**Home or away?**

As an alternative to NHS pensions, a significant number of dentists are choosing to invest in property. But should you still buy in the UK? Thomas Dickson explains

Dentists in the UK have traditionally relied on the NHS pension scheme and personal pensions to provide for their retirement. However, with the number of dentists leaving the NHS or reducing their NHS commitment, this will have an inevitable knock-on effect on their future pension income.

A significant number of our clients are choosing to invest in property as an alternative. This article will shed some light on whether you should still buy in the UK.

**Property investment trends**

The housing market is certainly rising at the moment, with the latest Financial Times’ House Price Index, showing that house prices rose by 0.7 per cent in June and by nine per cent over the past 12 months.

This is despite the fact that the Bank of England has announced five interest rate rises in the last year, with the last decision to order another quarter point increase in base rates, to 5.75 per cent—the highest level since February 2001.

We have an aging, growing population, with more people living alone and it’s predicted that an average 225,000 new households every year will be formed over the next 20 years. These figures illustrate that the demand for housing is going to continue over the long term and if house building can’t keep up, the laws of supply and demand dictate that the prices will continue to rise.

Many property commentators agree that the market is likely to slow as the year goes on, not least because of negative income growth and the likelihood of continuous increases in interest rates. However, out of 14 organisations including Lombard Street Research, BBC, Right move and the Council of Mortgage Lenders, who make predictions on the UK housing market, everyone has predicted a positive increase for 2007.

Of course analysts don’t always get it right, but the strength in numbers could lead one to conclude that house price inflation will continue and that investing in property is likely to be a good investment over the long term.

**Finding investment property**

Once you’ve decided you need to invest, you need to find out as much as you can about property prices and their likely profitability. You’re looking for two main ingredients. Firstly, the yield, or profitability. You’re looking for two main ingredients. Secondly, the profit or capital gain.

Once you’ve made a decision to purchase and you’ve worked out that you can afford to take the risks, don’t overanalyse it. A client of mine buying in London for the first time had a huge complicated spreadsheet showing the price per square foot and all other of intricate details. This amount of analysis can paralyse the decision-making process and give you a property or an area you know personally can be better than anything Excel can work out for you.

Another, lesser known means of locating suitable investment ingredients is going to local auctions and drive around your local area so you get a real idea of what’s available and how much you should be paying.

**How to attract new patients and keep existing ones happy.**

An evening seminar full of proven marketing techniques – specifically for dentists.

Feedback we had from last year’s marketing seminars revealed dentists most wanted to learn about building customer loyalty and ‘acquiring new customers’. This inspired Denplan’s new marketing seminars – ‘Don’t Lose Your Patients’. The seminars have been created by The Chartered Institute of Marketing. Bringing together their marketing expertise with Denplan’s dental knowledge about patients are the most relevant marketing seminars for dentists.

Developing the marketing and communication skills of everyone in your practice can result in many benefits:

- Knowing where to look for new patients and how to attract them
- Holding onto existing patients for longer
- The potential to increase practice profitability
- More effective marketing communications
- Marketing budgets managed effectively
- Improved patient relationships

**Don’t Lose Your Patients seminars**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venues and dates</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dundee Castle, Edinburgh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thrumpton Hall, Nottingham</td>
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<td>Cheeton Glen, Bournemouth</td>
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<td>Edgbaston Cricket Ground, Birmingham</td>
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<td>Aston Court, Bristol</td>
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**Book your place now:**

Phone 0800 169 9934* or email events@denplan.co.uk

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