Learning Curve
With more than 4,500 new cases opened every year, there is a wealth of experience within Dental Protection from which all of us can learn

Difficult economic times impact upon the clinician and the patient. People tend to assess their own situation and consider the financial implications. Any purchase that may be perceived as unnecessary will usually be the first to go.

In addition, it is well-recognised that healthcare complaints and litigation tend to increase in times of recession or economic downturn, perhaps because patients are less willing to accept and tolerate a sub-optimal outcome for which they have paid money, that (in their view) could have been put to better use.

Possibly now more than ever the practice owner should consider carefully the explanations given by patients who are slow in settling their account for treatment provided earlier. It is important to distinguish between the patient’s situation in liking and paying and the one who is reluctant to pay for treatment that is not satisfactory.

Payment overdue
Consider the case of a dentist who wrote to a patient demanding payment of his account overdue by one month. The patient had ignored a previous request, but had also indicated on the phone to the practice manager, that she was unhappy with treatment.

The dentist, who was of the view that his treatment was beyond criticism, considered this complaint to be a delaying tactic.

Company Feature
Selling your dental practice - Who is your buyer?

It is widely acknowledged that the open-market approach to selling a dental practice often generates the most interest and therefore the highest price paid.

However this is not always the case, especially when you intend to sell:

• Dentists within the practice
• Body Corporates

Price setting, negotiating and managing the sales process are equally important to practice owners who don’t go for the full open-market option. PFM offer support in this instance, helping to avoid numerous potential complications arising from the practice sale. Sales agencies such as PFM deal with the sale of dental practices day in day out, whereas the majority of practice owners sell a practice once in their career.

Our experience and skills have allowed us to develop and launch two new services for dentists who have already identified a buyer for their practice.

Selling to existing associates or partners
We have come across a number of dentists over the last 12 months experiencing difficulties with the internal sale of their practice. Common problems include uncertainty on how to price goodwill and resolving contractual intricacies as the sales process evolves.

PFM now offers a service to remove this burden and the potential problems from practice owners. The service includes:

• A goodwill and equipment valuation
• Negotiation handling until completion.

The aim of this service is to promote a smooth sales process. By offering this third party element, PFM can reduce potential difficulties which includes a meeting with all important tie-ins and advice on the partnership

In addition, it may be considered which is suited for the practice, what price could be achieved and deal with all important tie-ins and terms. PFM are proud to be independent and will consider all Corporate Bodies to ensure the best sales terms are achieved.

In the majority of Corporate Bodies will pay the agent’s costs as part of the offer (this offer is of course direct offer from a Corporate Body than could have been achieved with help of a professional agent).

The experience and skills of an agent will identify which Body Corporate will be most suited for the practice, what price could be achieved and deal with all important tie-ins and terms. PFM are proud to be independent and will consider all Corporate Bodies to ensure the best sales terms are achieved.

About the author
Martyn Bradshaw
BSc (Hons) Dip PFS, is a director of Practice Financial Management Ltd (PFM), one of the UK’s leading dental practice sales agents. Further information about PFM’s practice valuations and sales services can be found at www.pfmdental.co.uk.