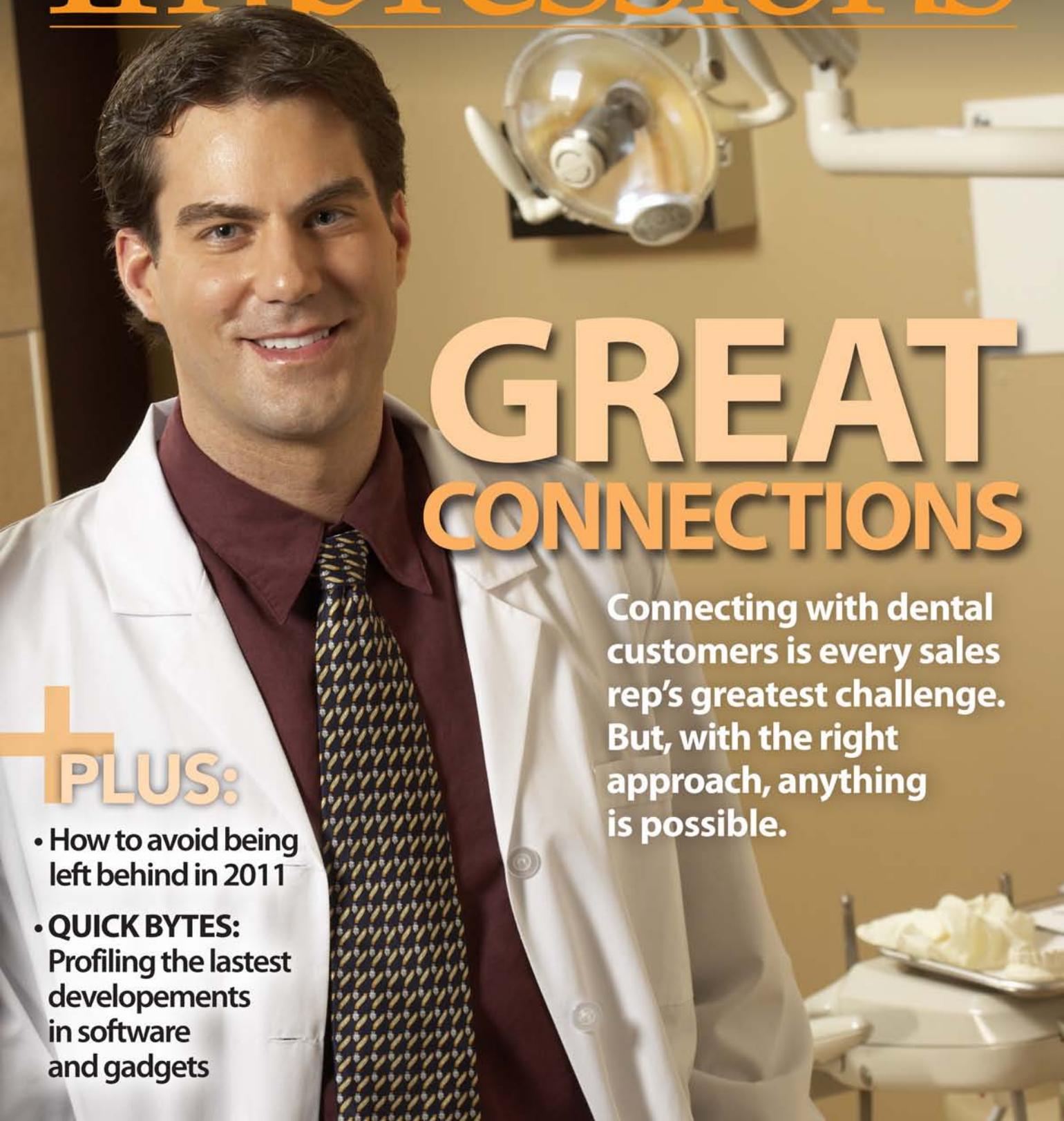




First Impressions

For Dental Sales Professionals • January, 2011



GREAT CONNECTIONS

Connecting with dental customers is every sales rep's greatest challenge. But, with the right approach, anything is possible.

PLUS:

- How to avoid being left behind in 2011
- **QUICK BYTES:** Profiling the latest developments in software and gadgets



SANI-CLOTH® TOUCHPOINTS™

What's the fastest way to become an expert in Infection Prevention?

Partner with PDI. From prophylaxis to oral surgery — and every touchpoint in between — we'll provide the expertise and resources your customers need to meet the daily challenges of infection prevention.

With three formulations to choose from, PDI has the right Sani-Cloth® Germicidal Disposable Wipe for all sensitive dental equipment and other high-touch, non-porous surfaces. But we don't stop there. Our commitment includes a dedicated team of Field Representatives and Medical Science Liaisons who educate, train and support you and your customers in infection prevention. PDI's goal is to help your customers achieve and maintain the highest level of infection prevention possible.

◎ **SANI-CLOTH® PLUS, SUPER SANI-CLOTH®**

- Bactericidal, Tuberculocidal, Virucidal
- Kills Influenza A (H1N1) Virus, Influenza A2/Hong Kong, MRSA, Hepatitis B (HBV), HIV-1*
- Super Sani-Cloth contact time is 2 minutes or less*

◎ **SANI-CLOTH® HB**

- Alcohol Free
- Bactericidal, Fungicidal, Virucidal
- Kills Influenza A2-Asian Virus, Hepatitis B (HBV), HIV-1*



Get in touch with PDI.

