

10 mistakes you must never do before opening clinic

Opinion

How can a new dental graduate start a successful practice and make it profitable in the shortest time? The solution is by not making these 10 Mistakes Yes, having our clinic is a moment of pride, joy and happiness. It does feel like owning a piece of the world. But it's also a fact that by 2017 dental profession has become too much competitive due to over saturation. There is no denying the fact that a fresh dental graduate today is under much more stress than a dental graduate few years back. The salary of fresh dental graduates working in college is not as expected. Everybody wants to open a clinic in a city. The practice market is so overcrowded. Because of all this, once, highly profitable profession of dentistry has now become not so profitable. As you are already in to dentistry you can't suddenly change your field. What you can do is to be cautious while planning to set up your practice. Yes there is a perceived over-saturation in dentistry but you have to find your way through it. Many times being continuously around negative thoughts about dentistry closes your minds from many other possibilities. In this post we will be looking at those possibilities before you open your dental clinic. Am no expert but am sharing the points that I realised while trying to open & establish our clinics. We have opened a few clinics and have helped many friends to open and establish a clinic in various parts of Kerala, India. Based on these experiences I am presenting my views. The idea of this article is from an article by Dr. Varun Bajaj. Many people will tell you what to do to open a clinic. But we will tell you top mistakes that you should not do before opening your first dental clinic Check out the 1st mistake that many dental graduates make ...

Not sure about your basic clinical skills? Don't open clinic!

Irrespective whether a fresh passed out dentist or a post graduate, your dental clinic depends on few basic dental procedures Extractions Root Canal Treatment/ Tooth Preparation, Esthetic Composite Works, FPD/CD. Never open a clinic without getting your hands smooth on these procedures. Learn the Basic Things Properly.

High investment (remember you are Bambani not Ambani)

Ask any dentist in general what type of clinic he/she wants to make?

He/ She will answer-the most swanky, comfortable and modern age clinic where the patients will just feel like slipping in to a resort, get treated and pay me handsomely and more. Well it's not a bad idea. But to make it successful you or your parents need MONEY! If you don't have enough of what shown in the picture, then the real game starts. "Never Spend Huge Amount to Set up the Clinic" That's a cardinal rule. Never spend excess amount on furnishing and interiors. That takes up huge chunk of money. Instead spend on instruments; chair and other must have clinic accessories. Don't just yet go for the show business. It's not the correct time. Every business venture has risk elements and you need to take it a little carefully from the point

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Raed Saeed

Department of Orthodontics, AB Shetty Dental College, India

Correspondence: Raed Saeed, Department of Orthodontics, AB Shetty Dental College, Founder of Zaindent Group of Clinics, India, Email zaindentclinics@gmail.com

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of view of investment. Spend only in what is necessary. Nothing more or nothing less.

What you should not spend on? What you should spend on?

This is the mistake many of the budding dentists do. They spend on things that they should avoid without making a clear cut idea about it. We will give you a simple rule for it. Divide your estimated spending to 2 categories:

1. Cosmetic Spending
2. Necessary Spending

Cosmetic spending: These include the spending on interiors, furnishing, roofing, tiling etc. Some time, if not checked the expenditure on these things can go too high. There is no upper limit, you tend to spend too much on them (Should Be Avoided).

Necessary spending: That includes dental chair, x ray unit, rvg, dental forceps, motors, drainage, AC and the change in power supply to your clinic. The Entire Furnishing + Instruments should be kept within the budget of max 6 Lakhs Indian Rupees (If you reside outside KERALA then the prices will vary according to market value in your place). Also very few Dentists have idea about Insurances. The moment you are completed with installing all the instruments & furnishing, think about insuring your clinical set up. Yes, it's very necessary as the clinic is packed with very costly instruments like RVG etc. So, make sure you get the necessary insurance to guard your instruments.

The power to play "Waiting game"

(It's a Long Waiting Game ... The One Who Waits For The correct Time, Reaps the Crop) You finally completed building your clinic with great care and investments. You hope that soon you will be in a position to recover the money. But it's not that easy. Setting up a clinic by investing and recovering money from that are two different things completely. It Takes Time For You To Have Solid Net Profit In Your Hands The Waiting Game Because of this waiting game its preferable to have an academic career attached to some college. That's what BDS/ MDS graduates used to do till the recent years. But problem as you all know, due to too many pass-outs jobs are difficult to get by.

Don't be a super hero (clinic is not a comic book story & you are not a super hero!)

This is a very crucial point. Being a Super Hero can give you lot of headaches. Take the day to day clinic proceedings easy & calm. It's your clinic and part of your responsibility is to DO PROPER CASE SELECTION Select the cases to treat very properly & carefully. In case you are confused about something don't try to experiment and find a treatment. Contact a specialist and call him/her for consultation. Yes you will have to give part of the treatment fees to the specialist, but you won't be at the risk of getting a bad name for your clinic. It's called being sensible.

