Dental Tribune
United Kingdom Edition • September 7-13, 2009

Money Matters 9

Dedicated dental solutions

If you join the ASPD, you'll find no shortage of trustworthy advice on running your practice. Here, some members share their experiences.

The success of any dental practice ultimately depends on the ratification taken by the principal, but the everyday dilemmas facing a small business often need more than clinical expertise. Of course, there is no shortage of 'expert' guidance on offer, but how can you tell whose advice can be trusted and who has genuine experience of the dental industry?

Maintaining high standards

Professions engaged in services such as accountancy, banking, financial advice and property development leasing and vehicle rental, legal and litigation advice, valuations and estate agency have their own professional associations. The multi-discipline Association of Specialist Providers to Dentists (ASPD) moves a step further by offering the highest standards of service across the whole spectrum of business activity. Membership to the ASPD is open only to individuals within companies that have been vetted and can demonstrate substantial experience of the dental environment and are familiar with the specific developments within the dental sector.

Mike Hughes of Dental Practice Consultancy Service (DPCS) and current chairman of the ASPD finds it difficult to over-emphasise the benefits of membership. 'The ability to communicate regularly with other professionals whose interest in serving the dental profession is paramount, is of enormous benefit,' he says, 'whether those individuals are involved in the provision of similar advice or those individuals are involved in the everyday dilemmas facing a small business.'

‘Accreditation to the ASPD demonstrates that we are a professional firm specialising in the provision of services for dentists,’ says Beverly Mills of Smart & Cook, an insurance broker, which also provides dental management and financial advice. 'The dental sector is continually evolving and to maintain our specialist status we must keep up to date with all areas affecting the profession.'

An ideal solution

Another advantage to the client of engaging an ASPD member is co-operation – member firms are happy to recommend each other or will work together to provide the dentist with the ideal solution. Members are familiar with colleague companies’ expertise, as George Manolescue of Dental Business Solutions remarks, ‘We know each others’ strengths and specialities, and so can recommend other professionals with suitable experience and commitment.’

Financial services and advice

A hot topic for dentists today is identifying a safe haven for investment, particularly for those with pensions in view, as well as advice on surviving the credit crunch. This is the stamping ground of the dentist’s independent financial adviser (IFA), who has access to the latest global information as well as an understanding of the specifics of the UK dental market. ‘Being an ASPD member allows us to keep up to date with changes in dentistry,’ says Essential Money’s Sarah Gwilt. ‘It also offers good networking opportunities and helps us better understand the needs of clients.’

Richard Lishman of moneydentists agrees. ‘Our clients can be confident they are receiving reliable advice from the best service providers in the market.’

The value of the ASPD to both members and their clients is acknowledged by high-street banks, some of who are members themselves. ‘When I meet a prospective client,’ says Alan Springer of Lloyds TSB, ‘I explain I am a member and recommend a visit to the association’s website. Clients often find a member offering exactly the skills they are seeking.’

David Griffiths of Maxwell Hodge Solicitors believes that ASPD membership helps persuade potential dentist clients to choose his company rather than a non-member. ‘While George Burn of Burn & Co acknowledges the benefits of extra mural discussions and appreciates being part of a multi-disciplinary organisation, ‘We can confidentially refer clients to members from other financial disciplines.’

Legal services and advice

There is no doubt the dentist, no matter how long he has been in practice, will at some time find a member offering exactly what you are looking for. ‘If you tie the knot whose advice can be trusted,’ says Beverly Mills of Smart & Cook’s Henry Brownson and John Minford of Minford’s agreement; ‘We can keep our fingers on the pulse.’

The ASPD is the leading association of dental service providers, and is always keen to attract new members with a proven track record of exceptional service to the industry.

For more information on the ASPD, call 0800 456 6775 or visit www.aspd.co.uk.