

TIME
is
MONEY

Efficient Dentistry for Better Productivity

THE TWO "EFF" WORDS YOU NEED:

EFFICIENCY
EFFECTIVENESS

Time is Money.

Especially more so when you are operating a dental practice and your main source of income is "bums-on seat". Many things factor in to operating a dental clinic to ensure you deliver the best possible outcome to your patients – but how do you balance between that and using your time efficiently to increase productivity?

With dentistry constantly evolving with more products, procedures and best practices, how are you maximizing your time and your dental team's productivity to ensure you are reaping the most of your time efficiently and proficiently?

Am I treating more patients? Am I having enough time with each patient and feeling relaxed and focused during the treatment procedure? Or am I thinking of other things that we have to do in preparation for the next patient? Should I be spending this much time with this treatment?

Proficiently utilising your time with each procedure and the workflow of the practice can save you a few more minutes which when added up, could result with having time to focus on other aspects of your practice – either for professional development or time with your staff and practice. Even if your practice is not operating at full capacity, you can spend more time on activities to attract patients or improve recall.

We now then come to address the million-dollar question - How do I save time in my practice then?



[BE ORGANISED]

Whilst most would say this is rule #1 in any business and common sense, it's incongruously not always the case in some scenarios. Being organised doesn't just encompass a good filing system or having instruments placed in their proper shelves or drawers – instead, when it comes to complementing the efficiency factor, there are various facets some practices tend to overlook or take for granted.

1 Know How Long Procedures Really Take

We all know what the standard clean and scale routine encompasses and roughly how long it takes, or what instruments need to be prepped – but how long does it really take YOUR practice? At best, most practices guess and estimate their chair time procedures. Some dentists may underestimate the time needed for a procedure probably because they only think about the time they spend with the patient. Assistants on the other hand, might overestimate the time required for a procedure because they factor in the room setup and break down, the OHS compliance procedures, lab work, and sterilisation of instruments between each patient. Factoring every facet of a treatment can give you and your staff an advantage of planning out your diary and appointments, and also avoid cases where your patients might have to wait for their treatments.

2 Scheduled Ordering

Each practice goes through the staple essentials on a daily process. Consumables like latex gloves, surgical face masks, syringe covers, cotton rolls, and sterilisation pouches, are fast moving and the rate of re-ordering them should be monitored. Once you have identified how regular you should be ordering them, it would help to set-up a scheduled ordering system with your suppliers through an eStore. Many online ordering stores have the options for you to customise your "favourite lists" and set up as a recurring stock order so that you never have to spend that 15 to 30 minutes putting through the orders manually. It also allows you to create specific lists of products required in accordance to the type of procedure or treatment you have coming up – so that you don't have to go through with your staff a shopping list and risk overlooking anything. On top of that, many eStore orders like Gunz Dental's have a "next-day delivery" promise with exclusive online savings.

3 Train Assistants In All Expanded Duties

Assistants are essentially your practice's auxiliary support – so that you as a dentist are focused on the procedures and treatments at hand. It is highly worthwhile to have a meeting with each dental assistant to create a training module where you can consider integrating the services from a local dental assisting school to come in to train your assistants. You could also ask your lab techs to teach them to make temporaries or pour great models. If you have an in-practice orthodontist, or are one yourself, get your assistants to spend some time to learn how to take good and accurate impressions or to pour and trim models. In fact, some well-trained industry representatives can assist with impression techniques, whitening procedures and upselling, making temporaries, chairside assistance and even maintenance of equipment and instruments.

Are there new advanced ways or products that can help deliver great (or greater) clinical outcomes in a more efficient manner out there now? Most of us can sometimes get caught up in our routinely “comfort-zone-bubble” – we’ve been using this reliable product for years with good, predictable and manageable results, so why re-invent the wheel? There are many recognized dental manufacturers out there constantly working with established laboratories everyday on improving and pushing clinical efficacy that can help dentists save time on various procedures, and at times, even costs. It really doesn’t hurt to keep an open mind to the new advances in dental clinical procedures. And remember, you can always request for a product trial or demo with your vendors before you make and decision to swap over. Here are a few examples:

STREAMLINING CLINICAL PROCEDURES

1 Forget the Whitening Trays

Whitening products like the *Opalescence Go* Tooth Whitening by Ultradent allows you to offer your patients professional tooth whitening, with predictable results, without having to make any trays. It features on-the-go convenience with an enhanced UltraFit tray for an even more adaptable and more comfortable whitening experience. From a treatment efficacy perspective, the UltraFit tray’s superior adaptation ensures the maximum amount of gel stays in contact with the teeth during the whitening process.

2 Manage Difficult Bleeding During Treatments

Bleeding from dental procedures is a common occurrence. However, good proper tissue management is the key to quality direct and indirect restorations. Astringedent X is an aqueous 12.7% iron solution containing equivalent ferric sulfate and ferric subsulfate for difficult-to-stop, problem bleeding. It is less acidic than other iron subsulfate solutions, and can facilitate profound hemostasis even with the most challenging cases, allowing you to focus on the matter at hand with no compromises.

