, and how short life really is are just a few.

What’s the Way Forward?

Workplace flexibility and willingness to use technological solutions such as remote/virtual teams, (Insourcing with SupportDDS.com) can be used to offset the rising costs and staffing shortages.

Time will tell which organizations will rise above the “Great Resignation” and turn it into an opportunity to leverage growth and elevate their teams. ■



Organic Growth

Within the last calendar year, Lollipop Dental has more than doubled its revenue. Owner Dr. Mary Pham shares the keys to their success.

By Graham Garrison

Dr. Mary Pham puts a heavy emphasis on relationships. Not just in balancing work with her personal life, but also in the way she and her team at Lollipop Dental approach their patients. “We treat our patients very conservatively,” she said. “When it comes to dentistry, some doctors recommend a lot of treatment to patients. We come from the mindset of, ‘If this were my child, I would do this,’ and that’s how a lot of our conversations go.”

Yet that conservative approach has led to phenomenal growth. Within the last year, Lollipop Pediatric Dentistry & Orthodontics, a dental group practice in communities in and near Orange County, California, has grown from \$6.5 million to \$14.5 million in revenue, with four locations and three on the way. How have they done it? “Our growth has been organic,” Dr. Pham said, “because ultimately we’re taking care of the patients like they’re our family.”

In an interview with The DEO, Dr. Pham shared some of her best practices and lessons learned through her organization’s growth.

Word of mouth

Lollipop Dental has doubled its revenue mainly by expanding the number of patients. “About 70% of our new patients are from patients who refer us to their friends and family,” Dr. Pham said. “We continually see support from patients that believe in what we’re doing, which is creating an amazing, fun, and educational experience for their children at the dentist.”

Listening to patients

Dr. Pham is not averse to adding more chairs and team members, but the motivation behind those additions may look slightly different than other practices. Over the years, Lollipop Dental has added several services from patients asking whether her practice would provide them. “In our strategy sessions with our team, we’ll ask, ‘What are patients asking for that we’re not providing, that they have to go somewhere else, but want from us?’ Having a team that believes in

listening to customers and fulfilling what they need is key, she said.

Laser-focused on the patient

When you have this kind of growth, you need the manpower, Dr. Pham said. “Your front office team can’t do all the things they were doing for 40 patients when now they have 80.” So, Lollipop Dental leaders are committed to looking for creative ways to support their team so that they can stay patient focused. “Everyone in our practice is laser-focused on the patients and the patient experience,” Dr. Pham said. “A lot of the administrative tasks that are not patient facing, such as insurance verification or billing, are done by our remote outsource team. Our outsource team consists of 35 team members, and handles tasks that include insurance verification, billing, and accounts receivable, as well as a call center.”

Develop leaders from within

As Lollipop Dental grew in size and profitability, Dr. Pham said she realized she wasn’t able to support a staff of 120-plus the same way she could a smaller team. “We went from 25 team members to now over 120 team members” she said. “So I started promoting from within, leveling up people that I saw were special and going through coaching and leadership development to allow them an opportunity to not only grow themselves, but help continue to support the organization as we grow.”

Identify partners

Even with its growth, Lollipop Dental has maintained about the same level of practitioners as it had a few years ago. In Orange County, California, there’s no shortage of dentists. Most of the dentists in the area work



part-time at different practices. “As we grew, three of our doctors became full-time,” Dr. Pham said. “They left other companies to work with us as we grew.”

In the next step of growth, Lollipop Dental is offering partnership opportunities for doctors who are dedicated to the company and its vision and mission. “We want our best doctors to have some ownership, and this also helps us to retain them with the company because they’re so amazing at what they do.”

Have regular strategy sessions

Lollipop Dental’s leadership team meets at least once a month with the specific intent to drill down into strategy – what worked, what didn’t, and what to implement the following month. “We meet three days a week to talk about our culture, our team, and to make sure we are on track to meet our goals,” Dr. Pham said. Lollipop Dental’s leadership team has a very active pulse on the day-to-day business. They do a recap of all the offices and departments every week, asking managers, “How did you do last week?” If something is not working, they brainstorm ideas to pivot and change it the following week. “We respond very fast.”

The meetings normally consist of Dr. Pham, a regional manager, clinical operations manager, and pediatric and orthodontic clinic managers. “Then we have administrative and clinical leaders,” Dr. Pham explained. “Our leaders are responsible for implementing the strategies into each location and are actively involved in our strategy sessions.”



Share teams

Lollipop Dental’s strategy is de novo. “We find that with de novos, we can set up a practice exactly the way we want,” Dr. Pham said. “There is brand recognition, and a skilled team who live in a very localized area. Our offices are within a 15- to 20-minute drive of each other. So, we are able to share teams and get off the ground running without much downtime.”

Be prepared to pivot

While Lollipop Dental grew from one, to two, to three and four practices, Dr. Pham didn’t feel there was a difference in the challenges her business faced. Rather, just the recognition that there was always something needing to be done.

“For instance, the front office was missing way too many phone calls, so we needed to quickly solve the issue,” Dr. Pham said. “We pivoted and fixed that issue quickly with our call center. We put the issue into a task, assigned it to a leader, and executed quickly. With growth, the biggest challenge to adding more team members has been training them quickly with the same level of care that we are known for.”

Emphasize retention

Lollipop Dental’s goal is to retain every single person who is hired. “If you don’t have that support for them in place, then people don’t feel like you care and they’re not happy,” Dr. Pham said. “So, it’s really

ClearFees ClearGrowth ClearPay™

onDiem ClearPay™ eliminates concerns about staffing costs so you can focus on what really matters—growing your practice safely.

YOU EARN



\$5,500

Avg value of one day of RDH production and referred dental treatment

YOU PAY



\$500

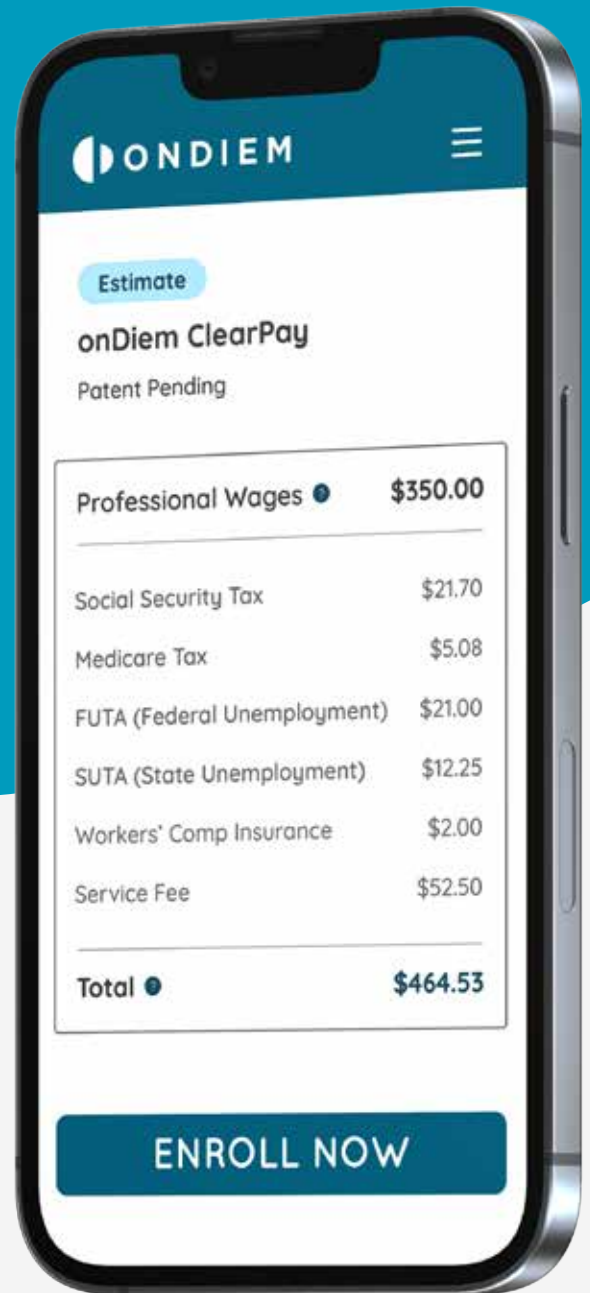
Avg. Day Temp Wages, Labor Costs + Service Fee

