

All Change
Steve Gates

As you may have realised...I'm not Roger Matthews! But with 2011 looking like another year of big change, I thought I would continue the trend and mix things up a bit!

It's easy to forget just how much has happened in the past 12 months, and with planning for the New Year moving on apace, 2010 already seems like a distant memory to me. For example, who would have thought that in the last year, we have seen the country say goodbye to Gordon and give a cautious welcome to David and Nick; watch economists argue over the best way out of the largest budget deficit in modern times; see the Miliband leadership drama finally come to a close and collectively hold our breath as George Osborne delivered his long-awaited spending review – although the debate about its fairness rumbles on.

The new coalition Government has certainly made its presence known when it comes to budget cuts, and the dental profession will not remain unscathed. But politicians come and politicians go – and it's up to you, as dental professionals, to decide how best to deal with the changes that an uncertain political and economic environment can bring. However, for the first time in a number of years we're at the start of a period of change for the dental market - with the CQC officially taking the reins and ring-fencing of NHS budgets coming to an end in April. All this means there's sure to be a lot to contend with over the next few years - not to mention the challenges of HTM01-05 and the ongoing NHS contract reform.

The latter has certainly been met with some trepidation, especially considering the last reforms in 2006, which led to many dentists leaving the NHS and reduced access to treatment by patients for the following three years. Providing a service based on 'capitation, registration and quality' is something very close to my own heart and it's heartening that the NHS has come to realise the value of this model. However, good dentistry depends on a continuing relationship of trust between patient and dentist and it remains to be seen how the details of the new proposals are developed and, crucially, whether the dental profession are prepared for yet more change.

But times of change are also the times that make look forward to the coming year with such enthusiasm, as despite the country facing an austere few years, we nevertheless approach the New Year with traditional good humour and optimism...which is no mean feat for members of the dental profession!

Even dental payment plan specialists with 25 years experience are listening to the changing demands of their clients and reinvigorating our products and services to move with the times! You could find that changes need to be made to your own business to keep it profitable and stable,. If you're not, there's plenty of help and advice available out there...but it's up to you to take advantage of it! As the late American Professor W.E.Deming once said "It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory."

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About the Author:

Steve Gates – Denplan Managing Director

As Denplan's Managing Director since 2001, Steve is responsible for the overall strategic direction and growth of all its activities, in association with the Denplan Board and other Executive Leadership team members. He works particularly closely in areas of new product and business development, while maintaining hands on links with the dental profession.