Is there a technology you’ve come to rely on so much that you can’t imagine how you ever got along without it? For me, that technology is digital radiography with flexible wireless sensors.

When I first started private practice, we used film radiography exclusively. After a few years, we invested in a wired digital sensor system. It didn’t take long to realize that a large number of children, especially the young ones, couldn’t tolerate the hard sensors. So, after a few months, we went back to film. For the next several years, I never gave it much thought, other than when my staff would complain about having to clean the chemical processor.

About eight years ago, however, I discovered and invested in ScanX phosphor storage plates—now more commonly called flexible digital sensors—for our two offices. Manufactured by Air Techniques, the small, soft, flexible, wireless ScanX sensors are comfortable for any pediatric patient who can tolerate a film radiograph, unlike hard sensors.

Recently, Air Techniques introduced the ultra-compact ScanX Swift, which I ordered for a third pediatric office that we just opened. Here are 12 advantages I have come to appreciate about ScanX in general, and this new Swift model in particular:

1. Excellent image resolution. ScanX images enhance your case acceptance by helping you show the patient’s parent the extent and location of any problems.
2. Faster image processing. All ScanX models process images in literally seconds, a much faster rate of time than with a wired sensor. This makes you much more likely to capture the complete coronal-to-apical length and not miss a root apex or distal cusp, which means fewer retakes.
3. Larger image area. The image area with ScanX is up to 38 percent larger than with a wired sensor. This makes your factors more likely to capture the complete coronal-to-apical length and not miss a root apex or distal cusp, which means fewer retakes.
4. Easy image manipulation. Brightness and contrast can easily be manipulated, and areas of the film can be magnified for better viewing and diagnosis.
5. Same placement technique as film. ScanX digital sensors are placed in the patient’s mouth just as X-ray films are.
6. Easy software integration. ScanX software integrates easily with most imaging software.

Less radiation. With ScanX, the X-ray exposure can typically be 80-to-85 percent less than that required for film, which is something your patients’ parents will appreciate.

Quick image review and saving. When you view the scanned image, within seconds, you can determine if you’ve captured the desired image. With a couple of keystrokes, you can then save the image into the patient’s electronic record.

10. No chemicals. With ScanX you don’t have to deal with and pay for costly film packs and messy chemicals, or deal with the hassle of chemical disposal.
11. Affordability. ScanX sensors are a fraction of the price of hard sensors and can be reused hundreds of times. There’s also no need for costly insurance or annual maintenance.
12. Chairside compatibility. The compact size of the ScanX Swift processor makes it perfect for chairside use or for placement just about anywhere in the office.

If I had to pick the most important advantage of using the ScanX Swift, it’s the fact that its sensors can be used with 100 percent of the children who can tolerate regular film X-rays. ScanX sensors are 30 times thinner than wired sensors, so they’ll fit even the smallest mouth. If you ask my staff, however, their favorite advantage of the ScanX Swift would probably be the fact that the images are scanned and available so quickly so if a retake is needed, they know it almost immediately.

If you explore digital radiography with flexible wireless sensors, I’m confident that you too will soon be wondering how you ever got along without it.

Planning for partial retirement can be tricky

If you want to keep working, only on a less demanding schedule, you’re not alone. Many people these days are considering a ‘partial retirement.’ According to a survey by the University of Michigan study, 20 percent of those ages 65 to 67 consider themselves partially retired, while in 1960 this group was nonexistent.1

The reasons for this trend vary: Some are financially secure, while others simply enjoy their work and don’t want to stop.2 Can you participate in this trend? Possibly—but it takes planning. To help you clarify your goals and how to reach them, consider drafting a partial retirement plan.

Having a ‘planned duration’ helps

The process of retiring, especially partial, is complicated for dental professionals, largely because of their practices. If you’re the owner of a private practice, a partial retirement must be planned well in advance, and generally is more successful if there is a planned duration.3 But whether you’re negotiating with partners to scale back, looking for possible buyers to take over your practice or considering moving into an entirely different part-time job, planning is crucial.

