

The digital revolution has changed the way dentistry is delivered exponentially



Clinical innovations have raised the bar for the profession, making diagnosis, treatment planning and patient education exciting, easier and more predictable.

But how many practice owners have enlisted the power of digital dentistry for the purposes of marketing and engagement in order to signpost potential patients to the wonderful things that happen inside their surgeries?

Did you know that most patient journeys now begin online?

Social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, along with an easy-to-navigate website, provide significant opportunities to promote the practice and engage effectively with patients (new and old) on all aspects of oral health and treatment options.

The internet is a vast pool of information, good and bad, and nowhere is this more relevant than in the world of healthcare.

By becoming a 'safe place' for patients to learn about the latest, evidence-based treatments, you build a brand that is trusted – and popular.

Ensure activity is targeted, relevant and frequent in order to build up a following.

Make sure posts are relatable and shareable. A post that is liked and then shared again can appear on a newsfeed of someone who has yet to hear of your dental practice.

Drive patients to your website with links to great content – in your blogs, to the images of successful treatment results and to the great feedback in patient testimonials.

Have a game plan, think about your patient demographic and tailor tweets and posts to this. Include rich content, such as videos, and think about what makes you click through to a website.

Instagram has become a major stage to showcase dental treatment results and great 'before and after' images are hugely effective. Don't forget to use the relevant hashtags to flag up your treatments and your location.

With careful nurturing of your internet presence, your business will reap benefits.

Seek an experienced and specialist team that understands both search engine optimisation (SEO) to help boost your practice website's popularity with Google as well as the peculiarities of dental marketing.

And, if you've neither the time nor inclination to handle your own social media activity, hand it over to someone who knows how to communicate with words concisely and effectively.

Invest wisely as you would any product or service related to the building of your practice.

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Managing multiple practices



Should practice acquisition be the goal of all practice owners, and how can a practice owner tell if expansion is right for them?



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So, you are considering expanding your practice? One of the options available is to acquire a second practice (or more). Is this right for you?

Successfully managing multiple practices brings new challenges and requires different skills to operating a single site. Of course, multiple practices offer the opportunity for cost savings, synergies and creation of a 'brand', which can be easier to market, as well as the consequential opportunity to increase profits and, ultimately, goodwill and an exit value.

When considering expansion, you must ask yourself a number of questions. Firstly, if you manage as well as 'doing the day job', will you be able to continue to do both roles within a larger practice? Inevitably you will have to delegate either or both of the management function or the surgery time. What do you prefer to do? Without delegating, you can easily become frustrated, micromanaging multiple sites and cutting into your family and personal time.

You must also consider HR aspects. Maintaining a happy and cohesive workforce across multiple offices is not easy, and will require greater communication as well as operational HR services, including payroll, training and general compliance. Of course, there is also the need to manage multiple buildings, ensuring regulations are complied with modernisation can be carried out and associates, staff and patients are comfortable and happy.

Operationally, there will be a need to integrate practice management software so patient data and financial and NHS contract contractual performance can be accurately tracked in one place, rather than through individual sites.

However, if you are willing and motivated to take on this challenge, the benefits can be immense. But, once everything is organised and you have oversight over the enlarged practice, cost savings through buying power, increase in private patients who prefer a more 'corporate' offering and increased performance through integration and management enhancements can lead to significant revenue increase and practice value.

Our experienced healthcare team advises both purchasers and sellers of dental practices, from sole practitioners to multi-partner, multi-site practices. We also advise on NHS contracts, employee, associate, patient and supplier contracts, property matters, associated dispute resolution and private wealth and inheritance tax aspects, providing a full service to practice owners.