

## Business

# A lack of exploration?

**Simon Reynolds**, commercial director of Patient Plan Direct, shares his view that some practices are hampering their potential success by not taking the time to review how they run their practice and explore alternative methods and suppliers

Last month's fantastic 20th anniversary edition of *Dentistry* showcased how much the industry has developed in a relatively short period. So many new techniques, equipment and clinical advances have come to fruition, as well as shifting views and opinions around the strategies, tactics and approaches to running and growing a successful practice in the modern age.

One thing for sure is that in the last 20 years the world of dentistry has become a much more competitive environment. The evolution of corporate groups, digital marketing, the growth of private dentistry, smarter and discerning consumers, amongst a whole host of other things, have made running a successful practice a huge challenge. Practices need to keep on their toes in order to stay one step ahead of the game to avoid the risk of stagnation.

## If it ain't broke, don't fix it

Yet despite the need for practices to ensure they develop and move with the times, I still come across too many (not all by any means) practices that seem to stick to the same approach in running their practice as they did five,



10, even 15 years ago. Their mentality tends to be 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'.

They use the same suppliers, the same tired looking and outdated posters in their waiting rooms, and think marketing involves the ad-hoc printing of a few leaflets dropped in the local area in an attempt to drum up new business.

The reality is that these practices are often blind to the fact that things could already be 'broken' and do actually need fixing. They are likely to already be experiencing stagnation, but don't recognise the signs and that things need to change.

Of course the pressures of compliance, delivering day-to-day patient care as well as managing a team can often take up a principal and practice manager's hours each day. However, it's so important to regularly and systematically review the running of the practice.

## Alternative suppliers

My advice, whilst we're still in the early part of the year and many will still have the 'New Year, fresh start'

motivation – take a day out to review your suppliers. Some relationships, services and products will still be the best option for your practice. Conversely, I'm confident there will be cases to explore alternative suppliers, whereby a new supplier could be a better fit for your practice and help your practice to grow, become more profitable or offer a better patient experience.

When undertaking this review ask yourself questions such as; What value does this supplier represent? What other suppliers offer the same service and how does this compare? When did I last meet with my supplier to review the services or products they deliver?

Dental practices are a dying breed, it is the dental business that will survive and thrive. **D**

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Simon Reynolds is the commercial director of Patient Plan Direct, one of the UK's fastest growing dental plan providers. To discover an approach to dental plans that makes sense and cuts costs, contact Patient Plan Direct.



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