YOUR ROI



\$5,000

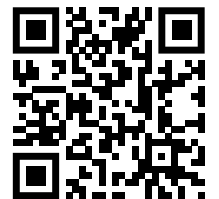
Avg return on investment for 1 temp RDH shift



Hiring illegal 1099 temp labor puts your business and your patients at risk. ClearPay™ eliminates the mystery of what it really costs you to hire a temp safely. With your compliance burden covered by onDiem, you can focus on maximizing the return on every staffing dollar you spend.



Visit our website to learn how transparent labor pricing can help you maximize revenue growth using affordable temporary staffing.



important to me where we get a pulse for how team members are feeling at 30 days, 60 days, and 90 days.” Lollipop Dental has built a 90-day template to track whether a new team member is doing well in their new role and feeling supported. “If we get feedback that they’re not feeling great in their new position, we brainstorm, work out the issue, and follow up. This is how people will know that you care. Their concerns are brought up, and we are truly intentional about fixing them.”

Be picky with new team members

Bringing people in and giving them the support they need to get acclimated has helped Lollipop Dental with retaining amazing people. “But also, we’re just pickier when we bring someone on,” Dr. Pham said. “We look more at the stability of their resume. Do they bounce around? Our goal is to focus on the patient experience and get the right people in that really believe in what it is that we’re doing, and give them the support that they need so that they want to stay.”

Set the example

Dr. Pham likens her leadership journey to the perspective of someone who used to look at parenting as a simple task, until they actually became parents. “Here you are without kids thinking, ‘it doesn’t look that bad,’ but then you have them and you’re wondering ‘Why didn’t anyone tell me how much I would love these human beings’... or how hard it would be to take care of them?” Opening a new practice is an amazing experience, Dr. Pham said, but it comes with a set of challenges. “I think that going from one location to now, how I’ve changed the most as a leader is that I’m a lot more resilient to things going wrong to where I understand that everyone in the company is watching how I respond to difficulties.”

So when Dr. Pham gets the news that a team member is leaving, or a patient is upset, she wants to set the tone by remaining calm. “It’s OK,” she will tell her team. “Let’s learn from our mistakes and pivot. That’s how we are better.” Dr. Pham said her team responds in a similar way to adversity. “It’s really nice to

see what you’re doing rubs off on them unintentionally.”

Let them know you care

“They call me the mom of Lollipop Dental,” Dr. Pham said. It’s important to nurture and connect with your team. This creates priceless dedication and loyalty with your people. “They want to know you truly care.

“I think you get to a certain point where I feel like I am now, where if I open four offices or 50 offices, it’s not really going to change my life that much,” Dr. Pham continues. “I feel content with my family life, with my marriage, and with my team. So, everything that I’m building now is to help all of those around me that have dedicated their lives to helping build our company. Building these offices, they’re not really for me. They’re more partnership offices for our doctors to have some ownership in what they helped build. For my team members who have been with me 8, 9, 10 years, who grew up at our practice, I want them to become leaders and equity holders too.”

For instance, one Lollipop Dental leader started with Dr. Pham 10 years ago as a teenager. She’s 27 now and recently became a mom. “It’s so amazing to see someone grow from a 17-year-old teenager to now a mom and a leader in a \$50 million company,” she said. “Those are things that drive me now. I have these people who have essentially dedicated their whole lives to something they believe in. So, why not continue growing a beautiful company that can change lives and provide opportunities that not many people get?” ■

Find Like-Minded People

Dr. Pham said being a part of The DEO has encouraged her to keep going on her journey as a dentist entrepreneur, even when certain circumstances have been difficult. “The people you meet in The DEO change your life,” she said. “Being able to talk to people that say, ‘Hey, you’re going to feel this, but you’ll get through it. You’re going to just bounce back. Don’t let it get you down. We’re all going through that.’ Knowing they understand gives you a whole other level of motivation.”



Smile Now, Pay-over-time.

**More patients approved.
More care provided.**



"Sunbit has changed the way we do business."

Dr. Michael Riccobene
CEO, Riccobene Associates



"This is the best financing tool we've seen
come to the market."



Ryan Heroy
CEO, BDG Dental



sunbit.com/dental

Loans are made by TAB Bank.



Over
85%
get approved

**The kind,
kind of payment.**

To Brand or Not to Brand?

By Ray Caruso, CEO, Lone Peak Dental Group

To brand or not to brand your multi-site group?

This question has been around since the beginning of multi-site dental groups. Both strategies have pros and cons, and companies generally choose their path early into growth. I was torn on which direction to take when assessing Lone Peak's future. I weighed both options and came up with a new solution that provides the positives of both branded and non-branded entities.



Why should you brand?

Branding your office is not just the elements such as logos and colors; it is your unique identity. It creates recognition, builds trust, improves marketing, and develops loyalty. A brand is a personality and culture that attract patients and team members.

Do you carry the brand to a second office? It certainly would make sense to keep trust, recognition, and loyalty to help your new practice grow! It also saves money in marketing, gives ease in social media, and improves SEO.

Why wouldn't you brand?

In my experience, the main reason multi-unit dental groups stay

unbranded is risk avoidance. When you affiliate with a new office, most of the asset purchased is goodwill, which we know as trust, loyalty, and recognition. You need to keep that brand recognition in the community, otherwise, you're just buying chairs.

I am a frequent traveler, and in my early days, I was brand-agnostic. I flew whatever was cheapest or most convenient. Now I won't fly certain airlines because of a poor experience. Experience is another area to consider when branding. What happens if one of your practices is known for poor customer service. Does the brand hurt you? Will customer reviews taint the overall reputation for the rest of the locations?

What's the solution?

We believe branding without risk is the right strategy for our business. A new approach was needed – brand the service model, not the office. We developed something we call Kidsperience to unify our pediatric dental offices. Our service model defines what we do and still allows offices to maintain their unique identities. We designed Kidsperience to provide caregivers and patients with positive encounters every visit through excellent customer service. It enables us to have a brand within a brand and deliver the benefits of group marketing without its risks.

