

Q&A

with Charlie Kleiman,
owner of Dental Computer Systems Integration

How did you get into the dental computer business?

In 1997, I had just completed a millennium information systems master plan for a big insurance company and designing a new 2,000 square foot, five-chair office for my wife's dental practice. I saw that the cost of dental



information technology was dropping and the capabilities were improving. I also felt that dentists needed a trusted business partner that could help them implement these technologies into their practices. So I left the insurance company and started doing for other dentists what I had been doing on the side for my wife the previous 10 years.

You don't have any employees, isn't that a limitation?

For my clients, the nice part of working with a sole proprietor is that they know that they are always going to get the best employee, not the one that is available. I always have my cell phone with me and triage all my calls. If a client has an outage, like a dead server or their network is down, I immediately drop everything I'm doing to fix their problem. I also have a network of trusted colleagues that can cover for me when I'm on vacation.

What is the foundation of your success?

Ethics. Putting my clients' needs first. Unbiased advice. Being there for my clients. Understanding the business of dentistry: profit and loss, cash flow, patient acquisition and retention, case acceptance, productivity, infection control, return on investment, and personnel issues. Not selling products that my dentists do not need or will never use. Doing the right things right.

What do you see as market trends?

The federal mandates and cost containment efforts we are seeing in the health care industry are going to flow into the dental field. Secure information portability and electronic data sharing between providers will be expected by our patients. The paperless office. Tools that can help our patients visualize and take ownership of their mouths as well as their entire body and well being.

What distinguishes you from other computer guys and dental equipment companies?

I have a unique skill set for my clients. I understand the business of dentistry and I'm a computer guy. I'm married to a dentist, manage the finances of her practice, and have taken lots of practice management courses with her over the past 20 years. I also have over 30 years of information technology work experience. I treat all my clients the same way I treat my wife's practice. I do not want my wife nor any of my clients to buy equipment that they will not fully utilize. At the same time I want my wife and my clients to have the best quality for the lowest price.

What is your territory?

One hour driving radius of San Rafael for my maintenance clients. That way I can get to them in a reasonable period of time. So that's Santa Rosa to the north, the I-80 corridor to the east, and the City of San Francisco

to the south. I also do long distance design and IT consulting.

What do you think doctors want in an information technology partner?

A trustworthy, knowledgeable, experienced technician that is there for them when they need him. One that provides timely and actionable information that helps them make the right decisions as they evaluate, purchase and implement new information technologies that can make a positive difference in their practices. A partner that understands and listens to them and puts their needs and goals first.

What is the role of information technology in the dental office?

To make business processes more efficient. Lower business costs. Introduce innovation, new products and services. Improve the patient experience and customer service. Improve the interactions with co-treating dentists and labs. Support new business models. Make the dental practice more eco-friendly.

What is your vision of dental information technology in the future?

I foresee video conferencing in the treatment room with the patient in the chair for real time inter-disciplinary care. The ability to electronically transmit patient records to co-treating dentists for improved patient experience. Digital impressions. Arms length interaction with the computer using Wii type motion sensors, eye movement sensors, and voice recognition and voice assisted technologies. The future looks so very exciting to me. ■

For more information, contact:

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