

## **PROBING INTO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Henry Clover, Denplan's new Deputy Chief Dental Officer and former GDP, discusses the value of CPD and postgraduate development and how increasing your knowledge and clinical skills can not only keep you up-to-date on the latest techniques but could also help you differentiate your practice from the competition.**

With the current economic environment still proving to be unstable at best, CPD is, in my opinion, more vital than ever. In fact, evidence from the last recession in the early 90's demonstrated that businesses which identified and implemented a development strategy were more likely to survive and thrive as the economy recovered.

In a recent speech, John Denham, Director General of the UK's Confederation of British Industry, said: "Businesses must resist the temptation to slash training to cut costs. Why? Because businesses that don't invest in talent are two and a half times more likely to fail, whereas those that carry on training will recover more quickly."

And I couldn't agree more...professional development has always been an integral part of professional life, even before we called it CPD and it became an essential requirement. But I also believe that development should be about more than accumulating CPD hours in order to fulfil annual quotas. It should be part of a structured development plan to benefit both your practice and your patients. The following tips will remind you of the benefits of CPD and postgraduate development, plus how to identify the most up-to-date and appropriate training to give your practice the upper hand in this increasingly regulated and consumer-led profession.

### **Going the extra mile**

Although there are some CPD subjects that are required by our Registration authority – it's increasingly important than ever to identify each team member's additional development needs.

I don't think that any dentist would struggle to find training courses to help them to gain CPD – although finding the time to do them is another matter. However, it's important to think about how they will benefit your practice team, how they will benefit your business and how they will benefit your patients. It's also a good idea to look for courses you can undertake as a team, as this will help the teamwork and efficiency of the whole practice when you come back to day-to-day work.

There are a wide range of useful training courses around these days and some payment plan providers offer tailor-made options for your specific practice needs. These can range from bespoke practice-based development days to regional team days, and provide verifiable CPD. Alternatively, you could chose to attend local courses that provide an opportunity for staff in similar roles to meet and learn together, benefiting both your employees and your practice.

### **Clinical Training for Dentists**

Denplan, for example, has recently launched The Denplan Stairway Programme – a structured development programme designed to be relevant to dentists at any stage of a general practice career. The Programme aims to encompass the continuum of professional education in a relevant and practical format and has now also received official recognition from the University of Birmingham - equating to two optional modules towards an MSc in Primary Dental Care.

The Programme includes a series of units, each comprising a study day and a practice-based project on clinical and practice management aspects of running a practice. Each unit can earn an individual up to 20 hours of CPD, or two educational credits. Accumulation of 20 credits leads to the Denplan Stairway Award, which can then be counted towards attaining an MSc in Primary Dental Care at Birmingham University for those who wish to pursue their studies on a more formal basis. This makes the Programme not only invaluable for training and development, but also a potential springboard towards gaining a substantial qualification recognised by peers and patients alike.

### **Stairway to success**

Father and daughter dental team, Nick and Fiona Richardson, from Berry Lane Dental Surgery in Lancashire, were the first two dentists in the country to complete the Denplan Stairway Programme and Nick commented: “This is a fantastic achievement for the practice and we are really looking forward to sharing the benefits of the Programme with our patients. Training and development are crucial in our business and we take it really seriously here at Berry Lane. To find out that the Denplan Stairway Programme could not only assist us in our training and development, but also help us convert that training into further qualifications was an opportunity too good to miss. To be the first practice in the country to complete the programme is just the cherry on the cake!”

I think it’s reasonable to assert that CPD and postgraduate education is a vital part of practice life but I believe it should also be seen as an opportunity to improve your services, rather than a necessary chore. The information above should not only help point you in the right direction when it comes to finding appropriate courses, but I hope it will also give you the boost you need to ensure that your practice continues to thrive long into the future. It’s up to you to take up the challenge!

**-ends-**

**855 words**

#### **About the author**

##### ***Dr Henry Clover - Deputy Chief Dental Officer***

Henry is a former general dental practitioner who converted his own practice to private practice in 1993. With his experience as a Denplan member dentist, he joined Denplan's Professional Services department on a part-time basis in 1998 and full-time in 1999, with responsibility for professional support and member services.

Henry has now been promoted to Deputy Chief Dental Officer and is responsible for the Professional Services team as well as being a member of the Executive Leadership Team, supporting Denplan’s motto – ‘By Dentists, For Dentists’.