Kidsperience also promotes a look and feel. When we build or acquire new offices, we brand them internally with our Kidsperience collateral. We place Kidsperience logos on websites and patient-facing materials and train new teams and doctors on why we do what we do. Kidsperience promotes consistency and purpose in our daily operations and builds our desired culture.

You must ask many questions to determine the best strategy for your business model. Will branding help drive business to other locations? Will you build offices or acquire them? Are communities and doctors ready for branded dentistry? Is there another approach?

We spent a lot of time on that last question and the answer is yes. Branding the service model is what we found to be the future for Lone Peak Dental Group. ■



Never be stuck without a front desk again!

VIRTUAL FRONT DESK SERVICES

Does your practice need some extra hands in the front? Consider using our Virtual Front Desk Services. Our services can be used as a permanent or interim resource for your practice. Below are some examples of items we can help with.

- Dental Concierge Receptionist (Phone Services)
- Insurance Aging
- Hygiene Recare
- Patient Aging
- Recruitment
- Billing/Posting
- Special Projects

Contact us to learn more about how we can help!

📞 (916) 500-4125 ✉️ contact@swissmonkey.io



Swiss Monkey

YOUR DENTAL PRACTICE
OPERATIONS RE-IMAGINED.

(916) 500-4125

contact@swissmonkey.io

www.swissmonkey.io



I really love your company and what you have put together. It has given me the ability to focus on dentistry which I really needed to do. Thank you again for providing such a great service! - General Practice, Big Sur, CA

3 Trends Driving DSO Success

Successful dental groups are incorporating technology that makes it easier to schedule patients, pay for services, and return for future treatment.

If the key to surviving 2021 was resiliency, the key to success in 2022 is convenience.

Both patients and staff members are craving anything that makes life just a little easier. Fortunately, technology is advancing at record speed. Successful dental groups and DSOs are capitalizing on three technology trends to spur growth and revenue.

No. 1: Make it Easier to Schedule Online scheduling is no longer a nice-to-have. It's become a must-have.

The popularity of sites like OpenTable for restaurant reservations changed how people think about making appointments. They no longer want to have to call during business hours. They want to be able to go online and select a time that works best for their busy schedule.

Smart technology lets dental practices choose which services can be scheduled online, with which providers, and for which amount of time. Select an online scheduling provider that tracks the revenue associated with each online appointment so you can see how it's benefitting your business.

No. 2: Make it Easier to Return for Treatment

With staffing shortages, inflation, and supply chain issues, it's more important than ever to maximize your schedule. This used to be a time-consuming process for the front desk team. Now smart technology uses artificial intelligence to quickly identify just high-value patients with unscheduled treatment and lets the dental team send targeted emails and text messages with a link to schedule.

While the trend used to focus on recare patients for hygiene, now the trend is shifting toward reactivating patients who have already been diagnosed. By sending them reminders to schedule and including a booking link or a phone number for them to call, successful dental groups are making

it easy for patients to complete their treatment and restore their oral health.

No. 3: Make it Easier to Pay

People no longer want to receive a bill in the mail and pay by check or call the practice and give their credit card number over the phone. Instead, successful dental groups are adopting mobile payment technology. This allows patients to pay quickly and easily online via text or email. This text-to-pay technology can virtually eliminate paper invoices by sending automated payment reminders via text and email with a secure link to an online payment portal.

Successful practices have expanded the types of payment they accept to include cash, credit, Apple Pay, Google Pay, ACH electronic fund transfers, and monthly payment plans. They're also selecting payment processing vendors that make it possible to offer a cash discount to patients, which saves thousands of dollars a month on credit card processing fees.

The best DSOs know creating a fast and frictionless patient experience is the key to winning and keeping patients now and in the future. Now is the time to embrace technology and automation tools to meet the demands of today's patients. ■

Successful dental groups are adopting mobile payment technology. This allows patients to pay quickly and easily online via text or email.

Simplifeye empowers doctors by automating the business side of their practices. The company provides software solutions that digitize processes including online scheduling, 24/7 website live chat, payment processing, patient recare and reactivation, and business listings. To learn more, visit simplifeye.com.



0% Credit Card Processing Fees? **Yes, please!**



See how much your group could save.

Plus, enjoy text-to-pay, customized payment plans, wireless terminals, and so much more.



simplifeye.com | 646-846-7467

Select Dental Management: Doctor retention, patient retention and practice growth go hand in hand

By Graham Garrison

Elliot Zibel could see that his childhood friend Dr. Jonathan Mason had a good thing going. The fee-for-service practice Dr. Mason had bought in Manchester, Vermont in 2015 had more than doubled in growth in a couple of years. Intrigued, Zibel wanted to better understand how Dr. Mason drove growth. The answer, he found, was in Dr. Mason's patient-centric approach. "Growth was driven by more comprehensive patient care and improved patient experience," Zibel said.



The duo was confident they could recreate that success on a larger scale, so in 2018 they started Select Dental Management, a Dental Partnership Organization, in the Northeast. They initially partnered with four practices and grew them organically 60% the first year they

were in operation. Today, Select has over 120 doctors and 39 practices in eight states. "Building SDM has been an enormous challenge and our success has not been linear," said Zibel. "We have made a ton of mistakes on this journey, but we learned from each one. Every obstacle we faced



has truly represented an opportunity for individual and organizational improvement."

Perhaps the biggest lesson learned from researching the industry was weak organic growth experienced in practices post affiliation with DSOs broadly. "We asked ourselves, "Why weren't these groups able to drive growth in line with, or above, the market?" The answer came down to doctor retention. The groups able to retain a higher percentage of their doctors almost always performed better than those that didn't. So, Select started with a focus on being doctor-centric and built out its organization from there. "A true doctor partnership model was the best way for us to create alignment and drive doctor retention," Zibel said.



Do you know how to grow your EBITDA?

EBITDA can be improved by reducing costs, increasing revenue, and building company infrastructure that can be leveraged across multiple locations.

CONSULTING TO GROUP PRACTICES AND EMERGING DSOS

Rely on our team's 30+ year's experience in operating, managing, growing, and monetizing group practices and DSOs throughout North America. Understand the pitfalls to avoid, accelerate your growth, and increase your EBITDA.

ACQUISITIONS

For entrepreneurial dentists seeking to add one location or fifty, allow the experts to advise and manage your acquisition strategy. All too often, a bad acquisition can lead to overpaying, poor integration into your platform, and/or negative cashflow or bankruptcy due to improper deal structuring.

CAPITAL SOURCING

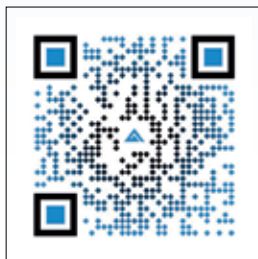
Don't go to the bank without a business plan to "tell the story" of your company and your vision. As lending sources tighten, sophisticated financials and a detailed picture of your growth strategy are required in order to raise capital.

Supporting Dentists and Their Business Growth for 30 Years



"Aligned Dental Partners were true partners with us in forming and launching our DSO. They offered insight, options, and information in a manner that felt like they were supporting the individual dentist partners' best interests, but also nurturing the vision of our company."