To learn more about infection prevention and how PDI can help you help your customers, go to www.pdipi.com/surface

**Refer to the Technical Data Bulletins for complete list of organisms and contact times*

◎ CHLORASCRUB™ ◎ SANI-HANDS® ◎ SANI-CLOTH® ◎ HYGEA® ◎ NICE 'N CLEAN®



Copyright © 2010 Professional Disposables International, Inc. Sani-Cloth®, Sani-Hands®, Hygea® and Nice 'N Clean® are registered trademarks of Professional Disposables International, Inc. PDI Touchpoints™ is a trademark of Professional Disposables International, Inc. Chlorascrub™ is a trademark of Professional Disposables International, Inc. Chlorascrub™ is under license by American Solumed, Inc. Alcohol based hand sanitizers are not approved by FDA to prevent the spread of influenza.

First Impressions – Digital Edition
 is published bi-monthly
 by mdsi
 1735 N. Brown Rd. Ste. 140
 Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8153
 Phone: 770/263-5257
 FAX: 770/236-8023
 www.firstimpressionsmag.com

Editorial Staff

Editor

Mark Thill

mthill@mdsi.org

Senior Editor

Laura Thill

lthill@mdsi.org

Managing Editor

Graham Garrison

ggarrison@mdsi.org

Art Director

Brent Cashman

bcashman@mdsi.org

Publisher

Brian Taylor

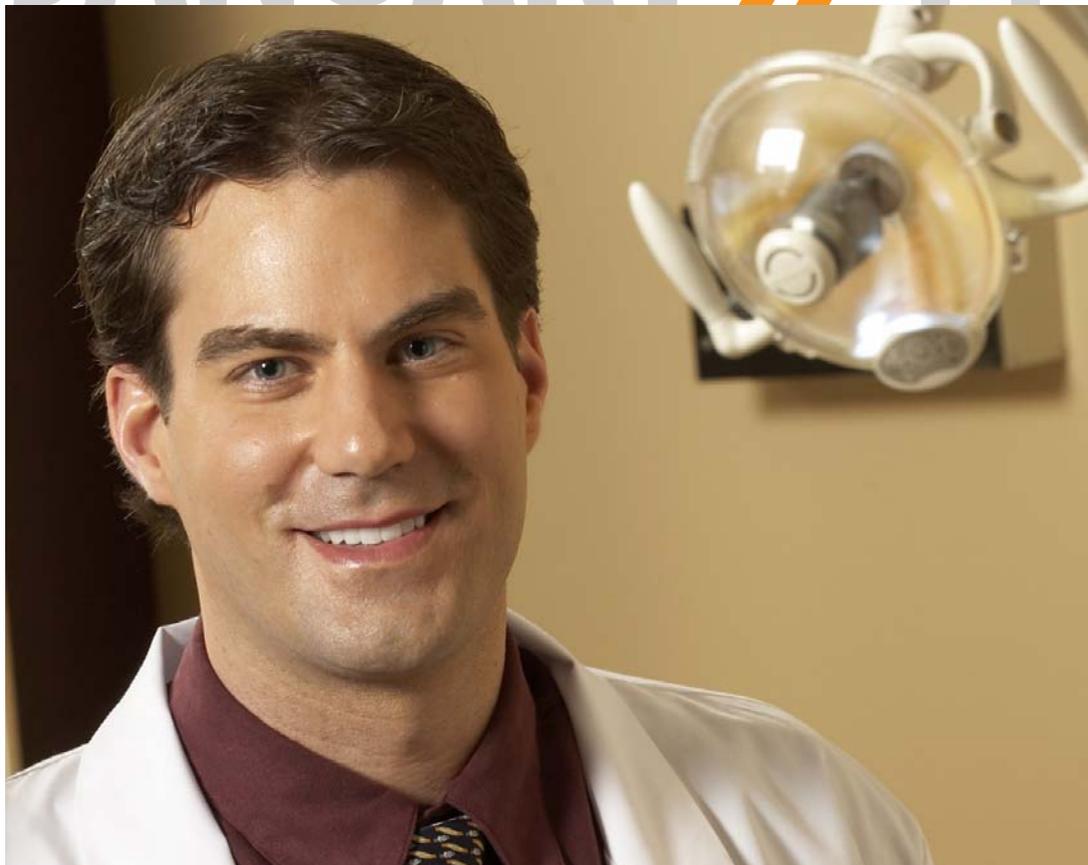
btaylor@mdsi.org

Sales

Bill Neumann

wneumann@mdsi.org

First Impressions (ISSN 1548-4165) is published bi-monthly by Medical Distribution Solutions Inc., 1735 N. Brown Rd. Ste. 140, Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8153. Copyright 2010 by Medical Distribution Solutions Inc. All rights reserved. Subscriptions: \$48 per year. If you would like to subscribe or notify us of address changes, please contact us at the above numbers or address. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Medical Distribution Solutions Inc., 1735 N. Brown Rd. Ste. 140, Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8153. Please note: The acceptance of advertising or products mentioned by contributing authors does not constitute endorsement by the publisher. Publisher cannot accept responsibility for the correctness of an opinion expressed by contributing authors.