Who can provide cheapest treatment (one major point pulling dentistry down)

Never get in to this game. Never ever. It is one of the biggest problems in modern day dentistry. Irony is this problem is created by no one else but the dentists themselves. "It's a problem by the dentist, for the dentist & of the dentist." New dentists might feel that keeping the price low will bring in more patients. But that's not true. By doing so you are just deprecating the value of your profession to the level of potatoes and tomatoes. Any patient who tries to bargain, Don't Entertain! I am not saying to charge very high prices. Charge the respectable minimum that's prevalent in the market. Make an understanding with the fellow dentists. The moment you give the patient the liberty to bargain with you it does more harm than good. Always remember good things never come cheap. There is value for it. One patient might go but others will come. So hold your ground.

Not updating your knowledge (it's like your phone app ... you need to update it)

Yes am talking about all those boring CDE (Continuing Dental Education) program. I agree they appear boring. But once you get in to dental practice there is the need to do it. Dental treatment is continuously evolving with the invention of newer and more user friendly materials and techniques. You need to know these methods to make the treatment easier that will benefit you and your patients.

Marketing with so many dentists around, why a patient will come to you???

You Have to Make Yourself Sell-able each dental practice is like a company. And you are the boss of that company. So you need to do marketing. But of course you don't need to spend millions in marketing. Be innovative. Take help of social media. (But lately Face book is not a very good platform for promotion for fresh graduates as the charges are very high) But you can make use of the free features and try promoting through mouth publicity. You can also think of adding your clinic in yellow pages and other search engines like just dial etc. The best way to market and promote is to aim the public at your local community rather than distant social media promotion. Social media is already too crowded and it's not worth it to spend money and time on it if you are beginning. You need to understand you are not going to have overnight foreign patients. Majority of your patients will be from your local community. Attend local social functions. Make settings and deliver speech on dental education in school, colleges and community places. Attend treatment camps. Visit rural places to provide dental treatment. The goal is to make yourself visible within your local community. Slowly & steadily you will rise the ladder up.

The area

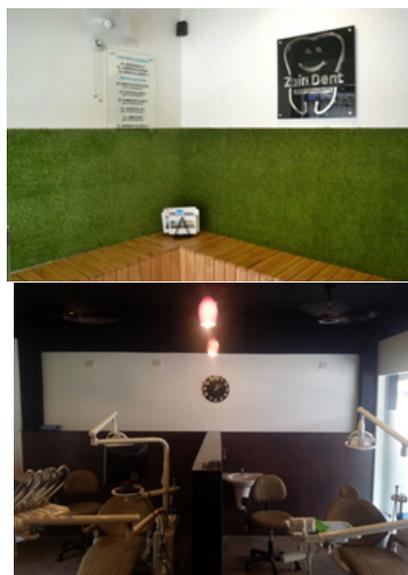
Find a good site to setup a clinic. Always look into crowded areas rather than areas with less population. For example a highly crowded city with 3 to 4 clinics already running is a better to setup a clinic than a small town where there is less crowd and no clinics. This we have experienced with our clinics.

The site (including rent and deposit)

After selecting an area you should always look for a good building to set up your clinic. Look into an area where people gather most of the time. For example near a bus stand, a mosque, temple or a busy street. And look for a building with an average rent and deposit. Use your and your friend's influence for the same because this is the only way to deal with the landlords.

Conclusion

You need to remember that dentistry and dental practice is still a profitable business model. Even a simple central incisor RCT can give you a profit margin of 1500 to 2500 INR. And 10 such RCTs ... You have pocketed minimum 15000 INR. With time as patients increase profit keeps increasing. (Prices vary in each locality) Yes, you still need to face the expenditure of maintaining and running a clinic. But in the long run it works out. All that is needed at this stage is the power to consistently do the practice and to take it day by day. Also you need to keep yourself updated with the treatment procedures that are your main stay of income. Hence, I would conclude this article saying "Don't feel like the battle is lost. Ours is a highly respected Profession. I know it is tough in the present scenario but hard work and respect for others will definitely take you to bigger heights. BDS/ MDS / Higher Dental Degrees don't matter much but communication skills and respect you give to your patients is very important and influences your image and popularity in that area. The way population is booming, there is enough place for new graduates. Yes it's not as easy as it used to be 10 -15 years back. You need to stop comparing dentistry situation now to what it was a decade back. You live in today. In 2017 one needs a little more time to find their place. But it's possible. "If any of you have any genuine queries regarding setting up of a dental clinic, you can contact me anytime. I would be more than happy to help you (Figures 1-6).





Figures 1-6

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The authors declare there is no conflict of interests.