– Dr. Shane Ness, CoFounder, Evident Alliance



**SCAN HERE TO SCHEDULE
A FREE ONE-HOUR EBITDA
COACHING SESSION**

aligned dental partners



Alineddentalpartners.com • 8429 Lorraine Rd. #426 • Lakewood Ranch, FL, 34202 • 440-561-0264

At Select, not only do doctors retain ownership, but they're treated like true partners. It's a very collaborative relationship. "We're focused on preserving the identity of what they have and what they've built, which has gotten them to be in the top 1% of dental practices," Zibel said. "We work with our doctors on how we can grow their practice in a patient-centric way, together. We support the development of strategic plans and the execution of those plans, but it's not a cookie cutter approach. It's much more decentralized. What we focus on to improve one practice might be totally different than a practice two miles down the road."

Doctors have substantial clinical autonomy for anything that impacts patient care and patient outcomes, including material and lab selection. Select invests heavily on development, continuing education and training for its clinicians. Six regional clinical leaders help with everything from doctor recruitment, onboarding, to development. "We are a clinician-led organization."

The doctor-centric partnership model has paid off for Select which boasts doctor retention and patient retention rates greater than 90%. The dental practices Select has affiliated with for over a year have grown more than 15% post affiliation on average. "We want to demonstrate an ability to consistently improve and grow the practices we affiliate with. Growth is driven by improved patient care and that is what really excites and motivates our leadership team and partners."



Patient retention

"The patient comes first in our model and patient satisfaction is one of the core metrics we use to evaluate our success," said Zibel. Select has identified 25 steps in the patient journey, starting with how the phone is answered and how the patient is greeted in the practice. "Each step is an opportunity to exceed expectations and create a 'WOW' patient experience." Select practices have over 7,000 reviews – 98% of them 5 stars – with an average Google score of 4.9.

Patient satisfaction is one of the organization's four pillars, along with employee engagement, practice growth and practice efficiency. Specifically, Select is focused on driving growth in active patients, which represents the number of unique patients that have been in the practice in the past 18 months, consistently across all practices. The biggest driver of active patient growth is not attracting new patients, its retaining existing patients.

To illustrate the importance of retention as it relates to driving active patient and practice growth, Zibel uses an example of two practices, each with 100 active patients. One of the practices gets 20 new patients a year, the other 50. "Which one do you want to work for?" Zibel asks. "Most people usually say the practice that gets 50 new patients a year. But then I show them that the practice that has 20 new patients is only losing 3 patients a year, so they're adding 17 patients every year. The practice

that has 50 new patients is losing 60 a year, so they're losing 10 patients every year."

The point, Zibel said, is that it's hard to fill a bucket with a hole in the bottom. "Our people understand not only how many new patients we're getting, but also how many are we losing, how many are we re-activating and how many are becoming inactive. We help our practices improve patient retention and quality of patient care by establishing systems, processes, visibility and accountability around key metrics. Ensuring patients are in regular re-care is one of the most important ways to improve the

oral and systemic health of our patients, as well as the health of our practices."

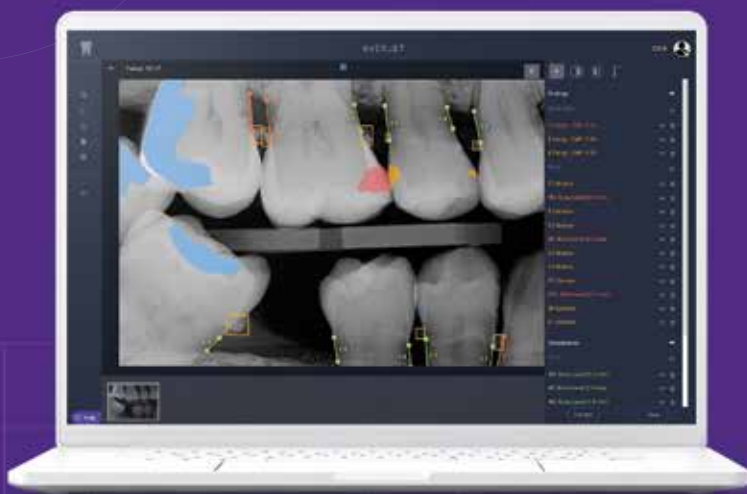
Mining the data

As a self-described "numbers guy," Zibel is always looking for ways to improve patient and practice health with visibility into key metrics. That's why Zibel is excited about the upcoming launch of an enterprise-wide data warehouse. "It doesn't matter if you have one PMS system or several like we do. Getting important information that drives your business is extremely hard with most dental practice management systems."

Indeed, it can be difficult for a growing organization to get data real time in a consistent way. By having this data warehouse, which combines not only the practice management system data, but also data from payroll providers, Google analytics, net promoter scores and all sorts of other things, Select can take their analysis and management support of the business to another level.

"I think it's going to make it a lot easier for us to identify opportunities to improve patient care and to automate workflows which we expect to drive improve patient satisfaction and practice growth going forward," Zibel said. ■

The Power of AI + Dentists = The Future of Dental Care



SEE IT IN ACTION

Book a Demo Today at
[Overjet.com/DEO](https://overjet.com/DEO)



 **OVERJET**

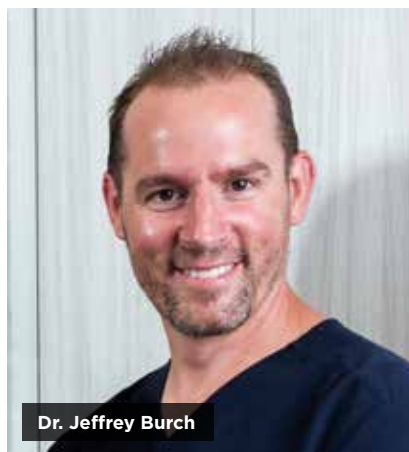
Burch Dental Partners: Revitalizing the notion of what a DSO can be

By Pete Mercer



Finding success in the dental industry is not easy. That romanticism that you picked up in dental school can fizzle out rather quickly, especially when you are operating on your own. One dental group, Burch Dental Partners, is trying to change that by providing doctors with the experience they envisioned in dental school.

Burch Dental Partners is a clinically focused, multidisciplinary dental network based in the Midwest – 12 locations in Illinois, one in Wisconsin – that has been operating since 2007 with a mix of periodontics, pediatrics, and general dentistry. Dr. Jeffrey Burch – a periodontist – and his partners own and operate this hygiene-centric practice. Besides clinical practice, hygienists play a huge role in office management and



leadership teams. There is hygiene focus at every level of the practice.

Dr. Jeffrey Burch said, “My goal in life as a practitioner and a leader is to help prevent people from needing periodontal surgery in the first place. We do this by treating periodontal disease at its earliest stages in the pediatric and general dental offices. Periodontal disease is the most common disease in the world, and we can prevent its progression.” This approach to treatment is designed to help patients understand the mouth/body connection so that they can better understand what it means to be healthy.

Dr. Burch said. “We take a medical approach to our hygiene department, and we have a unique model – we treat patients from birth to death.”

The clinician’s DSO

Part of what makes Burch Dental unique to doctors and its partners is the long-term outlook and commitment to the future. Instead of the typical DSO owner path, where they practice for a few years and ultimately sell to a larger brand, Burch is on a crusade to improve on the DSO model. A sort of DSO 3.0.

