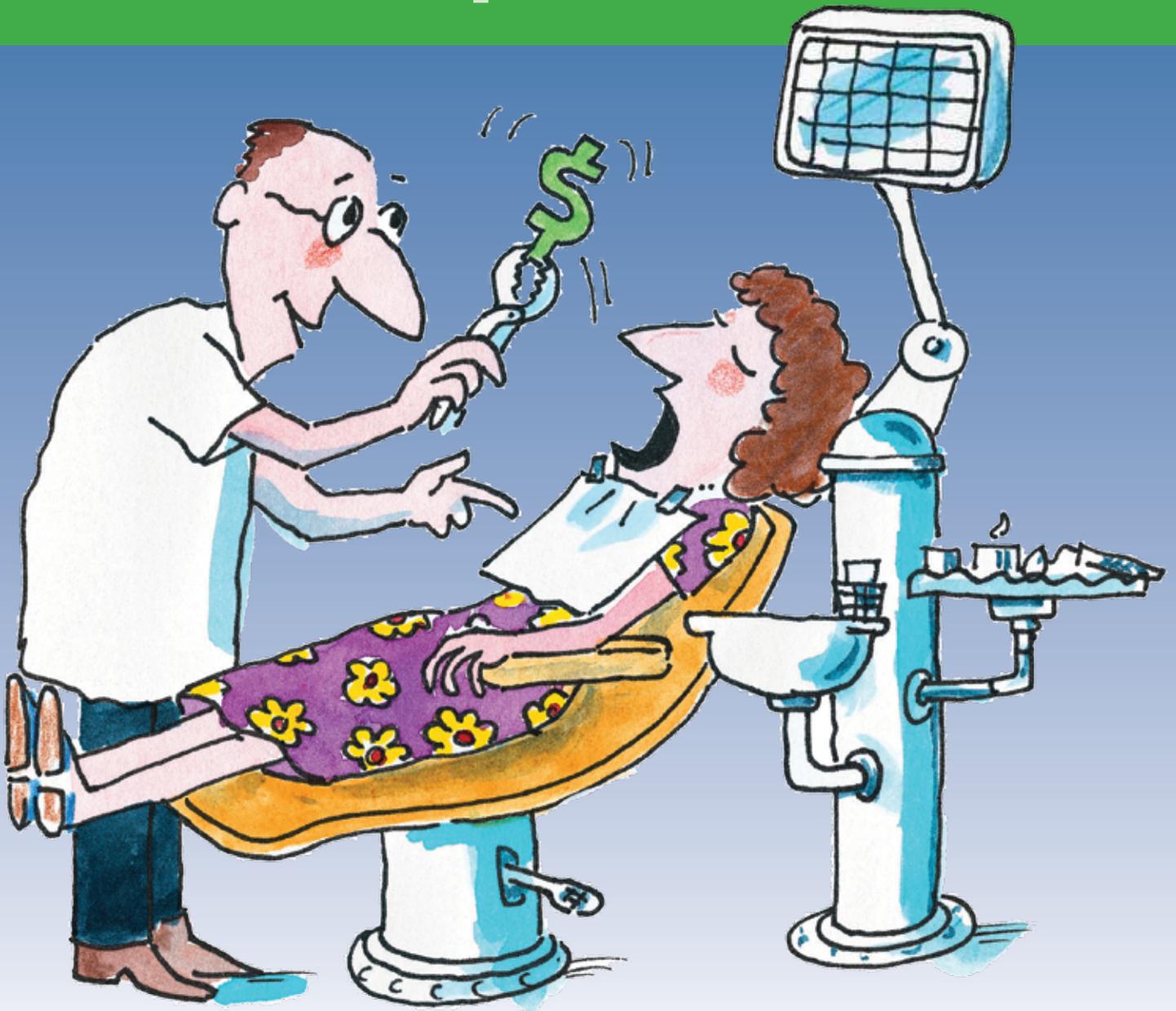


dental entrepreneur

Business Beyond
the Classroom

CLASS OF 2011 | SPRING ISSUE



10 Tips for Young Dentists

When to Start Looking for a Practice to Purchase

The “Secret” to Increasing Profits in the Growing Practice!

Your Journey Begins with the Right Tools

As a recent college graduate, I can appreciate both the level of excitement and anxiety for those beginning their start-up journey in private practice. Allow me to share my experience.

In 2006, I remember being told that the startup “recipe” was to be frugal, do your own hygiene and start with bare essentials until you can justify the expense of having the equipment and tools of your dreams. Although



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this concept has proven to be successful for many clinicians, it quite honestly did not appeal to me. I knew I wanted to hit the ground running. Those

that continue to read this article must share a common philosophy: service before self and excellence in all you do. Let me encourage you to think outside the box and build the practice of your dream with the technology recipe. I like to think of myself as someone who does not accept a simple approach or the easy way out. Like the majority of you, I spent a significant time in dental school daydreaming about my venture. I ran multiple scenarios through my head about the risks and the rewards. I knew what my goals were, but quite honestly needed help figuring out how to get started and what tools I would need along the journey. With the help of my Patterson Dental representatives, I opened my practice three years ago in February of 2008, Infinite Smiles. It makes sense to keep your risk low and follow the traditional path for a start-up practice, but



the risk was too great not having the right equipment for excellent service and great dentistry. I have come to value great technology and equipment, necessary tools so I can compete with seasoned practitioners. Realize that the risk of not having good equipment is far greater than the risk to acquire it.

