

Achieve your ultimate private practice

Shirin Seehra, design director of Designclinic, explains how to create your ultimate private dental environment

There are several design companies within the dental industry offering to help dentists set up a new practice, expand or refurbish their existing premises. The vast majority will apply their tried and trusted design solution to your project giving you a practice that is highly functional in its design yet lacks a connection with its end users – your patients. In an increasingly competitive marketplace, this is something that you cannot afford to do. Your patients are consumers – hunting around for a dentist that will give them a good

service in an environment that makes them feel comfortable and welcome.

So high on your priority list must be to engage a designer that understands your vision and has the creative know-how to deliver a design solution that attracts new patients and satisfies your existing ones.

The following are a few basic but important points that you should consider to ensure the success of your venture.

1. Engage a designer

Before you undertake any building work you will need to give your chosen builder a set of information for them to cost from. The more information you give them – the more accurate their cost will be. This must include construction information, the extent of work and what materials are to be used in the form of scaled plans and schedules. If you ask them to start work without this information (or if you ‘drip-feed’ them) you will find yourself being charged ‘extras’. Although entitled to these ‘extras’, many builders may take advantage of the situation and inflate their prices in full knowledge that your priority is to get your project finished. You are also



leaving your project open to interpretation. This may lead to costly mistakes and a design that has been compromised by lack of planning.

To avoid such a situation you must engage the services of an interior designer. They will prepare all the necessary information that your builder will need to deliver your project, including a general layout, design details and colour schemes. They will make sure that every element has been thought about and correctly specified, providing prices and delivery dates of each item so that your builder doesn't complain that they are unable to get hold of a particular item at the last minute.



Working with a designer can save you money in many situations by allocating resources wisely, eliminating design mistakes, and increasing creative thinking about your project.

They will ensure that the work begins and ends in a timely manner and take full responsibility if there are problems, doing whatever is necessary to overcome any obstacles that may occur.

2. Allocate funds

Any new business venture is exciting but without a firm financial foundation the enterprise will quickly fail. It is wise to obtain financial advice to help you to identify how much you have to spend and how it is to be divided. A designer will be to provide you with an estimate of the build based upon the square meterage and level of finish. They will advise you of other expenses that need to be taken into account: dental equipment costs, local authority fees (if statutory approvals need to be obtained) and external consultants.

3. Select the right builder and entering into a contract

Don't worry if you do not have a builder. One of the many advantages of using a designer is the access that you gain to their pool of building contractors. These builders demonstrate a high quality of workmanship within their portfolio. These are independent builders not linked with any equipment supplier or the designer and therefore totally flexible and transparent in their approach.

You must have a contract in place between you and your builder. Once you agree a price and start date, get a written contract and make sure you understand it and agree to all of it.

Your designer will help you to select the most suitable contract. They will also monitor progress, standards and safety onsite and oversee the coordination of the construction through to its successful completion using the contract ('contract administration'). Your designer will see to it that all specifications stated in the drawings are adhered to. This will

'People ignore design that ignores people.'

Frank Chimero

ensure that the builder does not compromise the design by cutting corners, re-designing the scheme to their benefit, or 'down-specifying' using inferior quality products.

Final words

In the consumer-driven world we live in today, choosing the right company or individual to design your practice is a critical step in the process of creating the right environment for you and your patients. It can mean the difference between a mediocre set-up that just ticks by, and a stunning environment that is highly profitable.

An interior designed practice will drive patients to you and make you more confident about your services.

It will also allow you to focus on what you are good at – delivering high quality dentistry.

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