Perhaps more accurately, Dr. Burch is on a mission to revitalize the notion of what a DSO can be. His reasoning is

that “the only way to beat a DSO is with a DSO.” Burch said, “We want to attract the people that normally would not want to work or partner in a DSO but are softening to the idea. There must be a good guy out there for what most of us in dental school thought was the ideal practice where you have autonomy, freedom, good profits, lovely patients, and good team members.”

Burch Dental also provides an avenue for career development within the organization, providing opportunities for advancement and development in roles that would not normally allow for that kind of growth. If someone in the organization is interested in developing themselves

into a leader, manager, or a mentor of some sort, there is a pathway to do that at the hygiene level, the assistant level, the business assistant level, manager level, and the doctor level.

He said, “We feel that gives people a message that this is a place that you can stay and grow. We try to have a purpose for what we do. We take care of our community.”

That focus on culture reflects the quality of dental work and patient care that Burch Dental provides, which can be plainly seen in the reappointment rate with their patients. “Industry standard is 91%. We want a 93% reappointment rate on the general side, and we have a 99% rate on

the perio side. We feel like that shows we provide a good patient experience when people are coming back instead of cancelling their appointments.”

Fitting the culture

While it might seem that Burch Dental is a haven for motivated dentists, they are looking for an extremely specific type of team member. Operating off an established value system, applicants have to align with the Burch Dental Core Values, or CHEW:

- > **C** – commitment to excellence
- > **H** – humble and hungry to grow
- > **E** – effective communication with every person you interact with
- > **W** – a winning attitude

Leading Dental IT Provider for
DSOs & Emerging DSOs

medix
Dental IT

**OVER 20
YEARS**

of experience in the
dental IT industry.



medixdental.com

Emerging Groups To Watch

Anyone that does not align with these core values – or doesn't "get it" or "want it" – will not fit the culture that Dr. Burch has established in his organization. By his own admission, not everyone is going to make the cut. He explained, "I had to close an office a year ago, and I sold it for an 80% discount because the doctor's core values did not meet the requirements. He was a partner. We took a massive loss, and we did not look back." It was worth it in the end, because they were able to keep most of the employees.

At the end of the day, it is all about coming together as a team to meet the needs of the patients. When the right people are coming in, it perpetually feeds the culture and improves the work environment. Dr. Burch understands that it requires a lot of help, a lot of teamwork, and a lot of great partners to maintain the culture.

He works to pick the right partners that will focus on working together as a team. "The team member is number one and then the patient is like half a percent underneath it." His philosophy is that if the team is really great and put together, they will care about what matters and do an excellent job. Even when Burch Dental is losing people, it all comes back to the culture. Dr. Burch said, "We have lost quite a few people, but 95% of the people we lost weren't culture fits."

To feed the culture from his end, Dr. Burch has been able to improve benefits and increase salaries in the last year. Burch's employees have great benefits including a new full healthcare plan, paid



holidays, generous PTO, and the highest wages in the area.

"We just decided that whatever is out there, we want to try and beat it," Dr. Burch said. "Because

I do not see it getting better. We started raising everything a year ago because you don't want to be the last one that does the pay increases." ■

All Your CE in One Place



Running a successful dental practice is nearly impossible for one person to do alone. Hiring experts in specific areas and setting up processes and systems are crucial to productively run a practice. Once a process is established, opening another office becomes streamlined. Find key players, put systems in place, grow your business, repeat.

An area often ignored is making sure your key players remain key players by keeping their licenses in good standing. Without a license, they can't produce. Many companies and offices provide CE or a stipend for their staff to facilitate license compliance. With no system in place, state rules for each professional's license type could be misunderstood, therefore causing a key player to fail an audit.

Let's use payroll as an example. As an employer, you have a responsibility to ensure your staff is paid for their work. You also have to ensure your employee payroll meets all the requirements for proper calculations including accurate deductions, appropriate payment for hours worked and other considerations

such as voluntary deductions when applicable. That's a lot of information to keep track of using a manual payroll process. I don't know any employer who does this manually. Why waste valuable time when there are multiple systems that can do this for you? Just like the ease of a payroll system, CE Zoom manages CE and license compliance for your entire staff.

We've surveyed thousands of dental professionals and the top 3 concerns we hear are:

1. Difficulty understanding each state's licensing requirements
2. Finding necessary CE courses for license renewal
3. High cost of CE

CE Zoom solves all 3 of these concerns in one simple program.

The CE requirements required for each profession and license vary significantly from state to state. For example, most professionals understand that AGD-PACE and ADA CERP are approved in all 50 states. However, a common misconception is if the CE Provider is approved then the course will count towards CE. This isn't always the case. Some states don't allow self-help or business courses or limit the hours that count toward CE. Several states require mandatory courses by state-approved presenters for license renewal. For example, New York requires a state-approved infection control course that can only be given by a state-approved presenter.

CE Zoom provides all the required CE courses in one location. There is no need to scour websites or travel to conferences looking for the right CE. As for cost, a dental professional can get all CE through CE Zoom's Your Total Package for a low annual fee.

Navigating the required continuing education can be complex. CE Zoom is here to simplify it. We've done the research, we track licenses with precision, and we provide every course professionals need to renew. One place. One price. No joke.

For more information, contact help@cezoom.com. ■



Kessel Run Management: Pushing the envelope of what a dental organization can do

BY PETE MERCER



What's in a name? Finding the right name for your dental practice or DSO can be a challenging ordeal. While you want it to feel familiar, you also want it to stick out in a way that is memorable and recognizable to everyone. Many labor over the naming process of their organization, spending a great deal of time trying to find something that

conveys meaning and some level of expertise in the field.

Kessel Run Management is a dental management organization based in Houston, Texas. Run by Dr. Kyle Hale, Kessel Run was created as a common management entity to preside over the five locations he and his family were operating in the Houston area. A longtime

Star Wars fan, Hale named the organization after the infamous Kessel Run, a dangerous smuggling route used by the rugged hero Han Solo, as seen in 2018's *Solo: A Star Wars Story*. Now, Kessel Run has two more de novo practices (making it seven practices in total) on the way, as well as 17 managed practices for their Invisalign group purchasing.



TWO LABS. ONE SOLUTION.

One single-minded focus.

Working together, BonaDent and Danaren® satisfy today's needs for expertise, aesthetics, affordability, and turnaround times. **Get started today with the single best relationship** you could have for the growth of your practice.

BonaDent is the **Anterior & Complex Case Specialists** and Danaren® makes **Beautiful Restorations Affordable**. Our two-lab solution allows you to scale your business while maintaining the highest level of care for your patients and satisfying the critical needs of your practice:

- ▶ American-made restorations
- ▶ Quick turnaround times
- ▶ Reduced chair times
- ▶ Superior communication
- ▶ Greater profitability

Ready to grow? We're ready to help.

800.732.6222
bonadent.com/starter-kit
info@bonadent.com



Describing the unique name, Dr. Hale said, “We named it just as a joke and we never changed it. We’ve been told, ‘Oh, you’ve got to change it. You got to change it.’ But what I’m trying to build is something that’s going to be durable, last for a long time, focused on generational wealth and generational opportunities. And if my grandkids have to work for Kessel Run and they’re not nerds about it all, then they’ll just have to think about me one day longer than they would have otherwise.” While Kessel Run Management might have started as a joke, it could prove to be the most memorable and fitting choice for an innovative organization in the dental field.