Publisher's Letter

Digital Delivery..... **p.4**

Guideposts

How to avoid being left behind in 2011 **p.6**

Quick Bytes

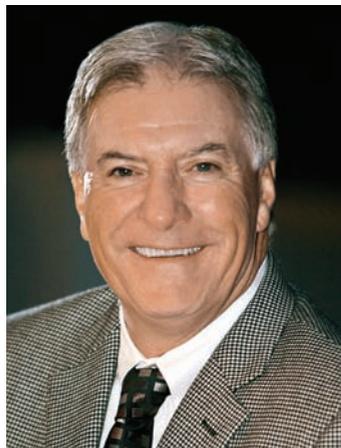
First Impressions will profile the latest developments in software and gadgets that reps can use for work and play..... **p.9**

Tech Talk

A look at composites..... **p.10**

Great Connections

Connecting with dental customers is every sales rep's greatest challenge. But, with the right approach, anything is possible..... **p.12**



Brian Taylor

It is our goal to provide the same kind of relevant and timely content that focuses on helping dental sales professionals do their jobs better that we accomplish in the print version.

Digital Delivery

Welcome to the first digital issue of *First Impressions Magazine*! We are pleased to supplement our six printed issues with original and timely content in a digital page-turning format that can be accessed 24/7.

In today's rapidly changing world of technology, we aim to serve up additional reader-capturing content that can be viewed via your computer, smart phone, or iPad. We know that reps are busier than ever, and for some, accessing information while on the go is a must. It is our goal to provide the same kind of relevant and timely content that focuses on helping dental sales professionals do their jobs better that we accomplish in the print version. As we enter our fifth year of publishing *FI*, we know that it is important to deliver the kind of information you need, in a format that works with your busy schedule.

Surveys currently tell us that about 15 percent of a typical readership will want their information electronically. Certainly in time we suspect that number will grow. We want to provide our advertisers an additional way to get their name and messaging to the dental sales community. The electronic version also gives us unique ways to deliver some of these messages whether through links to videos, demos, coupons, specials, etc. Be sure to check out the digital version in the off months from our print version.

As always, we welcome your feedback and input on content and topics that you feel deserve coverage. We need your ideas and suggestions to make sure that our content is on the mark and remains a valuable tool for you the sales professional.

Thanks for your support and best of selling in 2011!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



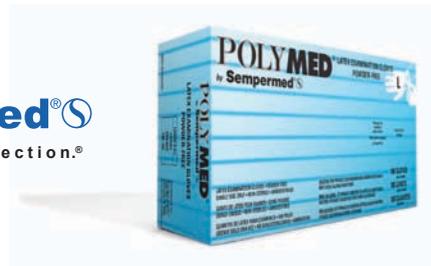
MINIMIZE TOUGH CHOICES.

Fit or sensitivity? This timeless paradox of exam glove wearers has finally been solved. Welcome to our Polymed® brand. The perfect multi-purpose, natural rubber latex glove from Sempermed that is polymer-coated for easy donning and powder-free to help eliminate powder-related complications. So, you can provide your customers with both the sensitivity and comfort they need.

And since we set the bar on quality standards that well surpass ASTM standards for both consistency and performance, you can feel absolutely secure that every box of Polymed gloves you provide your customers will deliver the protection and comfort they deserve.

For your free box of Polymed® gloves, email us at DentalGloves@SempermedUSA.com or call 800.749.3650.
For more information visit SempermedUSA.com/FirstImpressions.

Sempermed®
We are people protection.®



 Follow us on twitter  SempermedUSA.com/Blog  Connect on LinkedIn

13900 49th Street North • Clearwater, Florida 33762 Phone: 800.366.9545 / 727.787.7250 Fax: 800.763.5491

Guideposts

How to avoid being left behind in 2011

Even after three years of economic gloom, the predictions about 2011 range from optimistic to less so. In some industries, the landscape remains desperately arid, while for others, the green shoots that poked their way to the light are actually growing stronger. Speculating about the year ahead is an interesting exercise, but one that may not have much value. What may be more useful are certain guideposts that can help point the way for a beneficial 2011.

Get your employment record straight

Anyone who reviewed resumes over the last decade recognized one fact that stood out like the proverbial sore thumb: *job-hopping*. Employees often moved from one job to the next in a matter of months, let alone a year. For many, this was the plan.

While the “plan” may have brought pay hikes, it also created an unintended consequence. Once the recession hit, performance became an employee’s most valuable asset, not a string of jobs on a resume.

It takes time to master an understanding of a company, along with its products or services and most importantly, its customers. This is what has value to employers today.

Job security depends on strategic thinking

We might also call this “goal thinking” or recognizing the objective and then pushing aside anything that doesn’t bring value to reaching it.

Needless to say, strategic thinking is a rare commodity in the workplace. “Total immersion is the best



way to learn a new language,” says Michael Watkins of Genesis Advisers. “Immersion is important because people need significant ‘soak time’ in a milieu in order to build powerful mental models.”

