



Adding value to dentistry



Make sure a bargain is a bargain

Globalisation has increased the rate of market evolution and the level of competition at the same time as reducing the length of product life cycles. This has resulted in the more frequent introduction of new or enhanced products, greater cost efficiencies and access to a wider choice of products and services.

The Internet and electronic buying have assisted the trend and with the dollar exchange rate now so favourable more marketing opportunities have opened up across the globe and the profession is naturally looking to buy from overseas.

But before you make the decision to buy from abroad it is as well to also consider the advantages that come from 'Buying British'.

Buying from a UK manufacturer means that you are sustaining the industry in this country; maintaining employment and helping to ensure that the manufacture of instruments and equipment will continue here. This is as much in the interests of dentists as it is the manufacturers themselves. If you feel particularly strongly about your carbon footprint you can also have the satisfaction of knowing that British products have the advantage of being used

where they are being made, cutting out the need for long distance transport. It also means shipping times should be significantly quicker.

Also think about the services you are likely to need when deciding whether to buy from the UK or abroad. You may be able to purchase a piece of equipment from abroad which is competitively priced and of exceptional quality but who are you going to find to install and service it. Many companies in the UK will not offer such services for products they have not supplied. There are also occasions where spare or replacement parts are needed whether this is because the originals were faulty or simply worn out. Again you need to be sure that you can obtain these in the UK otherwise you face the inconvenience of surgery downtime.

Most importantly, you don't want to be left in the lurch with

nobody to turn to for support. There are real examples of this happening, especially recently, as companies struggle to survive in the current economic climate. Make sure the company you are dealing with is reputable and financially viable so that your needs can be met now and in the future.

It is well recognised that the manufacturing industry in the UK has sadly been in decline over recent years. However, UK manufacturers still exist, even within the dental industry, and buying from manufacturers or suppliers who are members of the British Dental Trade Association provides the reassurance that UK quality and service standards are being adhered to, whether the company is based in the UK or abroad.



The next generation...

Dentistry is an ever-changing profession, with new ideas and new technologies arriving every year. Access to information has been revolutionised since the advent of the Internet.



Dentists can now find the latest research from across the globe using on line reference sites such as Medline or search engines such as Google. Not just dentists, but patients' also use computer searches to find out what is now on offer. Health stories dominate some sections of the media. Although these may raise patients' expectations unrealistically, dental practices need to keep up with the latest trends.

Innovations are important in dentistry. They offer patients increased choice and even in these days of recession, many are prepared to pay for the latest treatment. Patients want to keep their teeth for life and are well aware of the benefits of good oral health. They want to look good and the days of tolerating missing, discoloured and misshapen teeth should be over. So innovations give dentists the opportunity to meet these new patient demands and deliver more efficient, effective, modern dentistry. This will give a competitive advantage for the practice.

The British Dental Trade Association (BDTA) has recently carried out a survey into the adoption of new technology by practices. Its objectives were to discover dentists' attitudes towards adopting new technology in their practices and to

understand their preferred training methods. The survey showed that dentists are not slow to take up innovations. Just under half will try a new technology product within a year of becoming aware of it, although there are still one eighth of those surveyed who take three or more years to come round to new ideas.

Perhaps unsurprisingly younger dentists are more inclined to take to new technologies. This also applies to those who are primarily in private practice. This no doubt shows the need to meet new patient demands and adopt the innovations they expect to be offered. There are also cost implications in adopting new technologies and these may make them uneconomic in NHS practice.

Some new technologies are adopted more quickly by dentists. Nearly half of UK dentists have integrated practice management software and approximately four in ten have intraoral digital radiography and an intraoral camera. Intraoral digital radiography usage skews strongly to dentists under the age of 55. Intraoral camera usage is more common in practices that are primarily private compared with NHS. Nearly one-fifth of respondents intend to purchase intraoral digital radiography and intraoral cameras in the next year.

Two-thirds of respondents

reported having in-surgery Internet access, but this was lower among younger and NHS dentists. About a quarter have panoramic digital radiography and a further nine percent intend to purchase this product in the next year. One fifth have a high power whitening light and another six percent intend to make this purchase, with a similar number intending to buy a laser.

But dentists seem reluctant to adopt some new technologies. Up to a fifth of dentists had no awareness of CAD/CAM, oral cancer screening environment or 3D cone beam tomography. Therefore unsurprisingly few dentists either had these in their practices or intended to purchase them in the next year. Importantly, peer recommendation and lectures or seminars were overwhelmingly the key decision factors motivating the purchase of a new technology product.

Although there is some reluctance from dentists to adopt certain new technologies, many BDTA members provide courses to support the introduction of innovations in the practice. It makes sense to learn what your new product can do and how to get the most out of it. This also will make the transition easier from an old and trusted product you have been using for some time to a new innovative technology.