“We spent pretty much all of COVID growing. We focused on building that internal process, essential systems, and essential team that we had thought about outsourcing before.”

Finding the right footing

Before it was Kessel Run, it was a nameless entity governing a couple of practices in the Houston area that were run by Dr. Hale’s wife, father-in-law, and sister-in-law. When Dr. Hale graduated from dental school, there wasn’t room for him to operate in the family business, so he went out and bought a practice of his own. Around the time that Dr. Hale bought his third practice, his father-in-law was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

“All the knowledge about practice management and practice

leadership went to Florida while he went to get treatment,” Dr. Hale said. “It was almost a full year that he was gone. With the help of his office manager, who had just recently retired after 28 years of working for him, and my other sister-in-law, we had to find a way to keep the business going.”

Dr. Hale realized that there were things about dental business that he had no idea existed or that could exist. A little out of his element, Dr. Hale focused on running a better, linear business. Eventually, they acquired two more practices in a

natural way. “We spent pretty much all of COVID growing. We focused on building that internal process, essential systems, and essential team that we had thought about outsourcing before.”

Before, Dr. Hale and his team described Kessel Run as similar to the well-intentioned, yet aggressive anti-heroes in comic books or Star Wars, but in the dental space. They are very pro-dentist owner, dentist-led, and dentist-driven. Now that they’ve found their footing, Dr. Hale says that they run the business like it’s a management company, even with a little rebellious spirit in the way that they treat it.

Leveraging the business side of dentistry

Somewhere along the way, Dr. Hale and his team realized that the business side of Kessel Run was eating up a lot of their time throughout the week. Dr. Hale’s sister-in-law found an extra \$20,000 hiding in patient AR, giving their organization a financial cushion to operate during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Eventually, they started to make better business decisions along the way, but that first year was really difficult.

“In that first year of trying to systematize so many things, we rubbed long-term employees the wrong way with how coarse and direct we were, and they felt like it was threatening their livelihood,” Dr. Hale said. “We totally screwed that first year up. But when we started running the business well in 2019, it really prepared us for the shutdown in 2020 where we were one of the fortunate offices that had cash flow.”

Dr. Hale and his team turned what had been a “hobby that paid really well” into a profitable business with structure and potential for growth in the future. “We realized we had to do something more structured, and we had to start setting time aside to work on the business. And if we don’t enjoy doing that, then maybe we aren’t long for practice ownership, especially multiple practice ownership.”

Regarding that future growth, Kessel Run’s two new de novo practices are basically branching into a new business – airwave dentistry, a new and growing field that’s focused on the structure of the mouth and

Dr. Hale’s sister-in-law found an extra \$20,000 hiding in patient AR, giving their organization a financial cushion to operate during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

how that impacts your breathing. With this new venture, Dr. Hale is expecting to continue to grow what is already a successful organization that is generating \$10 million in annual revenue for 2022.

Dr. Hale said, “It’s really exciting for me because we have a very clear, clinical North Star with how

we’re pushing every decision, how we’re making purchases, how we’re looking into technology and the patient experience, and how we curate appointments. We are really excited about the new business, and we are still excited to see what kind of growth and relationship we can develop.” ■

FIVE LAKES
DENTAL PRACTICE SOLUTIONS

Let's Grow Your Practice

- PPO Insurance Analysis**
 Our report to develop an optimal PPO participation strategy to achieve higher reimbursements from PPO plans.
- PPO Negotiations**
 Negotiate with PPO insurance companies for higher reimbursement plans.
- PPO Credentialing**
 Review qualifications and credentials to ensure proper participation with insurance carriers.
- PPO Optimizations**
 Optimize participation to produce the same amount of patients at the highest rate of reimbursement.

FIVE LAKES
DENTAL PRACTICE SOLUTIONS

30195 Chagrin Blvd., Ste 114N
Pepper Pike, OH 44124
(877) 955-2537
fivelakespro.com

Resolute Dental Partners: Building a positive team culture

By Daniel Beard



Dr. Gregory Toback regularly reflects on over 15-years of coaching in Little League Baseball and how much it shaped his approach for building dental teams today. As the founder of Resolute Dental Partners, a Connecticut-based DSO that began its journey in 2018, Dr. Toback points to unique commonalities that have helped propel the success of his young company.

“I learned the importance of building a positive team culture in baseball,” said Dr. Toback, a periodontist for over 24 years in New London, Connecticut. “Not just the players, but the parents as well. There are

so many negative stories about youth athletics, so the challenge was how to build an environment with high expectations, a winning mentality, while being inclusive of each team member.”

During his coaching days, Dr. Toback says he learned to reflect on success and failure, work on himself and how his words and actions influenced others, and how to strengthen the team culture each day. “I did a lot wrong along the way. But I had to learn how to let go of regrets and use the experiences to make me more effective the next day. It became a personal process I still use today. The technical aspects of baseball were known far better by many other coaches I competed against. What differentiated our teams was that we learned how to understand and work with a lot of different personalities, all young and vulnerable, and how to recognize each individual and provide the support they needed. Our ability to build team culture led to our success.”

“It all translates to how I run my business today,” he said.

Resolute is a doctor-owned DSO committed to the Connecticut communities it serves, capitalizing on its deep history of dental practices spanning 50 years in the state. Dr. Toback owned and operated Shoreline Periodontics for 18 years before building Resolute on a collaborative model of shared resources, technology, clinical intellect and experiences. With seven locations, 3 periodontal and 4 restorative, Resolute has capitalized on the team building skills across locations.

CANDID



Treat *more* patients.
Save *more* time.
Earn *more* revenue.



COMPLETE CONVENIENCE MEETS CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

Candid empowers dental practices and DSOs with a revolutionary clear aligner system. Our CandidPro™ service helps offices attract new patients and streamline their clear aligner workflows.

By fusing remote monitoring, aligner innovations, deep partnership, and the support of a network of US-licensed orthodontists, CandidPro can help you bring clinical confidence to every case.

Bring the future of clear aligners to your practice. Get started at candidpro.com



“We are building an energized and collaborative community”, states Toback.

“I love dentistry and it’s the vehicle to do what I’m passionate about doing, which is problem solving,” Dr. Toback said. “For many years, I focused on solving clinical problems and that allowed me to expand into solving problems for a growing company.”

Whether it’s baseball or business, the easiest way to building collective momentum is identifying a clear and imminent threat, he said. In baseball, it was the opponent and rival. The threat was very defined each day you walked on the field. Learning how to identify a common threat in business and dentistry was different, but Dr. Toback recognized that his early success had a similar style in getting the team to rally behind a common cause and create a winning mentality. As Resolute began to scale and acquire other dental teams, Dr. Toback realized Resolute itself was commonly viewed as that threat by other teams.

“Their comfort, security and determined future had been with their long-time dentist,” he said. “And suddenly, we were the threat that could unravel that for them.”

But Covid turned it all around in March 2020 as it threatened all team members without prejudice. While many dental teams went dormant, Resolute used the forced timeout to work harder than ever in team building and the creation of a community of connection and support.

“We began to prepare for when we’d be back on the field together again, to make sure we’d be in the healthiest position we could be in,”

Dr. Toback said. “It’s staggering what we’ve accomplished during the 24 months following the June 2020 reboot.”

