Sunstar awards research and promotes Barcelona session at EuroPerio8

By DTI

LONDON, UK. In order to promote research on the association between periodontal disease and diabetes, as well as oral and systemic health, the Sunstar Foundation has been organising scientific seminars around the world since 2008. During Sunstar-sponsored sessions at EuroPerio8, international experts lectured on periodontitis and its oral and systemic effects, as well as the role of nutrition in severe periodontitis and new regenerative medicine options for periodontal patients. Over 400 dental professionals attended the sessions.

As a partner of the European Federation of Periodontology, Sunstar also hosted the fifth World Perio Research Awards, which were established in 2005. This year, the three winning papers were those submitted by Dr Lai Tan et al. (first place) from China, Dr Marjorie Jeffcoat et al. (second place) from the US, and Dr André Luis Caiaia et al. (third place) from Brazil. The awards recognize research advances in oral and systemic health.

Mayumi Kaneda, Sunstar’s global public relations director, told Dental Tribune in London: “For the Sunstar Foundation, it is very important to support researchers. I feel that this is our mission as a foundation and we really believe that it helps the development of science and will also translate to the patients in the end. The trophy for the prize was designed by Italian designer Claudio Bollini. It symbolises an infinity sign and expresses our wish for researchers never to stop continuing their work. This trophy is also granted to winners of the Sunstar World Dental Hygiene Award, which application deadline will be this year on 31 December.”

“Sunstar is not only committed to supporting clinical studies and science, but we’re also committed to promoting education. Being seen as a partner in education at every stage is extremely important to us. We really want to help professionals become aware that, from the patient’s perspective, they are all key players when it comes to achieving a better quality of life, which is actually our foundation’s motto. We really believe in—in all our efforts we have that goal in mind. One example is the project done in collaboration with Quintessence Publishing to produce the latest chapter of the Cell-to-Cell Communication oral and general health animated video which premiered at EuroPerio8,” Kaneda stated.

Sunstar also announced the 19th Joslin–Sunstar Diabetes Education Initiative (JSDEI) session, the fourth in Europe, to be held on 6 November in Barcelona, in Spain. After the success of the 2014 JSDEI seminar in Frankfurt, Sunstar also announced that the 20th JSDEI event will be held in Singapore in January 2016. Again, experts in the fields of general dentistry, periodontology, dental hygiene, diabetology, nutrition, internal medicine and general medicine from all over the world are expected to attend.

“Top key opinion leaders in the field of periodontology and the field of diabetology will be lecturing. The seminar is focused on promoting interaction between professionals, in fact, the interactive aspect is very, very important to us. We are trying to make everybody comfortable enough to ask questions, as we really want to start discussions between these professionals,” Dr Marzia Massignani, Scientific Affairs Manager at Sunstar, said.

This year, Sunstar will be introducing an interactive JSDEI concept to universities across Europe. Students will be able to take part in the event via a live webinar, enabling a greater audience reach. “We are collaborating with key universities from different countries that include FDI in their education schedule. So far, the feedback has been very good and several universities have already agreed to be involved,” Massignani stated.

The seminar is supported by the Sunstar Group, the FDI World Dental Federation and the Sociedad Española de Periodoncia y Ostéointegración (the Spanish society of periodontology and osseointegration).

Dental professionals can learn more about and register for the events at www.jsdei-seminars.com. More information about the company can be found at www.sunstar.com.
Why dentistry needs branding

By Amanda Maskery, UK

Owning a dental practice or group has always presented challenges, but the marketplace has never been more crowded than it is now. With an ever-increasing level of choice for patients, it is more important than ever for dental businesses to stand out from the crowd. While we of course all know the value of providing a first-rate customer service, and that will always remain the most important factor, how many of us recognise the importance of creating and building a brand?

Generally, in dentistry, branding has not been regarded in the same way it is in the corporate world, where multi-national businesses expand on the strength of their brands. But now, with the growth of dental corporates and multi-practice groups, branding is becoming an increasingly important factor. That is not to say that branding is only the domain of the big players. Creating a brand which is unique and people can identify, talk about, recommend to others and remember is just as important for a single practice, and in some situations even more so, where there are other local competitors for existing and potential clients to choose from.