It’s fun to sit around and dream up clever “stuff,” whether it is a product promotion, a new smart phone app or a sales campaign. But it’s something quite different to create solutions that contribute to making that app of value to users or a sales campaign more than a glitzy gimmick.

In effect, the ability to think strategically is significant because it focuses on the consequences of an action or an idea. And that’s a valuable commodity in the workplace.

The necessity of technological competence

Although society appears to place importance on technological competence, how much of a connection is there, for example, between such competence and success in school? The results of a large, recently reported survey of secondary students in

England revealed the answer. It appeared that students didn't make a connection between "scholastic success and information and communication technology." In fact, the belief in the value of such competence was low compared with the use of technology in other areas of their lives.

It seems doubtful that the workplace is much different, particularly when a substantial percentage of those who are unemployed are technologically incompetent.

It's not what we do but how we think

"There is a fundamental shift in rules from *manual-based work* (where you follow instructions and an increase in productivity means doing the steps faster)," blogs author Seth Godin, "*to project-based work* (where the instructions are unknown, and

move up and go after the "really big accounts." In the same way, national attention takes precedence over local stardom. We grab every "Top 100" list we can find and add the names to our prospect list.

A marketing executive took a call from a company president for a small order of a particular promotional product, but over the next 30 years, that first order grew into a steady flow of very good business.

No one wants to get burned today. It's too costly. Buyers want to see how we perform. Do we take small orders seriously? If we do, they are more likely to give us more of their business.

Look at the long term

The last time Marc Buoniconti moved his arms and legs was when he made a tackle for The Citadel in 1985. Although a quadriplegic since that fateful

It's popular today to talk about "less is more," although there are indications that we don't believe it. Salespeople are often impatient for the moment they can move up and go after the "really big accounts."

visualizing outcomes and then getting things done is what counts.)"

The latter requires grasping the task, thinking through the implications, developing a plan, implementing it and evaluating the results. Ironically, such initiative is as necessary behind the counter at McDonald's as it is in the c-suite, and every place in between. It is often missing in both.

Jump at small opportunities

It's popular today to talk about "less is more," although there are indications that we don't believe it. Salespeople are often impatient for the moment they can

moment, he has become a mover and shaker, having raised \$350 million to find a cure for paralysis.

Almost hidden in the last part of a *USA Today* story about this determined man, Marc reports that his medical care runs from \$500,000 to \$600,000 a year. Who pays for it? All his medical expenses are covered by a "catastrophic insurance policy" his father had taken out. That's serious long-term thinking.

The issue is not about having objectives in life or on the job, but creating the personal infrastructure to make sure we get there. Without that, we become like so many people, subject to forces well beyond our control.

Put yourself on the line

My wife and I play a game as we walk through Newport, Rhode Island, on weekends. We guess which stores and restaurants will make it and which won't and we speculate about the outcome, one way or the other.

One example is the attractive Gelato shop that opened in a good location on a high-traffic street. As soon as we tried it, we gave it a "doomed" rating because of tiny portions and high prices. It closed at season's end.

A retail store opened on the same main street, but in something of a less desirable location. It featured interesting and fun, non-clothing items for the home (such as the "Gone to Newport" sign we have at home). It seemed to have a plan to make it, particularly since it was friendly and owner-managed. Before long, it was gone – across the street to a larger space.

It's a productive game for figuring out who has a winning concept and why and whose idea is problematic. It's a good exercise in testing one's business acumen.

Focus on what's important

Surprisingly, this doesn't include your own name or the name of your company, whether you're an employee or own it. If this seems a little crazy, it isn't.

It's a productive game for figuring out who has a winning concept and why and whose idea is problematic. It's a good exercise in testing one's business acumen.



Take the ad, for example, that a college in Boston ran on boston.com. Attracting the attention of prospective students seemed to be the objective. Yet, the headline was the name of the school and the subhead was its location. It was a missed opportunity and a costly mistake.

This is no different than placing an ad for a job and using your name as the headline and the name of the town where you live as the sub-head. Who would that attract? Perhaps just a few people who say, "I saw your name on a website."

The college might have stated, "93 percent of our graduates land a job fast," followed by, "Get the details

here." Start with the benefit, not the name of the school.

In the same way, a person looking for a job in advertising might use the same space this way, "My ad sold 342 pairs of jeans. Check it out here." Now, visitors are ready to listen to your story.

A name of a person, product or company doesn't become important until someone is hooked. It's the same with everything we do.

The year ahead will be pushed one way and then another by an endless series of events beyond our control. The eight tools may help move our prospects for success several notches, which might just make it a very good year. **[FI]**

COMMENT ON THIS
ARTICLE AT DENTAL SALES
PRO FACEBOOK PAGE

-----**CLICK HERE**

John R. Graham is president of Graham Communications, a marketing services and sales consulting firm. He writes for a variety of business publications and speaks on business, marketing and sales issues. Contact: 40 Oval Road, Quincy, MA 02170; (617) 328-0069; jgraham@grahamcomm.com. Blog: grahamcomm.com/wordpress. Website: grahamcomm.com.

QuickBytes

Charge your iPad

For five bucks, you can charge your iPad through the USB ports on non-Apple computers and some older Macs. The user attaches the iXP1-500 iPad Power Adapter from Xmultiple Technologies to an existing Apple USB cable, and the iPad charges from the computer's USB port. The device comes in handy because users of non-Apple computers and some Apple computers cannot charge the iPad unless they use an electrical wallplate.

