

I totted it up the other day.

Over the 35 years or so I've been designing practices, surgeries, cabinetry and systems for the dental profession I must have visited close on to 5,000 practices. And I haven't just visited; I've learned what works and, importantly, what doesn't. The knowledge I have acquired has put me in an enviable, if not unique position. I can look at a practice, assess its potential and give clear cut guidance on how it can be more profitable.

Of course not every principal I talk to follows my advice. In fact I deliberately say to every potential client, 'If you don't think we can make you more money, don't go ahead'. Investing in a practice **IS** a big step and no one should go into it half heartedly. But one thing I'll tell you with unequivocal certainty; the secret to success is not the amount you spend, but the attention given to detail. I've been privileged to be a judge on the WOW! and Elite Awards and what unites the very best performing practices is the way they constantly assess and reassess the way the work flows; the ultimate aim being consistently to exceed patient expectations.

The truth is of course that they view 'patients' as consumers. They recognise consumers have choices so they aim to be better than their competitors. In short, they take nothing for granted. I have been into practices that, being generous, leave a lot to be desired, yet I'm told 'no one's ever complained'. Not to the practice maybe, but the word will get around. We're not so good at complaining but we love to gossip!!

In my next article (same page November issue) I will spell out what I see as the main mistakes practices make in relation to three key factors:

- Practice design
- Practice workflow
- Patient journey

My views will take into account that every practice is different. As I have said before I have little truck with the 'one size fits all' approach. So my question to you is simply this.

Do you practise needs driven or desire driven dentistry?

If it is the latter, you'll find what I have to say challenging but helpful. If it is the former I'd turn straight to the next page.