3 Effective Delivery Systems

Consider utilising delivery systems that allow you to bring materials directly into the mouth, saving you unnecessary movements while delivering more accuracy. *UltraCal@* syringes by Ultradent, when used with their NaviTips can deliver a predictable flow, enabling direct placement – allowing you to always stay focused with the task at hand.

4 Universal and Versatile Materials or Instruments

Rather than having different materials for different purposes and procedures, consider using “universal” materials that can save multiple steps. Some universal adhesives such as 3M’s *Scotchbond*, *Voco Futurabond*, *Heraeus Kulzer’s iBOND* offers one simple adhesive application technique without having to use additional primers. There is also the *Jiffy Universal System* by Ultradent that is specially manufactured to allow efficient adjusting and polishing of any ceramic material – eliminating the need for multiple adjusters and polishers.

5 One File Endo

Traditionally, the shaping of root canals was achieved by the use of stainless steel hand files. However, these techniques faced a few drawbacks such as requiring the use of numerous instruments to adequately prepare the canals, and the amount of time it requires especially in teeth with difficult access. *RECIPROC®* is possibly the most significant new development since nickel-titanium instruments were first introduced to rotary preparation of root canals. However, the biggest difference to the rotary NiTi-systems with their elaborate instrument sequences is that *RECIPROC* completely prepares and shapes the root canal with only one single instrument – One File Endo. One *RECIPROC* instrument replaces a number of hand and rotary instruments and is therefore defined for use in one molar maximum. Instruments are taken directly out of sterile packaging and simply discarded after use – making work flow more efficient and preventing material fatigue due to over-use.

STREAMLINING CLINICAL PROCEDURES

6 Three to Five Seconds Curing

How long are you taking to cure resins or bonding agents in your restorations? Is it delivering enough heat to cure the resin? What about the time for microfills or curing darker coloured resins that requires more curing time? High-intensity curing lights such as the VALO LED Curing Light from Ultradent has the ability to cure all types of restorations with the touch of a button within a three to five second time frame. It also offers the high intensity output or power of a PAC light; producing the greatest amount of energy at distances up to 10mm from the tooth. Whilst you might not think there is a huge significance between a three-to-five second cure and a 30-second cure, Dr Christensen (of Dental Economics) puts forth a considerably important calculation:

The dentist practices about 220 days per year

He or she places about 10 resin-based composite restorations each day, thus placing about 2,200 restorations in a year

Each restoration requires at least four cures, and some have six cures

There will be 8,800 cures in one year

8,800cures x 30seconds = 264,000seconds = 4,400minutes or 73.33 hours

73.33 hours x \$400 per hour = \$29,332

Using the same assumptions, replace the low-intensity light from the previous equation with a high intensity light and the time used for curing equates to about \$2,933. The difference in savings is significant. High-intensity lights save about \$26,399 per year in a typical general practice. This is not pocket change. (REF: Ask Dr Christensen. Dental Economics, Vol 99, Issue 9)

Try using YOUR OWN metrics to gauge how much a light like VALO could save you.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE ABOUT THE VALO LED Curing Light.](#)



GET PATIENTS
TO SAY

YES

QUICKLY

Consider how much time is spent trying to convince patients that a certain course of action is necessary and that your proposed treatment plan is the proper solution – only to have them delay their treatment options, or worse – end up seeing another dentist!

Tease With A Freebie

Who doesn't like freebies? Even more so when the freebie is a Free Whitening Treatment! Your patient's just spent time and money with you on a general scale and clean, ensuring that their oral health is tended to. Before they leave your chair, try asking them if they would like a free whitening treatment while they're there.

Opalescence Go from Ultradent is the professional alternative to over-the-counter whitening option that is simple, fast and a great tasting way to initiate a patient to say yes to teeth whitening. With no impressions or custom trays necessary, *Opalescence Go* is ready to use right out of the package and your patient only needs to wear it for a limited period of time (pending on the hydrogen peroxide levels)! If they're rushing off for another appointment, you simply have to give it to them to take home!

Trust us, they'll notice the results and enquire more about this product again.

A Picture Paints A Thousand Words.

Sometimes, patients don't always fully comprehend what your diagnosis is and it would help them agree to your treatment plan if they could see for themselves the gravity of the situation. Intraoral Digital Cameras such as the Air Techniques' Spectra Caries Detection Aid not only produces high-quality images for the doctor and patient to look at, it also features fluorescence technology that indicates the extent of decay with colour and numerical readings. Many Spectra users have claimed that it served as a great education tool and motivation for their patients to proceed with treatment plans that has minimised return visits and maximising their time on the chair.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read a patient recount her experience on how the Spectra Caries Detection Aid helped motivate her to go forward with her treatment.

[Find Out More](#) about the two new recently launched Air Techniques cameras – CamX Spectra and CamX Elara [HERE](#).

If you haven't already, try integrating these few simple steps today at your practice and measure the results yourself.

Your patients need not be the only ones left smiling at your dental practice.

