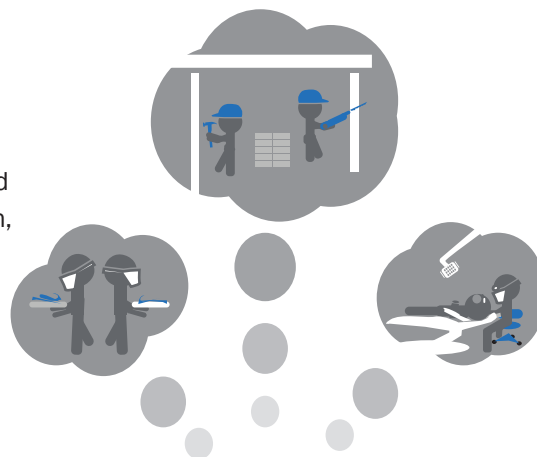


Practice planning: Five common oversights

Designing or remodeling your office requires a lot of upfront planning—and there is certainly no shortage of advice to follow. Just as important though, are those things you may *not* think about.

Here are five considerations to add to your list.



Plan for adequate sterilization.

The sterilization center is the hub of your practice. Without an unlimited number of instruments, you will quickly discover that if materials don't flow efficiently, neither does your stream of patients. Remember to include space for sterilization furniture. Designed with efficient instrument processing and proper storage built in, it ensures fluid workflow that most importantly, never backtracks or crosses back and forth through the same space. A simple cabinet can't do that. Many practices now purposefully make sterilization visible to patients, proving that it's taken seriously.

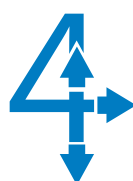
overshadows consideration for the total cost of product ownership throughout its life in your practice. Saving money up front may end up costing you in the long run. Make sure the initial purchase price includes the items that make it functional (sinks, faucets, power outlets and installation on dental cabinets, for example).

Downtime is costly, and things are not always as they appear. Talk with service technicians about the equipment they service most often, and ask what they like and dislike about various equipment brands. They can offer tremendous insight about reliability.



Design your working environment first.

Your future self will thank you. Dental office design and environment are important in setting the mood, reflecting personal style, and keeping both patients and staff relaxed and comfortable, but don't forget to budget for tools and equipment. If left as an afterthought, this can have a detrimental impact on your ability to practice efficient, effective dentistry. Based on how you work, look for equipment that minimizes movement and reduces the impact on your body, so you can stay healthy and practice longer. Plan your operatory with you—and your staff's—future health in mind.



Keep it simple.

Consistency = efficiency. Keep operatory layouts the same from treatment room to treatment room. With everything from sinks and equipment to storage standardized, the team reduces training time, increases consistency and establishes an efficient workflow.



Focus on the total cost of ownership (not the initial purchase price).

It's worth it in the end. The investment in your practice today will likely be in place for one or two decades. While initial purchase price is understandably important, it often



Build for the future.

Leave room to grow with your practice. Think about what's coming down the line and how you can be ready for it. If you are building new, make sure you plan enough operatories for future growth, keeping in mind the implications on materials that flow through the practice. Plan your space for today and tomorrow, even if it means leasing out your extra space for a few years.

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