

Ask my wife and family and they'll confirm it; I spend most of my working day thinking about dentistry and most of my sleeping hours dreaming about it. And if you take into account the number of practices I visit and dentists I talk to, I reckon I have a fair handle on the way the profession sees most things.

On the other hand, there are many issues facing dentists that evoke anything but a unified view. Take the Corporates as a case in point.

I hear very different opinions from Principals. Some believe Corporates are the future. Others feel that they sacrifice patient care at the altar of profit. I'm not taking sides, but if you are being courted by one of the Corporates then let me suggest some questions you should ask yourself before you commit:

- Are the Corporate's objectives and aims broadly in sympathy with my own?
- How important is it to me to do dentistry the way I want to do it? Am I prepared (if necessary) to compromise and if so, to what extent?
- Will I be happy not being the boss?
- What impact will joining a Corporate have on my Associates and my staff?
- What impact will joining a Corporate have on my family and our lifestyle?
- What impact will joining a Corporate have on my patients?
- What aspects of my job do I feel will be improved if I join a Corporate?
- Am I in a position truly to compare the benefits of joining a Corporate against alternative options?
- Have I compared the packages that each Corporate offers?
- Have I talked to colleagues who have joined a Corporate? What do they see as the benefits? What (if anything) do they see as the downside?

The important thing is not to rush or be rushed into a decision. And don't imagine there is a definitively 'right' answer. Ultimately you have to make a choice and stand by it.

Just be sure that choice is as informed as it can be.