

# An interior perspective

The appearance of your practice is vital, Designclinic talks you through how to create the perfect overall impression of your practice

## Before...



Dentists are fortunate in that they provide a vital service that is needed during both good and bad economic times. Needless to say dentistry is not immune from the effects of the economic recession that we are currently facing. Patients struggling with smaller salaries, decreasing benefits, or complete loss of employment, are being cautious about spending. The net effect is fewer dental appointments and decreased revenue. Some dentists are shuddering at the word 'recession' because it generally means fewer patients coming in and less income.

But this is no time to be negative. Recessions are temporary conditions. At some point the economy will start growing faster again. To keep your head above water you must continue with your efforts to generate new business and ensure that your practice meets the expectations of your new and existing patient base.

Aim at achieving 'top of mind awareness' with your customers – patients looking for a new dentist should automatically think of you first.

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Taking the decision to refurbish or relocate will help you to achieve this. Another important outcome is the opportunity to review how your practice functions. So what are the steps that you need to take to create a successful practice?

### Engage the services of a specialist interior designer

Designing a dental practice is a complex matter that needs a great deal of time and effort and an ability to translate design ideas into workable solutions. The key to success is to engage the services of an experienced practice designer.

Their main task is to create dental practice environments that support and affect positive response and behaviour. Only then will your patients recommend you to their friends, family and colleagues.

A good designer will listen to you and interpret your ideas imaginatively, creating an environment that is a pleasure to work in. Their involvement will maximise your investment by delivering a design solution that will be economic to build and run.

### Know your budget – communicate this to your designer

Any new business venture is exciting, whether you are setting up from scratch or refurbishing, but without a firm financial foundation the enterprise will quickly fail. It is wise to obtain financial advice to help you allocate funds appropriately. This will enable you to identify how much you have to spend on the practice itself – essential information to be passed onto your designer. Spending too much money on high specification finishes is often unnecessary as a similar look may be achieved on a smaller budget.



## ...After

**An overall approach**

There are other aspects of visual communication that require attention in order to gain the most benefit from a new fit out. Logo design, stationery, signage and websites, as well as the personal presentation of staff are just as important as the physical design of a practice. If these elements project a consistent image of a practice, combined they are a powerful tool in communicating the attention to detail and standard of services offered.

**Attention to detail**

It is important to ensure that your patients are left with a lasting impression of your practice so it would be a shame for the look and feel of the interior to be compromised by poorly chosen furniture, artwork and or accessories. It is often these small details that people notice – sculptural elegant displays of exotic flowers, scented candles or a patient being offered refreshments while waiting in a relaxed environment with good reading material available, all contribute to a positive experience. Have faith in your designer and let them choose the finishing touches – these can make or break the overall impression of your practice.

**Moving forward**

The economic downturn should not be seen as an obstacle for growth. Instead it should be welcomed as an opportunity for you to create the ultimate working environment for long-term profitability.

For many practices, the marketing budget is the first to be cut during tough times. But the money that you invest in marketing and promoting your practice today is what is going to drive your success in a few months.

Putting your plans into action now will mean that you will be in a better position to take on new business as and when it arrives. It will allow you to focus on growing your business when the economy picks up.

Continuing to move forward will give your current patients a feeling of stability. It will demonstrate to your community that you are stable, and still want to be a part of it.



**Gary Bettis, architectural director**



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DDPC is celebrating 40 years in business with the launch of a new website: [www.designclinic.uk.com](http://www.designclinic.uk.com).

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