Consider the following questions and discuss them with your business and life partners. Then share the answers with your accountant/financial professional:

1. Do you want to change jobs, or stay at the same job and reduce hours?
2. Have you made a financial plan that takes into account the reduced compensation resulting from fewer hours?
3. Have you spoken with your financial advisor to prepare for partial retirement?
4. Have you communicated your plans to your life partner and your business partners?

Once you’ve discussed these questions with all the players, the next step is to sit down with your accountant or financial professional and draft an actual plan for your proposed retirement.

This plan should cover financial matters, including how much you expect to earn and how that will cover your living expenses, work responsibilities including scheduling, such as on-call hours, regular hours worked and patients taken on, the expected duration of this arrangement, how a change in work habits will affect the ownership of the practice, and a clearly stated plan for the eventual transition to complete retirement.4

All of the above goes double if you’re in a solo practice and plan to eventually sell or hand down your practice to the next generation. Preparing a business for sale takes years if you want to get the best price, and both you and your patients will benefit from long-term planning.

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References

1. med-economics.modernmedicine.com/article/1519951/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-rise-of-the-partial-retirement
Designs for Vision is introducing a 3.5 expanded-field dental telescope that can be used all day, the Micro 3.5ef Scopes. The Micro 3.5ef Scopes uses a revolutionary optical design that reduces the size of the prismatic telescope by 50 percent and reduces the weight by 40 percent, while providing an expanded-field, full-oral-cavity view at 3.5x magnification.

“We listened to dentists who wanted the field of view of an expanded-field 3.5x telescope, but were concerned about wearing them all day because of the size and weight,” said Designs for Vision President Richard Feinbloom. “Designs for Vision was started by my father, Dr. William Feinbloom, as an optical company in 1961 to design innovative head-borne optical devices, and the new Micro 3.5ef Scopes continues that tradition of optical innovation. We’re excited to be offering several new products this year, including our NanoCamHD™ loup-mounted video camera, and two new frames: Nike® Retro and DVI Sport frames.”

Designs for Vision’s new NanoCamHD records digitally at 1080p high-definition resolution. The NanoCamHD records magnified HD images from the user’s perspective. The complete system includes 2.5x, 3.5x, and 4.5x lens systems to match the magnification dental professionals are already using — and providing a true user’s point of view.

As an added feature, still photographs can be taken from live video feed or during playback. Video or still images can be uploaded into a patient file, included in presentations or courses, or shared with a colleague or lab for collaborative consultations.

The NanoCamHD complete system includes a color-corrected ULTRA Mini LED Day-Lite™ headlight. The combination headlight/NanoCamHD can be attached to your loupes or it can be worn on a lightweight headband.

The system also includes a foot pedal to enable hands-free operation of the NanoCamHD Record/pause, mute/unmute and still photography are controlled by the operator hands-free via the foot pedal. For best results, combine the NanoCamHD with Designs for Vision’s dental telescopes — matching true magnification levels of 2.5x, 3.5x or 4.5x to produce the most realistic simulation from the user’s perspective. Designs also is introducing two new frame offerings this year: The DVI Sport and the Nike Retro. The Nike Retro frames are exclusive to Designs for Vision, which describes them as having “a classic look and excellent function.” The frames are available in tortoise shell, black and translucent gray.

The DVI Sport frames can be used for all magnifications and can incorporate eyeglass prescriptions — providing the protective wrap without any distortion. The NanoCamHD can be attached to the new Nike Retro or DVI Sport frames. Be the first to “See the Visible Difference®” by contacting Designs for Vision at info@DesignsForVision.com or (800) 345-4009 for a demonstration in your office. You can visit Designs for Vision in exhibit halls at upcoming meetings: American Association of Endodontists (booth No. 72A), American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (booth No. 813), American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (booth No. 83), and the Texas Meeting (booth No. 1169).

(Source: Designs for Vision)