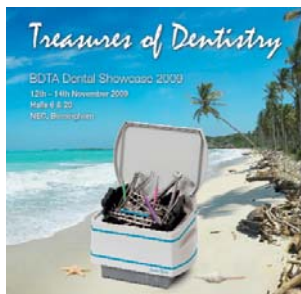
Verifiable CPD hours available in Showcase 2009 Show Guide

A new dimension has been added to the ever popular Show Guide which accompanies BDTA Dental Showcase 2009. This year for the first time members of the dental team who attend Showcase will be able to gain verifiable CPD hours by reading and answering questions on a selection of specially crafted dental and business articles.

Five relevant and educational articles will feature in the CPD section of the Guide and will cover clinical dentistry, innovations in equipment and materials, business and finance and customer satisfaction, providing something of interest for everyone.

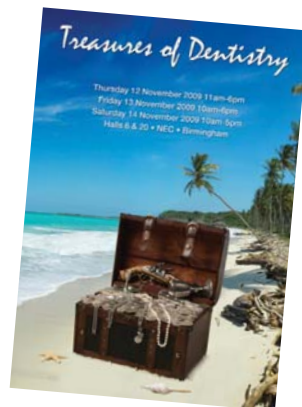
The articles will complement the information already contained in the guide which includes exhibitor contact details, a handy product locator and the latest news about the event and is designed to add even more value to your Showcase experience.

Tony Reed, Executive Director at the BDTA comments, "The Show Guide is essential reading for visitors planning to make the most of their time at BDTA Dental Showcase. I believe that



the addition of verifiable CPD articles linked to Showcase will further enhance the value of the guide and add to the overall Showcase experience."

For further information about the Show Guide CPD and other CPD opportunities available at Showcase 2009 visit www.dentalshowcase.com/CPD.



BDTA Dental Showcase 2009 takes place 12-14 November 2009 at NEC Birmingham. Please use the enclosed card to reserve your complimentary ticket NOW!

You can also register online at www.dentalshowcase.com/visit, call the registration hotline on **+44 (0) 1494 729959** or text your name, address, occupation and GDC number to **07786 206 276**.

Advance registration closes 6 November 2009.

On-the-day registration: £10 per person.

Have you been on the BDTA website yet and asked a question?



Because if you do, you have the chance to be entered into a prize draw to win a Nintendo Wii! It really is that simple, you just have to fill in your contact details and ask the BDTA a dental related question. Whether you are looking for a brand of filling material or the contact details of a supplier, simply submit your question and wait for the response.

To ask a question visit www.bdta.org.uk/DPearpiece. The closing date to win a Nintendo Wii is 1st November 2009.

The effects of the recession on private dentistry



We are in a recession, a global recession; but what exactly does it mean?

One definition at www.investorwords.com is: 'A period of general economic decline; specifically, a decline in gross domestic product for two or more consecutive quarters'. What does it mean for us and for our patients? It is labelled by some as the worst recession since the 1930s, but this doesn't feel like those years, even though most of us cannot remember them.

Despite rising unemployment, most people are still employed. Low inflation and low interest rates mean that those with mortgages are probably better off than they have been for some time. With savings accounts paying next to nothing in interest and much

of the credit card paid off, what better time for the public to spend a bit of money on something they've always wanted like getting their teeth whitened or fixed?

This is what appears to be happening. Sales of whitening products are rising. Companies operating dental plans are reporting that patients are maintaining their payments. For them private dentistry is their choice not a 'distress purchase' brought on by lack of availability of the NHS alternative. Laboratories report demand for the 'high end' of the market such as implants, multiple crown and bridgework, is being maintained, although there has been some reduction in single private crowns.

Some thought that the coming of a full-blown recession would mean a flight of patients from private dentistry back into the NHS. On the contrary some private dentists are reporting that they are seeing an increase in patients who have become disillusioned with NHS dentistry. Dentistry appears to have again proved itself to be 'recession-proof'.

However the message from across business at this time is that consumers are looking for good quality products and services as well as value for money. Although it is only natural in times of uncertainty to be a little cautious, now may be the time to consider some

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We want to hear from you

E-mail your name, occupation, GDC no and address to rebeccaevans@bdta.org.uk to register in advance for complimentary ticket to BDTA Dental Showcase 2009. The first 100 people will receive a BDTA branded mouth mirror and the chance to win a *BDTA Certificate: Introduction to Dentistry training package for your practice*. You have until 12 October 2009!



Winner of ultrasonic bath announced

The British Dental Trade Association (BDTA) is delighted to announce that Subash Simon was the lucky winner of the ultrasonic bath in the visitor passport prize draw which took place at the British Dental Conference and Exhibition 2009.

The visitor passport was designed to encourage delegates to walk around the exhibition and see the wide selection of products and services on display as well as collecting stickers from exhibitors participating in the initiative in order to enter the prize draw. The BDTA was the official sponsor of the publication and provided the ultrasonic bath, the same as the one used in the 'Treasures of Dentistry' Showcase 2009 advertising campaign, as the second prize in the draw.

