



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

10 minutes with Portman Dental Care's Head of Recruitment

Portman Dental Care is an award-winning group of private dental practices. With its continued investment in technology and people, growth is fuelled by the simple vision of putting patients first to transform smiles and lives. We spoke to **Darren Casey, Head of Recruitment**, about the challenges of growing the business.

Q Hi Darren. When did you join Portman and what did you set out to achieve?

A I joined the company three years ago this April. Getting the right recruitment system in place was an important part of the strategy. I'd seen all the benefits a good system offers from my role at my previous organisation, and I knew we needed to invest in a robust system to move forwards and ensure our recruitment processes are fit for purpose to support the growth of the business.

Q How quickly is your business growing?

A Three years ago we had 35 practices. We're ten years old now and have 91 practices spanning the UK from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and all the way through England. Our growth strategy is to acquire practices that fit into the group. We want to develop a nationally recognised consumer brand that puts customers first.

It's a growing industry with plenty of investment capital which is being fuelled by a number of factors including the rise of cosmetic dentistry and the demand for really good quality healthcare. With great people and the best technology and practices we're targeting a growth rate of around 40 practices per year and are currently the third largest private dental group.

Q What does this mean for recruitment?

A As any organisation grows in size, natural churn always increases with people relocating or moving on. Our business model is to acquire practices that have the potential to grow. We always have a clear growth plan for each practice we acquire, which usually involves introducing new state-of-the-art equipment and new systems.

Most of the practices we acquire tend to be general practices and we use our expertise to transform these into specialist treatment centres offering new services. This requires the recruitment of additional resources including specialist orthodontists and endodontists (root canal specialists) for example, and additional nurses to support these roles.

PORTMAN
dental care





Can you talk us through how you went about finding the right system to support your ambitious growth plans?



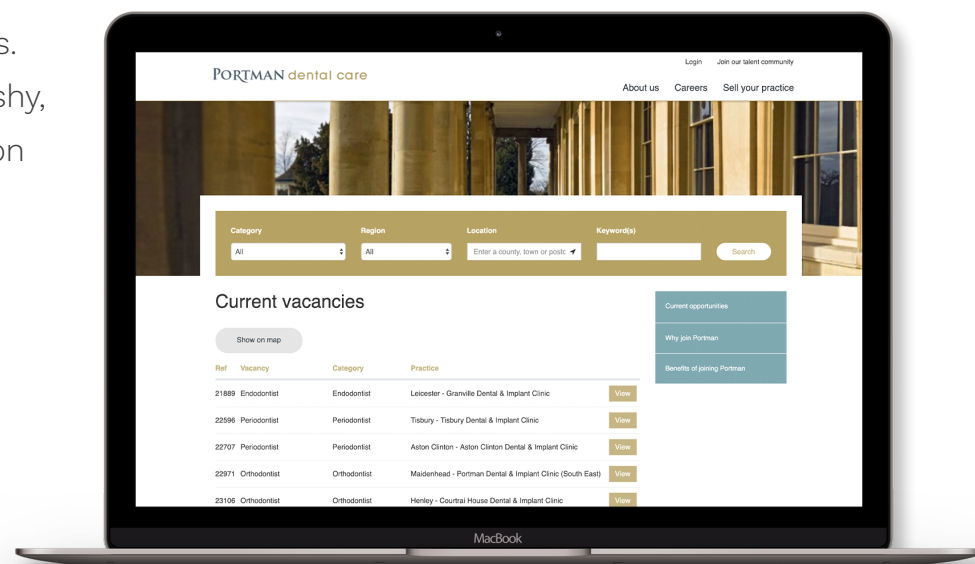
I began evaluating systems in early 2017 and looked in detail at five or six different suppliers which I then narrowed down to a shortlist of three. Kallidus offered a very competitive product. Visually the dashboard looked much nicer than the other systems we looked at and was very user-friendly.

I think it's fair to say that most of the good systems today offer very similar features and functionality so for us, as well as the stand-out user-experience Kallidus Recruit offered, the people element was very important in our decision to go with Kallidus.