Hewlett-Packard's tablet entrée

The Hewlett-Packard Slate 500 Tablet PC may look like an iPad, but it's really something else, according to a report in the *New York Times*. The device actually functions more like a MacBook Air, in that it runs full desktop software, complete with overlapping windows. However, the device lacks iPad-like apps. And of course, it runs on Windows. Battery life is said to be five hours, compared to 10 with the iPad. And the Slate is priced at \$800, about \$100 more than the top-of-the-line Wi-Fi iPad.

Candid camera

If you're so inclined, you can cause all kinds of mischief with Looxcie, a wearable camcorder and social sharing system. The manufacturer says it is a small, light, easy-to-wear camcorder that videos everything you see. The device, which retails for \$200, fits on the ear and points where the user looks. It uses a dual processor system for video and Bluetooth communication, so the headset can operate in video mode and talk mode at the same time. Said to be good for up to four hours continuous video use. Check it out at www.looxcie.com.

Standoff leaves consumers in the middle

Apple's Steve Jobs says he'll never accommodate Flash on the iPhone or iPad. Never again, he says, will Apple be at the mercy of a third party vendor. (Flash is an Adobe product.) Unfortunately, that leaves iPhone and iPad users without a lot of features that laptop users (and Android 2.2 phone users) enjoy, including Web games and Web videos, such as Hulu.com. Jobs says he wants the industry to migrate to rival formats, but according to a *New York Times* article, that's not likely to happen any time soon. Meanwhile, Adobe is said to be working on Flash applications for BlackBerry, Palm, Windows Phone 7 and Symbian phones.

Editor's Note:

Technology is playing an increasing role in the day-to-day business of sales reps. In this department, *First Impressions* will profile the latest developments in software and gadgets that reps can use for work and play.



Composites

Composite technology has changed the practice of restorative dentistry significantly since its introduction in the late 1960s. While many composites continue to be formulated from Bis-GMA resin, the composition and distribution of filler particles have changed dramatically. The development of new fillers with small particle sizes has led to improvements in esthetics, polymerization shrinkage, strength, wear resistance, and handling. More recently, companies have developed low-shrinkage composites.

Resin composites can be classified as micro-filled, microhybrids, and nanofilled.

Microfills

Main characteristics: High polish that can be achieved and maintained over time and excellent enamel-like translucency.

Clinically: Microfilled composites work best for anterior restorations, where esthetics is a main concern. Their small particles allow for high luster polish; however, because they are less filled, they lack strength. Many dentists use microfills as an “enamel” layer placed over stronger microhybrid resin.

Indications: Anterior restorations, cervical abfraction lesions.

Contraindications: Should not be used in heavy stress-bearing areas.

Microhybrids

Main characteristics: High strength and most closely stimulate dentin. They are more opaque, they are great for supporting a microfill layer. They can be finished and polished well, but lack long-term smoothness and gloss.

Clinically: Microhybrids have the needed strength and wear for posterior composites, while having the polish and esthetic potential for anterior restorations.

Indications: Microhybrids are considered a universal composite that can be used in anterior and posterior teeth.



Nanofills

Main characteristics: Nano-particles are the smallest particles used with resin composites. While conventional particles are ball-milled or ground from larger-sized particles, nano-particles are constructed on the molecular level. There are two types:

1. Nanofills – contain nanometer-sized particles throughout the resin matrix.
2. Nanohybrids – consist of larger particles surrounded by nanometer-sized particles.

Clinically: Unlike microhybrids, nanofills have life-like translucency. When compared to microhybrids, nanofills will maintain better surface smoothness and polish and are great for the single-product user.

Indications: posterior restorations, lower anteriors, composite veneers, building up incisal edges, class IV restorations, and when restoring or increasing cuspid rise.

Universal, Anterior, Posterior, Flowable: What do these terms all mean?

Universal composites are marketed as appropriate for both the anterior and posterior regions; basically, these composites can be used anywhere in the mouth for any indication. However, depending on the clinical situation, a dentist may choose to use a “specialty” composite. A composite specifically designed for anterior cases will have more shades and likely have higher polish and shine. A composite specifically designed for posterior teeth may have higher strength and wear resistance, but less esthetics. Flowable composites are helpful for smaller restorations and are easier to place.

Recent developments

The latest developments in composites include low-stress and low-shrink products that allow bulk placement and self-etching products that can be placed as a base without a bonding agent. **[FI]**

