The ancient stannary town of Ashburton, on the slopes of Dartmoor, is hardly the place you’d think you’d find the leading referral dental centre in the West Country, but you’d be wrong. And Dr Mitesh Badiani, who bought the place in 1995, has more than demonstrated what a wise decision it was.

Today, the Devon Centre of Dental Excellence is the flagship practice for a group of practices including Plymouth, Bovey Tracey and Portland. More are in the pipeline and dentists are queuing up to join. So what is Dr Badiani doing that is having such an impact and how is he achieving it in what, at face value, is a sleepy rural community?

The answer is deceptively simple. Dr Badiani makes no decisions without carefully considering them. When he does, his commitment is total and his business acumen sure-footed. And above all, he ensures that the patient experience exceeds expectations. It’s worth taking a closer look at how these values translate themselves into action.

Developing your product
The ‘marketing’ advice given generally to dentists is that a number of ‘experts’ is seemingly endless with the majority of it simply being statements of the obvious. It does not take a genius to work out that there are established ways of communicating with patients, all of which are relevant and applicable to almost every practice. The genius comes, not describing and defining your market, but in developing a product that satisfies its needs.

In this respect, Dr Badiani’s philosophy and skill are clear. It is not about creating a practice that simply flaunts its capability. It is about creating a practice that shows that it listens to and cares about what patients want.

A few examples highlights this point:

- The reception team greet everyone with a welcome that says ‘we’re glad you’re here’. They smile endorses this greeting and is genuine. It isn’t just a ‘skin-deep’ gesture. This can only happen in a practice where the staff are happy and is aware that patients recognise and take notice of body language.
- There are a variety of places (other than reception) through-out the practice in which patients may wait and relax. This provides personal ‘space’, encourages a greater affinity with the practice and builds the patient/dental team relationship.
- There is a delightful, spacious and calming garden, which, on a summer day, is a haven of calm and tranquillity. Patients are free to sit and relax there before and/ or after treatment. Again it enhances the relationship.
- The toilets are spotless and stocked with supplies of toilet- ries for patients to use. These make a nicer touch than a bottle of disinfectant.

Dealing with anxiety
It is a sad fact that many people fear dental treatment. Dr Badiani, who mentors and trains dentists all over the country, says: ‘We have for many years treated a great number of patients who are extremely nervous of dental treatment and...
where a local anaesthetic is re-
quired, there are various meth-
ods we will consider. One of my
favoured techniques is the WAND
system, which is amaz-
ingly effective when used by a
skilled, well-trained dentist. It
reduces anxiety and is literally
pain free. It is particularly help-
ful when treating children or
those with needle phobia who
we find often don’t even realise
they’ve had an injection!

Another concern of some pa-
tients is radiation dosage. In real-
ity, the risk to the patient may be
minimal, but this does not neces-
sarily allay fears and anxiety.

‘Low radiation dosage was
one of the criteria I had in mind
when seeking to upgrade to 3D
digital imaging. I was worried
that, by referring to the hospital,
I was increasing patient concern
and in many instances the diag-
nosis did not warrant the radia-
tion dosage,’ says Dr Badiani, ‘so
I decided to see what the market
had to offer!’

An exhaustive look at CT
scanners ended with Dr Badiani
choosing the Picasso Trio from
Vatech and E-WOO. ‘Quite sim-
ply the quality, the software, the
service and product knowledge
are the best,’ he says, ‘and the
Picasso is already enhancing our
diagnostic capabilities across
the range of specialist treatments
we offer!

Working as a team
Dr Badiani’s choice of the Picca-
so Trio exemplifies the policies
of the Devon Dental Centre of
Excellence to put quality above
cost. He has surrounded him-
self with something of a “dream
team” in the way of specialist cli-
nicians and knows that they, too,
want the best.

Dr Badiani himself concen-
trates on dental implants, IV se-
dation and cosmetic dentistry.
He also mentors for Osteo-Ti and
Ankylos. Andrew Pickering, Lin-
da Blakely, Carol Robinson and
Anna-Marie Smith offer general
dental treatment and specialists
include Professor Nico Louw
(Endo), St John Crean (Oral and
Maxillo facial), Amelia Jerreat
(Ortho) and Matthew Jerreat
(Pereo and Restorative dentistry).

It is Dr Badiani’s view that
individually and collectively
we will benefit from 3D imag-
ing, ‘While most treatments are
straightforward, careful plan-
ing is always required and the
exceptional quality of the Picasso
images is second-to-none. I also
value the information it provides
for more complex cases where
we need to work and assess as
a team.’

Building referral business
A further benefit of investing in
3D imaging is that it adds to the
service that the Devon Dental
Centre of Excellence can provide
to referring dentists.

Dr Badiani is very conscious
of the trust that other dentists
place in him. He recognises the
concerns that any dentist has
when he or she refers a patient:
“When you build a referral prac-
tice, you have to do so clearly
understanding that your role
is to support and advise, never
compete, he it consciously or un-
consciously. You must strive to
exceed the expectations of your
colleagues in the same way as
you do with your patients, always
keeping in mind that they are
all clients.”

In this way, referring den-
tists are seen as almost part of
the team. They have access to
the technology and share in
the knowledge, facilities and
skills available in Ashburton.
Specialist training facilities are
available and procedures can
be watched at the viewing thea-
tre as they take place and then
discussed in a comfortable and
relaxed atmosphere.

For more information, con-
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TQ15 7AX; call 01564 652 253 or
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