Kallidus' style was more akin to how Portman works. Their team were very professional, not salesy or pushy, and I knew I'd be able to have a straight conversation with them and rely on them to deliver.

The Kallidus team always strive to find a solution and they really helped us to think about what we want to achieve and how we can do that with our new system so we feel like we have a system that is built for our organisation.

We wanted to work with a company that we could rely on for the whole journey. Kallidus demonstrated a commitment that they would see through the implementation and could offer post-implementation support which was really important to us.



When did you implement Kallidus Recruit?



We started with a 10 week implementation plan in late January 2018 and went live as planned at the beginning of April 2018. The implementation included training 130 hiring managers and it went very smoothly, in fact more smoothly than you might expect for a new system! The support we received from Kallidus was second to none and the team were always readily available.



How are you finding the system?



It's great and very easy to use. Our primary use is to manage vacancies and the associated workflow. We have 130 hiring managers using the system for requisitions, while my team of five recruiters and I are using it to help us manage the growing volume of applications we are now receiving as the business grows. With the introduction of GDPR we are able to manage the data in a much more secure way than before.

“Overall, we’re delighted. We’ve got a very comprehensive system for end-to-end in-house recruitment and have had a great service from the Kallidus team.”



Q Are you seeing many benefits yet?

A We certainly are! For me and my team one of the big plusses is that the system is web-based. We all work from home at lot of the time and are geographically dispersed to support business growth across the UK. Our head-office is in Cheltenham but we have team members located in Manchester and on the south coast for example. The system has given us clarity of the whole recruitment process, from job posting to onboarding and everyone can see what the others are doing.

Given that our primary use of the system is to manage vacancy workflow we are delighted that Kallidus Recruit has helped us to speed up the workflow as well as giving us greater visibility of the candidate pipeline.

We acquired 30 practices in 2018 and we would have fallen over without Kallidus Recruit in place. The system helps us to cope with the sheer volume of job applications we receive. Portman Dental Care has three main streams of applicants. It manages high volume recruitment for Practice positions such as dental nurses, receptionists and practice managers,

all the head office recruitment for Marketing, HR etc., as well as managing the recruitment of dentists, orthodontists and other specialist practitioners. Kallidus Recruit enables the company to manage these three streams in different ways, ensuring the positions are filled quickly and effectively, with the best people.

Kallidus Recruit provides a seamless recruitment experience from start to finish. We are now able to interact much better with potential candidates from the moment they send us a CV all the way through the recruitment journey. Thanks to the system's ability to automate parts of the recruitment process we are able to respond more quickly to applicants and reject people who are not suited to the roles in a more timely manner for volume recruitment campaigns.

Even with GDPR we have been able to realise significant value from our database by storing the details of potential applications for future vacancies. Dentists are always looking at advancing their careers so the Talent Banking functionality is a very valuable tool for sourcing and nurturing future talent.

Q So what's next?

A We haven't had the opportunity yet to make full use of the powerful analytics and reporting functionality so this is going to be our focus in 2019. Last year I had five new people join my team and the focus had to be on training them and getting the system up and running.

When we purchased Kallidus Recruit we wanted a way to manage data and a way to report in real-time. From what I can see from the system the reporting looks very comprehensive and intuitive so I'm really looking forward to seeing how we can use reporting information to help us plan and manage our recruitment processes even more effectively.

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Q Finally, what tips would give somebody considering purchasing a system like Kallidus Recruit?

A My top tip would be to pay attention to the system and what it can do for your business but make sure you keep the people and the company you are buying from in the forefront of your mind so that you get the implementation support you need. This strategy really paid off for us and we have a system that really works and that we love.

One area where we didn't allocate time to was looking at processes at the granular level at the testing stage. Actually, this wasn't a problem for us, it just meant we had to learn in real-time, but if I was going through an implementation again I would certainly build in some more time for this.

Overall, we're delighted. We've got a very comprehensive system for end-to-end in-house recruitment and have had a great service from the Kallidus team.