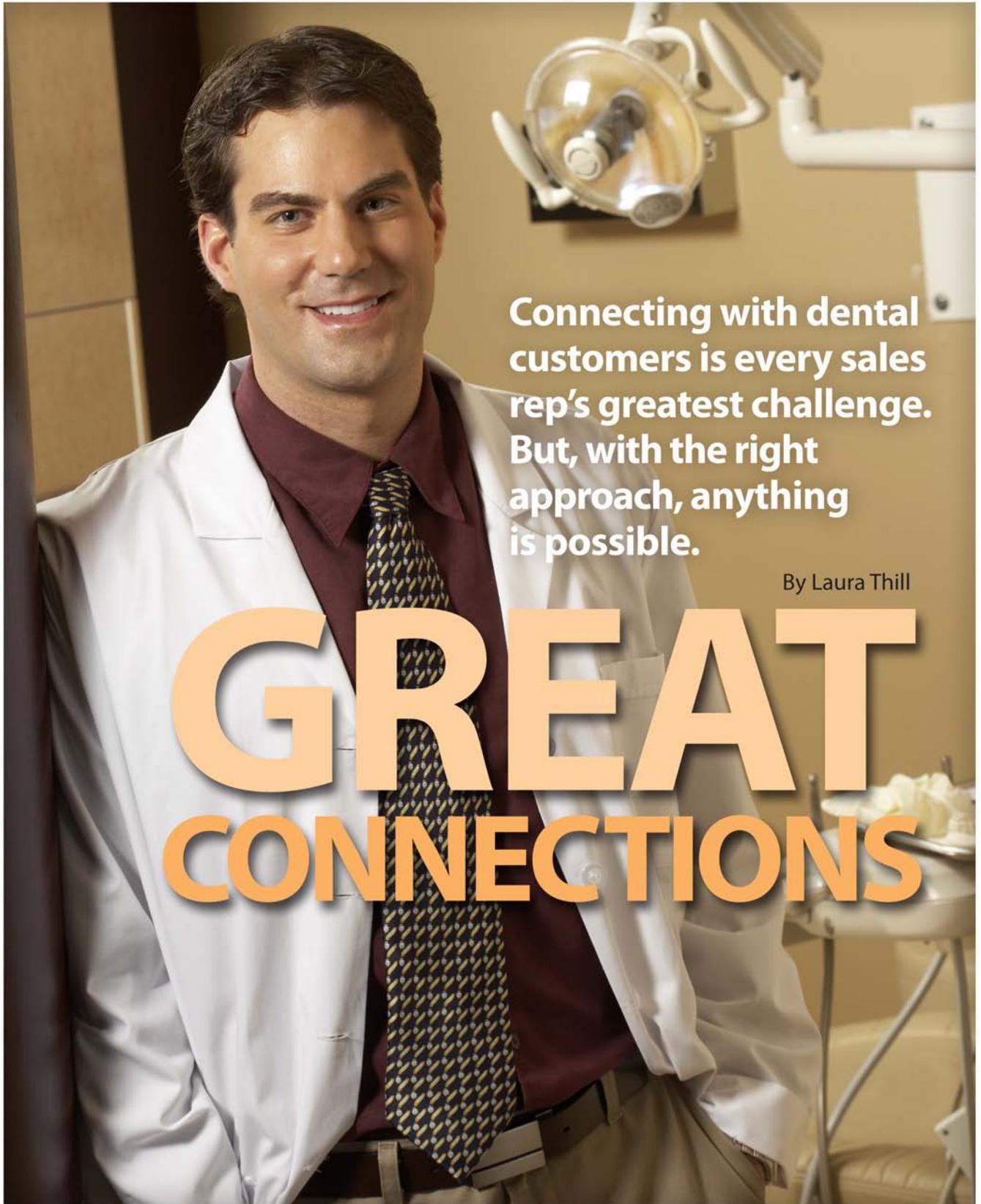
COMPANIES
THAT MAINTAIN
A CONSISTENT
ADVERTISING
PRESENCE OVER
TIME INCREASE
SALES

Advertising is an ongoing business investment,
not just an expense

First
Impressions



FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:
BILL NEUMANN 215-816-2866
OR E-MAIL: WNEUMANN@MDSI.ORG



Connecting with dental customers is every sales rep's greatest challenge. But, with the right approach, anything is possible.

By Laura Thill

GREAT CONNECTIONS

Is it a mindset, an attitude, a great smile or a new suit? From the moment they step in the door, some sales reps have a knack for making a winning impression on their dental customers. And it doesn't stop there. Great sales reps know that first impressions are only the first step toward building a lasting relationship with their customers.

Let the show begin

From the moment sales reps walk into an office, it's "showtime," says Kirk Greenway, field sales consultant, Henry Schein Dental. "No matter what else is going on outside of that office, your body language, words and appearance must reflect confidence and enthusiasm," he points out. "Always understand what your objective is. This may be as basic as making a true connection with a team member you haven't met before. Look for opportunities to solve a problem. It's not always about selling something." As the customer grows to trust the rep who is looking out for his or her best interests, sales will follow, he adds.

Alan Kegerise, director of sales, Premier Dental (Plymouth Meeting, Pa.), agrees. "Keep in mind the goal," he advises sales reps. "You are trying to develop an account and a relationship that will endure an entire lifetime. This is a series of activities, not a single episode. By definition, the introductory cold call could last from six to eight months, or 25 to 32 weeks. Success comes in the number of activities [you perform] not from the perfection of any one call."

Thorough preparation, a positive attitude and the willingness to listen to their customers are essential ingredients of a strong bond between sales reps and their customers, says Jack Abrams, field sales consultant (Henry Schein Dental) and corpo-

rate consultant of e-commerce and social networking, as well as the new editor-in-chief of the company's blog. He advises reps to dress appropriately and exude confidence. In addition, "do your homework," he says. "Be familiar with each account. Learn about their standard of care and insurance dependency. Make sure you have a business card and are prepared to discuss something interesting or revenue producing on your first visit."