Most recent graduates are overwhelmed with the abundance of options when it

comes to technology and equipment as seen in the exhibit floors of our national meetings. Do not make the mistake of investing in equipment that does not have a DIRECT impact on your ability to deliver exquisite care. Let's start with the backbone to this technology recipe. I chose to go digital from the onset. With advancements in technology and equipment, realize that digital dentistry has

made a significant impact in the dental market. Consider technology and equipment that is future friendly.

I teamed up with Patterson Dental to understand the fundamentals of a digital practice for management of patient data, diagnostic records, patient education and delivery of clinical therapy at the highest level. I was more afraid of having a potential patient evaluating my ability to do dentistry based on my equipment even before I had the chance to do the dentistry. Did I really want my clients to feel my pressures of starting a new dental practice? I honestly think that patients who are provided dentistry with bare minimum leave a practice feeling that way. Often, as dentist in private practice, we are “sized up” by our patients by their first impression. The question you must ask yourself is, “Do I want to be the young dentist thought of as having little to no experience and half the tools that most patients are now accustomed to, or do I want to be the young dentist practicing with cutting edge technology and latest techniques?” Trust me when I say this, my growth and success over the short three years has been by providing the best technology and tools that dentistry has to offer. Patients leave my practice ranting and raving about their experience.

In the modern age of computers, patients come to expect certain amenities from their dentist. Having the ability to collect and store patient records digitally is viewed as being progressive. Patterson Eaglesoft, among multiple other practice management systems, was the most powerful and intuitive software that still lets me focus on patient care. It successfully combines administrative and clinical features. Most of all, it has excellent support. In addition to digital patient records, I knew I wanted to go digital with diagnostic imaging. I chose Schick CDR digital sensors for its seamless integration with Eaglesoft. Patients are impressed with the clarity of digital Xrays on computer screens instead of films on a light box. I placed a significant emphasis on my ability to diagnose for comprehensive dentistry. I felt well-educated and pre-

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pared for private practice, but diagnostic acumen comes with experience. My lack of clinical experience required a “magic bullet.” My magic bullet was the Sirona Galileos CBCT. With the Galileos as my primary diagnostic tool, I was able to distinguish my practice from the rest simply because of my ability to diagnose using a 3D image. With one scan, I am able to diagnose for all facets of dentistry: Endo, Perio, Ortho, Oral Surgery, Implantology and General Dentistry. My ability to show and educate patients on their needs with 3D CBCT images has a direct impact on my case acceptance rate. In addition to being able to comprehensively diagnose and treatment plan, I needed a flexible platform to allow my practice to deliver restorative clinical treatment. I chose Sirona’s CEREC Cad/Cam as the platform for restorative care. With CEREC, my practice is able to provide prosthetics from crowns, inlays, onlays, and veneers. The CEREC platform is flexible and functions as a digital impression system for digital lab communication and lab fabrication of prosthetics, to chairside milling for same appointment restorative care. The beauty of having CEREC is that I have full control over my results.

Along with these essential tools, I supplemented several smaller items to help me streamline workflow and add additional procedures. With significant literature and research showing the long term success of endosseous dental implants and an increased public awareness of implants, I knew it was critical for me to be able to provide dental implants to patients as an

alternative to fixed bridges. I acquired Acteon’s Implant Center 2. The Implant Center 2 is a self-contained unit with both a surgical piezotome and an implant motor for complete instrumentation necessary for hard tissue augmentation and implant dentistry. And last, but not least, I chose to eliminate traditional tissue retraction using cord in my practice by introducing a diode laser. I chose Sirona’s SIROLaser Advanced, a powerful soft tissue laser that offers customized settings for all soft tissue procedures.

Although it might seem overwhelming, I will tell you that with these tools you will be more than prepared to pave your path to success. The combination of this equipment is my technology recipe for great dentistry. I am thrilled to and fortunate to practice such great technology and feel equipped to provide all levels of clinical therapy. My selection from CBCT to Cad/Cam allowed me to establish my start-up as the cutting edge facility for dental care in my area.

Although my patients see me as being young, they think of me as the young and enthusiastic dentist who provides the highest level of dentistry with amazing technology (the same kind of dentistry that most dentists expect for their own mouths). I encourage all of you as recent graduates to evaluate the list of equipment I have mentioned in my technology recipe for your own practices. I promise you that the decision will be one the hardest you will have to make, but the journey moving forward is incredibly rewarding in knowing the kind of dentistry you will be able to provide your patients as well as practice success. ■

Dr. Neal Patel is a graduate of The Ohio State University where he earned degrees in Molecular Genetics, General Dentistry, and fellowship in Implant Prosthodontics. Dr. Patel is currently on an international lecture circuit speaking on Advanced Digitization in Dentistry and CBCT. He is a consultant for a number of dental manufacturers and works closely with the R & D Sector for product development and enhancement. He can be reached at drpatel@infinitemiles.com.