How visibility, technology and efficiency led to rapid success

Meet the men behind Corson Dentistry in Denver: Michael Corson, DDS, and Kyle Miller, DMD
From an Army hospital to a state-of-the-art cosmetic dentistry practice and, finally, to his own private practice in his hometown of Denver, Dr. Mike Corson Jr. has practiced dentistry in very different environments. Through those experiences, he has honed his skills in a wide range of dental specialties, which helped him envision how his own practice would be. Today, anyone who drives down I-25 in downtown Denver cannot help but see the oversized sign that advertises Corson Dentistry. It sits atop his building and is seen by 420,000 cars driving by every day.

The location that almost wasn’t

Dr. Corson made the decision to move back to Colorado after practicing dentistry in the Army and in Scottsdale, Ariz. He had nearly settled on a location in a Denver suburb that his research confirmed would be profitable. Meanwhile, Henry Schein Field Sales Consultant Jason Whitlow met the doctor by chance at the office of another Denver dentist while making a sales call. Whitlow later reached out to Corson to suggest the downtown location. What the doctor saw convinced him it was an even better site than the suburban one.

“I saw the location and the density around the office,” Corson said. “It was dense — I knew I could market to the area for years! The location also had great visibility and parking. Other offices nearby either didn’t have the same visibility or wouldn’t accept insurance, so I knew I could attract and retain a lot of patients there.”

The doctor believed a combination of personality, efficient systems and a well-trained staff would lead to enough referrals that he could offset the money that would be written off from the insurance plans. Today, Corson treats 3,500 active patients and adds 120 new patients each month. The 9 by 12-foot sign on top of his building that practically jumps onto the freeway is his main form of marketing; he also relies on Google and Yelp reviews he receives online from satisfied patients.

“We dominate now, with hundreds of positive reviews! When prospective patients look us up, that’s what they see.”

Interestingly enough, even though the location was outstanding, the space inside the building — retail space on the main floor with senior living apartments above — was nontraditional and therefore quite challenging to work with. The square footage was tight, so fitting all of the equipment required some changes to the usual specifications.

“When someone asks, I typically recommend 400 square feet for each operatory, but that wasn’t possible in Dr. Corson’s space, so the design had to be adjusted,” said Henry Schein Equipment & Technology Specialist Mike Stanislawski, who worked alongside Whitlow to help the doctor make selections for the office.

“We had to maximize our capacity in exchange for the great location,” explained Corson, who noted the operatories are about eight feet across instead of the more common 10 feet. “We don’t have side cabinets in any of the treatment rooms. Removing them gave us more space. We store supplies in 12 o’clock units,
and we reorder supplies from Henry Schein by scanning bar codes, which are filed in a three-ring binder.”

_Spa-like ambiance and amenities_

The practice is truly spa-like, with rich chocolate brown walls, comfortable upholstered furniture in the waiting area and a generous use of stained wood accents in wall niches and shelving and for framing the glass walls that keep the office open and bright. These homey touches are further emphasized with vertical wall tiles and carpeting, all in the same neutral tones, that lead patients through the office.

Other luxurious amenities include heated massage chairs and paraffin-wax hand treatments. To the delight of the hometown sports fans, framed jerseys from local professional athletes, who happen to be current and former patients, line the hallways. And as patients help themselves to gourmet coffee from the beverage station, they can look up and see Corson’s framed army uniform, which is proudly displayed in the office.

“So personally wouldn’t be where I am today,” Corson said, “without my time in the military and the mentorship I received from both Dr. Mark Peck, a renowned cosmetic dentist, and my dad [Dr. Mike Corson Sr.], who is a well-known, retired dentist in the area.”

To maintain an open feeling, Corson chose glass walls with rich wood beamed accents to showcase the consultation room. Neutral browns and tans create a calming color palette and complement items such the check-out desk and waiting area.

_High-quality care facilitated by cutting-edge technology_

The 3,000-square-foot office, with its sophisticated yet comfortable feel, is equipped with the latest technology and equipment, and Corson essentially went “all in,” purchasing everything he would need from day one instead of gradually adopting technology as his patient load grew. The office is paperless, and every piece of equipment is integrated with Dentrix practice-management software. He brought an existing CAD/CAM system with him when he moved to Colorado, and he purchased a panoramic X-ray machine and digital sensors. After a year of running Corson Dentistry, he upgraded the panoramic X-ray to the Planmeca 3D Cone Beam unit.

“Before I had a cone beam, I sent my implant patients out for a CBCT scan,” remembered Corson. “They would have to get in the car and see someone they didn’t know. They didn’t want to do that. They would either wait on the procedure or ask for a bridge instead. Now, we do the scan right in my office, and we have an acceptance rate of about 90 percent.”

Around the same time, he also purchased a new Planmeca FIT™ restorative system to replace the CAD/CAM system he had. It made a large impact because he fabricates about 90 percent of all restorations in-house.
“The Planmeca FIT system allowed me to connect two laptops to the PlanMill,” said Corson, who found the one room/one laptop setup with his previous CAD/CAM system was limiting his patient care and workflow. “I was going between rooms, so being able to add a second laptop was huge. Plus, the Planmeca FIT is a great product. The break-even point is so low, and I make money every month having that unit. It’s had such a big impact on our practice that we are close to buying a second PlanMill 40.”

Restorations placed on implants are still sent out to a lab, but the doctor utilizes Planmeca Romexis® and DDX software, which shortens the process by at least a week and, in his opinion, creates better-fitting, more precise restorations.

_Rapid growth in staff, space and hours_

When Corson opened the practice in November 2011, he employed just one assistant and one front-desk employee. He performed all procedures, from simple cleanings to complex procedures. During the next few years, he added several hygienists, completed the other two operatories and welcomed Dr. Kyle Miller into the practice. Henry Schein helped Corson with the valuation of the practice and in drafting the associate agreement with Miller.

In 2013, Corson broke through a wall to expand into adjacent space and added three more operatories, bringing the total to eight.

“One of my favorite things about the practice is looking down the hallway into the new treatment area,” Corson said. “Now that we’ve maximized the space, we are offering extended hours.”

Corson and Miller work on a split-shift schedule, with Corson working 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Miller working 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. These expanded hours are convenient for patients and allow the doctors to fully utilize all of the treatment rooms.

_Ultimate goal to expand to multiple locations_

With no further expansions possible in the current space, Corson’s next goal is to expand his business through the acquisition of additional offices, and he would like to eventually have six locations under the Corson Dentistry banner.

In addition to operating a successful dental business, he also finds himself sharing his expertise in technology, lecturing about the Planmeca FIT restorative system at dental events and sharing his approach to integrated technology in his practice. “Many young dentists who have started or want to start their own practices want to meet with him and pick his brain,” confirms Stanislawski. “They constantly seek him out, and he has a very open-door policy.”

Corson maintains his mission is simple: offer comfortable, compassionate and convenient care to all patients. It must be working, because many patients drive a long way to see him. His successful formula — personality, good systems and staff, and a great location — has proven itself, beyond a doubt.

Dr. Corson invested in the Planmeca ProMax to provide precision 3-D imaging to his patients. The powerful Planmeca Romexis Software offers patients a comprehensive view of their diagnosis.