



Keeping Up with the Times Using Digital Case Presentation

By Brad Durham, DMD

In colonial times, dentists and patients had few choices. Filling a cavity, for example, involved rolling some type of metal between your fingers into a pellet-shape, sticking it in the crevasse and then shaping and polishing. As years passed, inventions continued to improve the dental experience. In the late 1800s, the invention of X-rays gave dentists the inside view of the mouth, and ether took pain out of dental surgery. In the early 1900s, the invention of Novocain gave pain management an even greater shot in the arm (actually, mouth). By the 1950s, high-speed air-driven hand pieces, deemed by the ADA to be “an immediate commercial success” heralded the new era of high-speed dentistry. Fast forward to the new millennium.

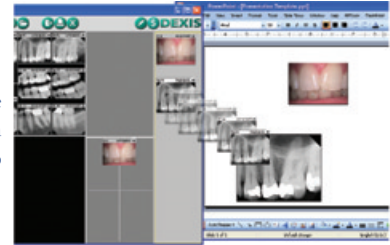
Fortunately for our 21st century dental practices, choices abound, in equipment and methods of diagnosis and treatment. Because of the many treatment options available, it is imperative for a growing dental practice to implement the technology and software to communicate these choices to our patients most effectively.

When seeking solutions to their dental issues, patients are not only faced with many different treatments, but also with a variety of dentists. Back in our country’s early days, the dentist was the only practitioner of his craft in the town, but today’s society presents stiff competition from the many talented and skillful dentists in each city. Setting your particular practice apart from the others involves gaining the patient’s trust in your expertise as well as an appreciation for the high level of dentistry your office can offer.

Cutting-edge technology underscores the office mindset—reflecting a level of organization, integration, and connectivity among the doctor, assistants, and the front office, and ultimately, patients. Integration software for radiography systems can now be easily combined with practice management software. Case management software integrates such important aspects as charting, treatment plans, clinical notes, and images into one cohesive package. This combination of case presentation software captures, stores, edits, and displays the patient’s dental images and information, and with the click of a mouse the dentist can show the patients images of their dentition in an understandable medium.

Besides keeping the office coordinated, case presentation with integrated software shows potential patients how much you value their case. When viewing a case on our 42-inch screens, it is evident to the patient that the office strives to understand and treat his specialized needs. The dentist and patient can view thumbnail radiographic and photographic images and then click

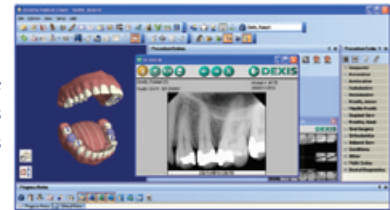
From imaging software to PowerPoint in one step



Large, enhanced digital images offer the ultimate in patient understanding



Presentations shine with integrated charts and images



to zoom in on a specific area. We can isolate images from X-rays, pans, digital cameras, or incorporate videos for patient education. Instead of showing our patients small film X-rays that they squint at as we hold them up to our operatory lights, the patient comfortably views our clinical software with its rotating model views (DENTRIX®), our multi-view imaging software (DEXIS®), or even a PowerPoint® presentation distinctly detailing the various aspects of their teeth. Even better, we can show what the teeth can look like after certain treatments.

For reaching a personal level, there’s no better medium than digital software. Presenting a patient with all of the information as well as the options, complete with introductory photos, digital radiographic images, and even video testimonials from other satisfied patients, gives them the confidence to say “yes” to your practice, and “yes” to future possibilities.

Dr. Brad Durham has practiced for 25 years with an emphasis on head, neck, and facial pain treatment; dental cosmetics; and complex dental reconstruction. His practice combines art, science, and technology with personalized care. He is a clinical and featured instructor at The Las Vegas Institute, and was the first in the world to earn the LVI Mastership award for aesthetic reconstruction. He teaches a series of courses entitled “The Niche Practice” at LVI and his home in Savannah, GA. He can be reached at drd@braddurhamdmd.com and www.nichepractice.com.