Resolute provides support for all aspects of dental practice management outside of direct patient care. This means doctors can focus on what’s important to them – exceptional clinical care for their patients. Its select services include centralized strategic support, leadership training, career development and practice transitions.

Similar to sports franchises, a major challenge for every growing DSO is recruitment and retention of top talent. Whether doctors or team members, Resolute has capitalized on its refined process for identifying the best prospects, and then successfully recruiting them to join the Resolute team. Dr. Toback calls it Resolute’s market differentiator. “Having a winning culture goes way beyond the ‘feel’ in the company. It impacts every aspect of what we do. And success breeds success because people want to be on a winning team so our culture drives our ability to recruit the best.” He says Resolute must continue to attract top doctors through leadership opportunities and providing a stake in the game.

Recruiting at Resolute isn’t just about competing on price because top dental teams cannot be retained on compensation alone. “The next company to come along will just offer to pay a little more,” he said. “For us, it’s about creating a growth opportunity for individuals and having an environment of inclusion.”

That’s attractive to high-level team members wanting to belong to an organization with a long-term future.

“If I’m doing my job developing my leadership team, then that translates to seeing other leaders rise through the ranks,” Dr. Toback said. “Each time that happens, I get an opportunity to step out of the day-to-day and into more strategic initiatives that continue to develop and support our organization.”

Resolute’s latest cultural initiative is “The Resolute Life,” aimed to position the DSO as a legacy company for years to come. It’s described as four components everyone strives for in their career and life, including:

- › Doing what we love
- › Doing it with people we love
- › Making an impact on our community
- › While being a whole person

“The saying, ‘leave it at the door when you come to work,’ isn’t real life,” Dr. Toback said. “Each of us is a whole person and our work personality is part of who we are. Recognizing that and celebrating it is something we can do together.”

That type of servant leadership and recognition of others extends to Resolute’s impact on its communities. “We’re so fortunate we don’t make widgets and we have this common purpose,” Dr. Toback said. “Dentistry is something that influences a patient’s quality of life. Most people in dentistry do it because they care about others.”

That translates to the environment as well. “It’s natural for our team to be engaged, and be invested in Resolute, when they feel like Resolute is engaged and invested in them,” Dr. Toback concluded. ■

THE **IN-HOUSE MEMBERSHIP PLAN** PLATFORM BUILT FOR

AUTOMATED AWESOME.

Your offices have different locations,
different demographics,
different team members.

It can be complicated...

...but your membership plan shouldn't be.

THAT'S WHY WE'VE AUTOMATED EVERYTHING.

- ✓ Automated renewals
- ✓ Automated payment processing
- ✓ Automated member notifications
- ✓ Automated member tracking
- ✓ Automated happiness

QUITE SIMPLY, DENTALHQ MAKES IT QUITE SIMPLE.

DentalHQ is the
completely systemized
easy to implement
simple to use
just plain better
dental membership plan platform
for DSOs and group practices.



Request a free personal demo
and learn why group practices
and DSOs love DentalHQ.

DENTALHQ
YOUR MEMBERSHIP PLAN, BETTER.



This is not a family. This is a team.

By Josey Sewell, Partner, DEO

The family I grew up in was not known for our direct communication or our confrontational tolerance. We were so bad on openly talking about things that frustrated or upset us that we would bottle it up and brush it under the rug until someone would have a blow-up because we let things fester. After the emotional explosion, we still wouldn't directly talk about the real issue and if someone got really mad they would write a letter to the other person, leave it in the bathroom or their room in the middle of the night so we wouldn't have to face each other and then pretend like nothing happened. If my team operated like my family, we would likely never achieve our vision and would struggle to keep great team members. I want to challenge the idea that even if you grew up in a highly functional, healthy family we still shouldn't try to make our team our extended family.

This isn't a family; this is a team.

It's easy to see why businesses are tempted to use the term "family" when discussing the work relationships within a team: they want to create positive relationships, camaraderie, and a sense of belonging. We know everyone means well when they compare a team to a family, but it creates many unintended consequences that hold you and your team back.

Here are some reasons why you shouldn't call your team a family:

- > **You can't fire your family.** You can't terminate children when they do not meet your expectations or when things aren't working out. The greatest challenge I see in many teams is leaders holding on to wrong-fit

team members. This might be wrong-fit for core values or the team member is in a position that isn't a good fit for their skills; in both scenarios holding on to those team members hurts culture and company performance. This doesn't apply only to leaders or managers; team members who stay in a company where they are under-appreciated, under-utilized but stay because they feel some familial loyalty also isn't healthy. There are necessary endings for relationships that aren't positive and productive.

- > **Lifelong employment is a thing of the past.** Families are forever; work relationships are not. Many dentists assume when they get out of dental school they will hire a team and that team will be with them until they retire, then find themselves upset or betrayed when someone exits. Even when team members are pretty happy with their boss they will move around every few years because their life is not about serving the boss, it is about their life, their growth, their happiness. The faster companies and team members can be open and honest about the fact that an employment agreement is not a marriage agreement, we can have healthier, more productive conversations and relationships. It also means that our relationships can continue even if we don't work together.



Increase cash flow and get back time for what matters most



Learn why thousands of dental practices
and DSO's rely on **QuickVerify**
Powered by Medusind



Eligibility Verification
& Claim Statusing



Billing



Credentialing



Payment Posting,
Adjustments,
Denial Management

Contact us to learn more

[Medusind.com/Dental](https://www.Medusind.com/Dental)

949-240-8895

> A team can be healthier and more functional than a family. We don't choose our family, but we can choose our team. In a healthy team, expectations are clear, boundaries are respected, conversations aren't as emotionally charged, and performance standards are met or exceeded. Often the happiness of the team might depend on the mood of one or two people. Too many dental teams allow the happiness of the work day up to the mood of the dentist. It's time for accountability to go up and down and side to side on the org chart and hold ourselves to stronger, more productive relationships.

What is a team to do? If you want to create positive relationships, camaraderie, and a sense of belonging, here is what you can do:

1 Create a compelling vision and values for your team. Expand and get very clear on your core values and why your company exists. Things such as: Who are you? Who do you serve? Where are you headed? When you answer these questions and live by them tenaciously, it gives your team a rallying point and something to be excited about. Once you have created your core values, make sure they are referred to regularly, and decisions within the business are based on the core values you operate by. Don't underestimate the impact of creating, and operating from, your core values. We all want to be part of something bigger than all of us.

2 Don't leave your crap at the door. There is this outdated adage

that people should "leave their crap at the door," which is simply not true if you want a healthy team. If you want to create a sense of belonging where people feel safe, you need to get rid of this concept. No matter how hard you try, you cannot separate your personal lives from your professional lives. Allow human beings to experience the human condition.

3 Connect with your team. Performance reviews won't work. Connect in meaningful ways that show your team that you care about them and their journey. Take an interest in their life outside of work to truly understand their personal goals, what motivates them and brings them joy, and how to be supportive of their future. Find ways to make the most of your relationship while you are together. Connection drives trust and collaboration, which create a healthy and productive work environment.