Effective branding is also important when looking to expand, franchise or sell one’s business. When dentists are adding another site to their existing portfolio, doing so under a brand will enable people to know who is moving into their area, and can help give confidence that this is an established dental business taking over their local site. One example being a business in North East England I act for, the Burgess & Hyder Dental Group, who now operate 11 clinics across the region under their brand. They are welcomed into each area as their brand is widely known, as is the quality associated with it.

Equally in franchising, the importance of a strong brand is crucial to enable a business to thrive in other areas. Through being part of that recognisable brand, patients will know that each site under that umbrella will offer the same levels of service and quality. Another of my clients, Damira Dental, has recently rebranded from Aspire Dental Care, and is pursuing a franchising model under its new and fresh identity. The business, which has 14 sites across the South of England, has amassed a strong reputation during its eight years in operation, and the strength of its service coupled with its branding will allow that to be replicated across the UK.

The creation of a brand identity, which can help support the expansion of a business, can also be of great importance when it comes to selling. It is much easier to market a business which is well known and has invested time and effort in standing out from the crowd. To a potential buyer, they are important factors in instilling the confidence to take on a site in a new territory.

In this day and age of dentistry being an increasingly competitive business, distinguishing oneself from the many other players has never been more important, and is something that must be given due consideration.

Amanda Maskery is one of the UK’s leading dental lawyers. She is Chair of the Association of Specialist Providers to Dentists (ASPD) in the UK and a Partner at Sintons law firm in Newcastle. She can be contacted at amanda.maskery@sintons.co.uk.
Online dentistry should be more active on Facebook

By Naz Haque, Dental Focus

It is commonly accepted that Facebook is one of the largest and most important online platforms in 2015. As it continues to dominate the social media landscape and hold a massive captive audience, the critical question is, are you utilising Facebook and, if not, why not?

Early 2015 statistics from We Are Social established that there were 1.366 billion active Facebook users in January 2015, 83 per cent of whom were accessing Facebook from mobile devices. Consider that the average social media user clocks in 2.2 hours of usage per day (15.4 hours per week), while the average daily TV viewing time for a professional is now reduced to 1.2 hours per day (8.4 hours per week)—you can see how social media is driving and changing people’s habits.

This year, Facebook has been pushing the Facebook pixel, which could loosely be compared to a website cookie. These can be created from your Facebook business page and then placed into the coding back-end of your website. The strength of these pixels is that they recognise visitors from your website and put you in a position to display adverts to this audience via Facebook. The real beauty is when one fully recognises the power of the pixel. Your audience may have found your website via Google, Bing, Yahoo!, Yell or word of mouth. The Facebook pixel tracks them and any pages they visit on your site. If a potential customer visits your tooth whitening page, for example, you can then show them tooth whitening adverts. Or if one looks at an Invisalign page, you can show them your Invisalign offer.

Essentially, you first qualify your audience and then show them adverts relevant to their habits. The data gathered from a pixel can be used to create a lookalike audience. Facebook will monitor habits and trends in the behaviour of visitors to your pages and then duplicate this on a larger scale by identifying users on Facebook who mirror these habits within the parameters you set, such as a 5 kilometre radius of your location.

There is one other trick Facebook pixel has up its sleeve; it allows you to upload e-mail addresses of customers/buyers so you can specifically target them with adverts too—just make sure you have their consent.

Most websites are now mobile friendly and most Facebook users are on mobiles. This increases the chance of your adverts being seen even further. The average cost of a click on Facebook is 27p, you can send targeted adverts to a specific qualified audience and buy data to a mirror audience for next to nothing, and the return on investment (£150 + take-home trays) can be very attractive.

Considering all these points, I would make use of this opportunity as soon as possible in 2015 before everyone else does and drives up the cost of a click to something comparable to Google (a minimum of £2.50+).

“Most websites are now mobile friendly and most Facebook users are on mobiles.”

Naz Haque, aka the Scientist, is Operations Manager at Dental Focus. He has a background in mobile and network computing, and has experience supporting a wide range of blue chip brands, from Apple to Xerox. An expert in search engine optimisation, Naz is passionate about helping clients develop strategies to enhance their brand and increase the return on investment from their dental practice websites. He can be contacted at naz@dentalfocus.com.