A suit and tie are important to the image presented, notes Matt Buettner, sales rep, Midmark Corp. (Versailles, Ohio). This attire sends a completely different message than a pair of jeans, he explains. But, a positive attitude is one of the most important things a sales rep can bring to the table, he points

out. "New reps can [easily] get the door shut in their face," he says. "They must be persistent and remain confident that they are bringing value to their customers." Indeed, relationships with one's customers don't happen overnight, he notes. "Reps need to invest in the relationship. Sometimes customers can be leery about a new sales rep. They may want some time to pass to be sure the rep will be around when they really need [him or her]."

If all of this sounds easy, think again, say the experts. Good intentions and all, it's easy for sales reps to get tripped up. So, scheduling appointments with

"The most progressive dental sales consultants try to raise the bar and engage their customers."

**– Jack Abrams, field sales consultant,
Henry Schein Dental**

one's customers is a good way to get started and conveys to dentists a sense of respect for their time. "Scheduling an appointment exhibits your commitment to assisting [the customer] with staying on task," says Greenway. Furthermore, reps must follow through with their appointments, adds Keg-erise. "Dental offices work by appointment and are naturally annoyed when appointments are broken," he says. By showing up consistently, reps demonstrate they value the same things as their customers and that they can be trusted, he points out. And, it helps when sales reps warn dentists

being described is merely a symptom of a much bigger problem. Don't be too quick to solve a problem without really listening."

Indeed, sales consultants often focus on what's important to their company, not their account, says Abrams. "Listen!" he states. And don't lose sight of the importance of your reputation, he advises. "Good representatives consider their integrity to be their greatest asset," he says. As such, they should never "attack the competition. [Instead], they should ask their account what is missing from their current supplier." And, when service calls are less than help-

ful or equipment breaks down prematurely, although it is outside the reps' control, "they must be humble and accept responsibility," he says. People are more likely to forgive people than companies, he notes.

At the dental office, sales reps should show respect to everyone there. It's a hard lesson for a rep when he or she overlooks a staff member who could have been a great asset.



Leave-behinds

If you have a great product, don't just show it to the customer. Leave it behind for the office to try out, note experts. Product samples are a valuable tool for "enhancing the clinical experience," says Abrams. "The best product samples are those that the customer has re-

quested. [The most] popular sampled products are those that are generally preventive, operative and disposable." That said, when reps leave behind too many samples, they're likely to go unused, he points out. And, it's important to follow up at the next sales call and get the customer's feedback on the samples.

At the dental office, sales reps should show respect to everyone there, notes Greenway. "Every person in that office is important," he says. "You never know who is connected to whom." It's a hard lesson for a rep when he or she overlooks a staff member who could have been a great asset, he adds. "Treat each team member with the utmost respect!" And, just as importantly, never talk when you should be listening, he points out. "Listen to what is really being said," he explains. "Many times, the problem

requested. [The most] popular sampled products are those that are generally preventive, operative and disposable." That said, when reps leave behind too many samples, they're likely to go unused, he points out. And, it's important to follow up at the next sales call and get the customer's feedback on the samples.

"I feel strongly that [product samples] are a main driver behind the success of direct sellers," says Greenway. "Every [rep] has a great story to tell about why [his or her] product is the best." So, why not let the customer "test drive" it, he says. "It might be worthwhile to ask [customers] to fill out a three-to-four-line questionnaire after they have sampled a product," he suggests. This will deter the customer from

dropping samples into a drawer and forgetting about them, he points out. "Accountability is a wonderful tool. If [dentists] really want to try a product, they won't mind that you are asking for their feedback in return."

Ironically, many distributors have cut back on product samples over the past couple of decades, Greenway continues. But, just as one probably would not give up his favorite sandwich "just because someone says another sandwich is better," many dentists prefer trying out a product before giving up their former brand, he says. "I would think you would want to try [a product] before committing," he says.

Product samples are both "appropriate and necessary," says Kegerise. However, reps tend to leave samples behind "because we like to give things," he notes. "It makes us feel good and productive. Real productivity, however, occurs when samples are evaluated through all areas of the practice. A material, an instrument or a device not only must be effective in the primary operator's hands, it also must get a passing grade with the assistant." In addition, a product must prove to be easy to clean and sterilize; the distributor must provide consistent delivery; and the value proposition must "sync with the practice," he says. "The relationship with the dental practice is strengthened when the practice and the sales rep evaluate a product's impact on the practice together."

While samples more often than not leave your customers with a positive feeling, reps should tread more carefully around literature and other such handouts. "Be a minimalist," says Abrams. "Provide only as much support materials as are needed. Let the client tell you what information will suffice. Support materials will matter more to an analytic dentist."

"The relationship with the dental practice is strengthened when the practice and the sales rep evaluate a product's impact on the practice together."

– Alan Kegerise,
director of sales, Premier Dental

The key is to have a reason for delivering literature and handouts, says Kegerise. "All practices have areas that need attention," he points out. "Discuss with the practice which areas are on their professional watch list. Technology, science and medicine are evolving too fast for any office to stand pat. Uncover which areas are hot and deliver material that is applicable."