4 Be clear about expectations. Have a handful of rules, be consistent, and have a simple way to measure performance. When clear goals and expectations are set, measuring and managing performance is very simple. Use Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and have a regular meeting cadence to review those numbers. Be careful not to complicate this process. KPI's are meant to be very simple and easy to report on. Keeping the KPI's to one to three numbers, per person, is best.

5 Stop managing and start coaching. Don't tell people what to do and be careful not to give all the answers. Lead them to the answers but be sure to keep them as an active participant in their own process of learning. Letting them learn from

themselves while experiencing their own journey is a powerful experience that also encourages confidence and growth. Be helpful, act as a resource, and coach your team to find their own answers. In summary, set your expectations, hold people accountable, but empower your people with tools, resources, and support to control their own destiny.

6 Master the ability to create positive exits — for them and for you. We have to change how we think about, talk about, and carry out situations when people leave the company. Sometimes people outgrow our company, sometimes our company outgrows our people. If you want to be a great leader of people, you have to actually love people and people deserve to be loved as human beings. We've all watched a key employee be loved and praised and trusted by a leader only to see them blacklisted and talked about because they choose to exit the company. It instills a sense of fear and unhealthy relationships. Learn to make exits (voluntary and involuntary) less scary, less judgemental, and less traumatic.

When we stop acting like a family and start acting like a team we create an environment where people feel safe, know what is expected of them and can be open and honest about what they truly need including when the relationship has run its course. Whether you are a team member, a manager, or an executive I am confident as you let go of the need to call your team a "family" and change the narrative you will find trust, productivity, and engagement increase. ■

Building Your Foundation

What to focus on when consolidating your technology needs.

In today's DSO market, efforts to consolidate vendors, centralize data, and streamline workflows are on the rise, said Christian Drbal, Director of Enterprise Solutions at Rectangle Health.

Indeed, consolidation of vendors into single platforms for the end-to-end patient experience is key for ease of use on the clinical staff side of the business. "Not having to rely on multiple platforms throughout the day allows staff to focus on patient care," Drbal said. "The corporate side of the DSO needs a reliable, centralized database to understand globally what is happening in the organization but to also have the flexibility to deep dive into a region, group of clinics, or single clinic in real-time to identify areas of opportunity for improvement."

But how do DSOs know they are taking the right steps to improve workflows and patient access? Drbal offered the following questions to ask:

› **Does it improve staff morale?**

Streamlining the workflows for staff and automating mundane tasks can reduce phone calls from confused patients, minimize manual entry errors, increase collection rates, and reduce time patient balances are in AR. "With staffing challenges impacting every aspect of the dental industry, automation is key to helping staff be efficient and not overburdened in their day to day," Drbal

said. It's also imperative that the onboarding process and ongoing management of systems is not disruptive or difficult for staff. We're hearing more often, "If it's not easy, it's not worth it," Drbal adds. Offering virtual installs and training, simple tutorials, videos, and checklists allows existing staff to self-serve with refreshers and get new staff up and running quickly.

› **Does it improve patient satisfaction?**

Does your platform have features that make life easier for your patients? According to data from a 2021 survey released by Rectangle Health in conjunction with PYMNTS.com, more than half of patients (56%) are "very" or "extremely" interested in payment plans for medical bills. The survey revealed an even higher level of interest (73%) among bridge millennials (ages 33-43) and younger patients. Younger patients are increasingly enticed by using a payment plan for typical visits, up eight percentage points from the initial survey.

› **Does it cover the essentials?**

As DSOs continue to grow through acquisition, the end result is an ever more complex maze of disparate systems throughout the organization. This problem becomes exponential

as growth accelerates. Drbal said keeping vendors to a minimum through utilization of platforms that consolidate and centralize capabilities for the patient, staff, and corporate level experience is critical to maintaining organizational efficiency.

In the current environment, both administrative and clinical staff are stretched thin amidst workforce shortages, making the implementation of technology that serves to improve efficiency even more challenging. Standardizing the systems, workflows, and tech in the organization is increasingly difficult – yet even more important – if continued growth is to be achieved.

"Without a foundational baseline of systems the organization can rely upon, complexities in disparities will continue to compound as the organization continues to grow," Drbal said.

Rectangle Health equips healthcare practices with the technology and tools to attract and retain patients from registration to post-care billing. The company's patented Practice Management Bridge® platform enhances the patient experience, reduces administrative burden, boosts financial stability, and simplifies healthcare and payment compliance. Since 1993, Rectangle Health has streamlined practice management workflows for tens of thousands of practices in the United States. Learn more at rectanglehealth.com. ■

Best Ways to Pay an Associate

Editor's note: **The DSO Secrets:** Dentist Entrepreneurs Growing Dental Organizations Facebook page is a place to find resources, networking opportunities, information about upcoming industry events, and a forum to ask fellow dentist entrepreneurs questions you may have about running your business. The following was a recent discussion among DSO Secrets Facebook page members.



Kaleb Greene asked: What has everyone found as the most straightforward way of paying an associate?

A few of the DSO Secrets Facebook page members responses:

Shaharyar Fiza: The absolute no-nonsense way to pay an associate dentist is percentage of adjusted production ... This has been the most straightforward compensation structure for me.

Aside from the obvious collection process handed off as the owner's responsibility, paying on production also incentivizes the associate to perform same-day treatment, as they do not have to wait for payments to come in and be processed by the admin team.

Kyle Hale: 30% production, 30% lab bill.

Anthony Joseph: Salary with potential for bonus at end-of-year term, which includes percentage of collection

minus lab. If reconciled yearly, then it's much more straightforward and simple throughout the year.

Emily Letran: Salary, bonus based on tiered production.

Santosh Patel: Eat what you treat. For GPs we are seeing 27-30% of adjusted production (with use of approved lab partners). For Specialists it's 35-40%

Hendrick Lai: Most straightforward way is a salary. (Not the best, but most straightforward)

Kiltesh Patel: Doesn't matter which way, but the key is being transparent. Trust goes a long way. ■



YOUR SYSTEMS YOUR WAY



**Outsourcing
Success Tips**



 **Insurance
Verifications/Claims**

 **Revenue Cycle
Management**

 **Recare &
Reactivation**

 **Patient Scheduling
& Appointments**

**Full-Time Dedicated Remote
Team Members To Leverage Your
Growth & Elevate Your Team**

THE **LEADER** IN PRODUCT SOLUTIONS FOR GROUP PRACTICES

VOCO
THE DENTALISTS



TO IMPROVE PATIENT AND CLINICIAN SATISFACTION!



The Preferred Group Practice Partner for Clinical and Supply Overhead SOLUTIONS

- VOCO offers a full range of competitively-priced restorative, preventive, CAD/CAM materials and more
- Reduce supply costs with products that provide crossover indications
- Award-winning products that deliver proven results to maximize patient quality care
- Simplified procedures to drive clinician satisfaction with innovative products
- Deliver added value to your team through VOCO's extensive and customizable continuing education options

OVER 130 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE LED BY:



John O'Neill
National Director of Special Markets

46 Years of Experience

John.ONeill@voco.com

Products that offer proven **PERFORMANCE** for Group Practice Needs!



Call 1-888-658-2584

VOCO · 1285 Rosemont Drive · Indian Land, SC 29707 · www.vocoamerica.com · infousa@voco.com

VOCO
THE DENTALISTS