

creating a *masterpiece*

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Good cosmetic dentistry
is a work of art.
Don't get caught with
the wrong brush.

Cosmetic dentistry is an art. For me, before digital and intraoral cameras became available for the dental practice, that was a literal truth. I produced quite a bit of great art in my office. To illustrate dental conditions and my plans for treatment, I drew pictures of teeth on tray covers, and tried my best to describe, in words, what a picture could explain much more succinctly. Approximately 10 years ago, after adding an intraoral camera to my palette, my patients were able to see their mouths, rather than in a pen or pencil representation, in “living color”. Especially with imaging technology, digital and intraoral cameras enhance my patients’ dental IQ and improve case acceptance for cosmetic cases.



Visual Learning

Dentists spend much time and effort staying current with all of the new procedures and treatments available in the cosmetic dentistry field today. Sharing that knowledge with patients takes much more than words. People are visual learners. Even those who work in related medical fields can have difficulty understanding the types of dental problems that justify certain treatments. This is where cameras fill the gap between just hearing the information and understanding. Patients sitting in the dental chair have a very different point of view than the dentist. When I have the capability to take an intraoral image, blow it up and display it on my computer screen, the patient can see exactly what I see—and the problem, and often the solution, becomes obvious.

Since intraoral images are so important to patient education, in January 2009, I invested in four GXC-300 (Gendex) intraoral cameras. This model offered two important benefits—portability and very clear images. With seven operatories, easily transporting the cameras

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between treatment rooms is important; the high-speed direct USB connection with no docking station accomplished that goal. The camera's great optics eliminate distortion and maximize clarity, and the adjustable focus maximizes efficiency in both intraoral and extraoral viewing modes.

Results were evident, even on my first appointment, on the first day of implementing the GXC-300. Already a long-term patient of my practice, the inaugural GXC-300 patient was aware for a long time that he needed a crown, but until then, he had just brushed off that fact. Then, I showed him the image of his molar, complete with a huge crack. He said, “If I had a crack like that in the foundation of my house, I would have it fixed immediately.” Case accepted.

For cosmetic cases, I begin the presentation with photos of their smile taken with a 35-mm digital camera. This opens up the conversation about possible cosmetic treatments. Here again, the Gendex camera is helpful for both function and cosmetics. The images show patients parts of their front teeth that they could not normally see. When

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they can view the back of the central and lateral incisors, they can see the large fillings that could be the cause of tooth discoloration, and they can see, close up, the poor condition of their teeth. Observing their teeth with images from the intraoral camera makes them more likely to accept cosmetic treatment to improve their smile.

A Team Approach

It is important to have good advice when researching office technology. Our Gendex representative, Jonathan Young, was very helpful in steering us to the Benco Technical Team. Digital X-ray and Visualix eHD sensors also helped to build our patient education opportunities. The ability to enlarge digital X-rays also is essential to

patient education, however building the computer and digital network that has become so helpful to our office was really outside the realm of knowledge of any of our dental staff.

The people at BencoNET stepped in, designed a network and advised us in our choice of equipment for the best interaction possible.

My practice grew last year even in the midst of a pretty serious economic downturn, and my cameras were a large part of those positive results. Armed with digital intraoral images, I have more effective conversations with my patients, resulting in increased case acceptance. Now, I still feel that cosmetic dentistry is an art, but instead of drawing teeth on paper, I show patients the true story through pictures, and let them “draw” their own conclusions about beautifying their smile.■



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