



# Point and shoot: the power of camera images

**For 25 years I've been on a quest for my own version of the "EXCEPTIONAL DENTAL PRACTICE."** I knew early on that I wanted a practice based on quality, not price and volume. Through continued learning and the implementation of available technology, I have been able to take a primarily Medicaid-based practice and develop it into my ideal practice.

During this transition, and even now, I focus on patient relationships with technique and practice development. I add the personal and physical "tools" that help me deliver treatment that is not only beneficial for my patients, that often changes their lives, but is the type of treatment I find personally challenging and rewarding. After all, it's a gift to make a living at something you find truly satisfying.

Over the next 12 months, I'd like to share some of my ever-progressing journey with you. Feel free to borrow some of my experiences on your journey. If I can create my ideal practice in the sleepy little town of Savannah, Ga., you can do it too.

I don't know any dentist who doesn't want to build good relationships with his or her patients. It's one of the cornerstones of a successful practice. Although I believe strongly that you should create a plan for attaining your ideal practice by setting short- and long-term goals along the way, there's one thing that you can do *today*: **Take a picture.**

Do you have an intraoral camera in your operatory sitting there collecting dust? Do you have a digital still camera, but only use it for family photos? Then you already have access to one of the easiest ways to build patient trust.

"A picture's worth a thousand words" is no more true than in an esthetics-focused practice. However, camera images are important in *any* practice. You are losing opportunities to connect with your patients if you are not taking advantage of the power of camera images.

Whether you have a moderately priced or high-end intraoral or digital still camera, you and your team should take time to integrate it into your routine work flow. Make it a habit to capture camera images like you do X-rays. Just as an enlarged digital X-ray gets your patients' attention and lets them see their condition, so do camera images.

After you've captured pictures, what do you do with the

images? Don't keep them to yourself! We show them on a 42-inch monitor that swings out from the wall to face the chair. You can do the same — show patients the images on your computer monitor.

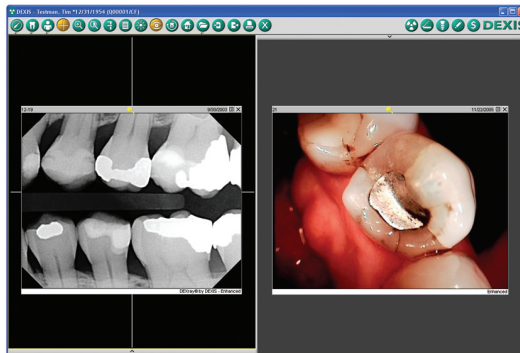
These visuals are especially important with new patients with whom you haven't had time to build solid relationships. When faced with the evidence of X-ray and camera images, patients feel sure you are suggesting treatment they really need. There's no second-guessing your recommendation — patients essentially diagnose themselves!

Not only are images helpful in creating trust, the statement you will make to your patients is that you care that they understand and are comfortable with the treatment you deliver. It also shows that you're keeping up with technology. Capturing images in your imaging software makes them available to print and e-mail, another way of reinforcing these perceptions your patients have about you.

What about after treatment? Don't stop with a "before" picture; share the "after" image with your patients too. Never miss the opportunity to print out images for patients to take home and share with family and friends. These pre- and post-treatment images remind patients of their previous conditions and how you were able to restore the area. The message is clear: "We deliver on our promises, and you can trust us."

Here's one of the best parts. Cameras come in a wide variety of types and price ranges. Anyone can afford camera technology. It's a simple, effective way to build patient relationships *and* your practice. The next time you reach for your mirror to have a better look, reach for your camera, too, so the patient can have the same view. **DE**

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*Digital X-rays and camera images have high impact.*