Greenway agrees. With so many new products and technologies constantly available, it's important to focus on those that are relevant to each customer. "Dentists have to find a source that they trust for information on a product, [whether] it's another clinician or a website [or another source]," he says.

Lunch-and learns

There's a case to be made for lunch-and learns – as long as they are carried out tactfully and with consideration for everyone's time. They are a great way of bringing everyone in the practice together, notes Buettner. "So, lunch-and-learns are a good way to get everyone's impression about a certain product," he says. At the same time, they can be tricky, as this time may be the only break the dentist and staff have during the day, he adds.

Abrams gears his lunch-and-learns toward practice management. "I try to utilize my time on areas that help grow or improve the client's operation and profitability," he says. And, he makes it a point to review his content with the dentist prior to making his presentation. "I always ask the dentist what message matters most and what key points [he or she] would like me to emphasize." The lunch-and-learn should fit nicely into the time allotted, and the presenter should arrive early to set up, he notes.

Raising the bar

Whether sales reps refer to themselves as consultants or partners with their customers, the fact is, the great ones do all it takes to properly service their customers. "The most progressive dental sales consultants try to raise the bar and engage their customers," says Abrams. "If they help someone grow their dental business and demonstrate sincerity, they generally will achieve a wonderful partnership with their client. This isn't easy and there are many hurdles one must [cross] before achieving this level of engagement. However, the distributor sales rep must create or demonstrate

"The goals of one practice may be different from those of the practice down the street," he says. "Not every dentist wants 25 operatories. Some may value a day off during the week."

— Matt Buettner, sales rep, Midmark Corp.

value in this economic climate. Being organized, honest, on time and competitive no longer is enough."

For Greenway, the key is to learn what drives his customers. "I think it comes down to understanding what is important to the dentist," he says. "I am very fortunate to work for a company that I believe has all the answers. My job is to [determine] what the question is. To assume that [all dentists] want to make more money or take off more time is foolish. If I presuppose what drives [my customers], I might offer solutions to problems they don't have. [I] take time to listen to what their real problems are."

In the end, a job well done is something reps should be proud of. Considering the complexity of the needs of the dental office and the variety of services dental dealers offer, servicing customers can be downright exhausting, says Kegerise. A sales order consists of "an entire series of transactions, including meeting confirmations, back-order investigations, credit resolutions, maintenance scheduling, small equipment repairs, sample evaluations, CE scheduling, long-range project planning, short-term equipment staging [and more]," he points out. "After all that, [the rep] must remember that the dental as-

istant is brand new and the alginate order is changed to regular set," he adds. "To complete this numerous times each day, several days each week, [calls for] an incredible balancing act worthy not only of a seven-digit compensation but of any title that makes the sales rep feel good!"

New Year's resolutions

If there is one thing reps should do more of in the coming year, it's to listen to their customers, says Buettner. He agrees with Greenway that each practice has its own goals. "The goals of one practice may be different from those of the practice down the street," he says. "Not every dentist wants 25 operatories. Some may value a day off during the week."

In 2011, make it a point to listen to your customers, Greenway advises. "The needs of almost every dental practice probably are different. Follow up with your customers. They need to know you will be there for them. And, be responsive to their needs. Get them the answers they need as quickly as possible."

Take time to do the research and analysis required to stay on top of your customers' needs, adds Abrams. Also, "embrace technology and operational efficiencies, and always operate with integrity."

And, remember, says Greenway: "It's not about you. It's about the dentist." [FI]

COMMENT ON THIS ARTICLE AT DENTAL SALES PRO FACEBOOK PAGE

-----[CLICK HERE](#)



Do your customers' masks have gaps in their defenses?

Introducing SecureFit™ masks – custom fit for better protection!

A recent published study found that a tighter-fitting face mask may provide up to **100-fold greater reduction in exposure** to potentially infectious particles than a loose-fitting mask!* The patent-pending design of SecureFit masks creates a tight, customized fit for enhanced infection control. **Help your customers reduce the risk with SecureFit – the next generation of Crosstex face protection!**

CROSSTEX® | PROTECTSSM
A CANTEL MEDICAL COMPANY



SECURE FIT™ Face Masks

- Conform to any size or shape face.
- Form a tight seal with aluminum nose and chin pieces that significantly reduce gapping at the top, sides and bottom of the mask.
- Available in all 3 ASTM performance (fluid resistance) classifications: Low, Moderate and High.



Samples available at crosstex.com

*Diaz K., Smaldone G. Quantifying exposure risk: Surgical masks and respirators. *The American Journal of Infection Control* 2011;038:501-8

Sterilization

Surface Disinfectants

Patient's Choice®

Personal Barriers

Environmental Barriers

888-276-7783 • crosstex.com

BE THE FIRST TO KNOW...



...NOT THE LAST

Tap into the industry's top resource for news by signing up for *First Impressions Weekly Drill*. Once a week you'll receive a **FREE** hard hitting easy-to-read synopsis of what's going on in distribution, manufacturing and with your customers.

It also includes Stock Watch, which covers most of the publicly traded dental companies doing business in these markets, as well as features like Brian Sullivan's Weekly Motivations and the News of the Weird.

Sign up today at: <http://news.firstimpressionsmag.com>