Subash Simon, said of his win, "I am delighted to have won this prize and happy that I took part in the visitor passport initiative. I'm a dental nurse and it's actually the first BDA Conference that I have been to and it won't be the last now! We will be putting the ultrasonic bath to good use in the dental practice where I work."



Sales suggest practices are keeping busy

Despite the recession sales of dental products in the UK are still buoyant. Figures* for the first quarter of 2009 (January-March) showed particularly high quarterly sales.

With the pound at that time weak against both the US dollar and the euro and with many products coming from sources outside the UK, some of this increase was due to currency fluctuations. Nevertheless between the first quarter of 2009 and the same period in 2008 there was unit volume growth of 9.4 per cent and between the last quarter of 2008 and the first quarter of this year, volume sales increased by 6.4 per cent.

Despite the gloomy state of the economy and the worst recession since the 1930s dental practices remain active and busy. Sales of local anaesthetic were up by 10 per cent over the year. Even sales of whitening products rose by 13 per cent, although one might have expected patients to be reining in on such spending in difficult economic times. These trends accord with what is being seen in both private and NHS sectors where many dentists report that they are busier than ever.

The generally buoyant state of the market was not uniform across the range of products. Indeed

for two categories there was a reduction in sales. Small equipment went down by 15 per cent, with LED curing light sales declining by 24 per cent and prophyl unit sales by 30 per cent since the same period last year. This may indicate some reluctance by practices to re-equip at this time. Sales of pins and rubber dams also fell although other endodontic materials rose strongly.

Products that are more directly related to volume of treatment showed strong growth. Cements, disposables, and restoratives were up by more than 30 per cent. There has been increased attention to disinfection and sales of products related to this rose by over 20 per cent. Likewise a new focus on prevention has seen a rise in oral hygiene products by a similar amount and fluoride varnish increasing by 45 per cent. Overall an increase in activity and treatments by dentists has been reflected in higher sales of dental products.

**Source: UK Dental Products Market Share Study (Q1, 2009), Strategic Dental Marketing*

Visit us at www.bdta.org.uk

Win a Showcase parrot at the BSDHT Conference



The British Dental Trade Association (BDTA) is pleased to be supporting the annual BSDHT Oral Health Conference and Exhibition, which is taking place at the Bournemouth International Conference Centre on 16th – 17th October 2009.

The BDTA will be exhibiting on stand number 6 throughout the duration of the two day event providing you with an opportunity to collect all the latest information on the BDTA and its members, reserve your complimentary ticket for BDTA Dental Showcase 2009 and enter a prize draw for your chance to win the Showcase 2009 mascot, Tweetums the Parrot.

Tony Reed, Executive Director of the BDTA

comments, “The Steele Review highlighted the need for a greater focus on oral health and prevention meaning the role of the hygienist and therapist has been escalated to a position of higher importance. We are delighted to be part of the BSDHT event and hope that the chance of winning a Showcase mascot may be sufficient temptation for delegates to come and talk to us about the BDTA, its members and Dental Showcase!”

For more information on the BDTA visit www.bdta.org.uk or for the latest details about Dental Showcase visit www.dentalshowcase.com

The effects of the recession on private dentistry continued from inside

investment in equipment, refurbishment or updating your website. You are likely to find some good deals and added value packages available. Don't forget to include a trip to this year's BDTA Dental Showcase in your plans if you're looking for something new for your practice or laboratory. The event provides a wide range of products and services all under one roof.

Where will the money come from to do this? Before there was the recession, we had the credit crunch, a term that entered the financial dictionary last autumn. Defined as a 'severe shortage of money or credit, its origins go back about five years to the USA where people started to default on sub-prime loans. By last

autumn the crisis was global. In the UK first Northern Rock, then Royal Bank of Scotland, followed by Lloyds TSB all went into partial or total state ownership.

At massive cost to the taxpayer, these banks are in recovery, but are still criticised for being reluctant to lend. Many dentists will remember the days when the response of your local bank went approached for finance was to ask 'how much do you want?' Those days have gone, perhaps never to return. Banks and other financial institutions are now averse to taking risks and this means looking closely at requests for finance from dentists.

Dental and medical practices, however, remain low risk businesses for banks and they are

still willing to lend, but the hoops you may have to go through will be extensive and time consuming. When it comes to major purchases, such as buying a practice or laboratory the bank's valuation may not be as high as you need. They will also look at your personal finances as well as your business plan. Questions such as how much you owe on credit cards may well be asked.

All in all now is a good time to invest, especially if you are wholly or mainly in the private sector. Obtaining finance in the recession may be more difficult and take more time, but is still available if the lender can be confident of your ability to maintain fee income and repay the loan.

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