



# First Impressions

For Dental Sales Professionals • July, 2011

## Sounding the Alarm

Roy Shelburne, DDS, found out that if your customers' dental records have any holes, they risk falling through them. And he's letting the industry know.

### PLUS:

- **RAPID FIRE:** The ultimate survival skill for the new economy
- **QUICK BYTES:** Profiling the latest developments in software and gadgets

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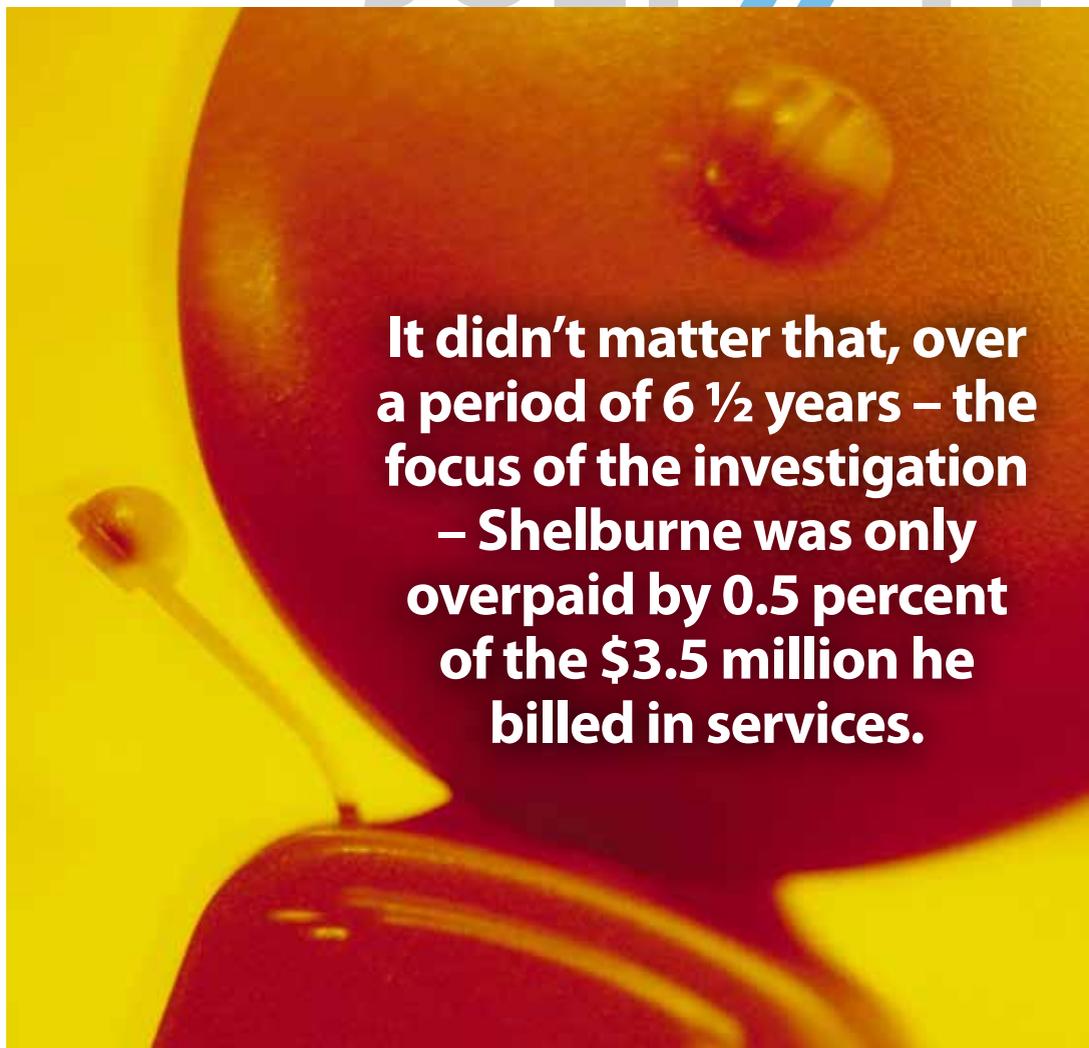
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# Rapid Fire

The ultimate survival skill for the new economy

**W**e're living in incredibly turbulent times. In spite of newspaper headlines proclaiming growing employment and a slowly growing economy, many business people admit to a pervasive feeling of uncertainty and confusion about their businesses.



The well-spring of this uncertainty lies in one of the characteristics of the newly-arrived information age. Business people are being buffeted by an increasingly rapid rate of change. Consider this: In 1900, the total amount of knowledge available to mankind was doubling about every 500 years. In 1990, it was doubling about every

two years. Today, according to some, the rate of change is doubling every 35 days!

Imagine the implications of that kind of increase in the rate of change! It means new products, new regulations, new market configurations, new customers, and new technology in almost every industry. It's no wonder that we're confused and uncertain about what to do. It wasn't so long ago that we had a growing market to cover over many of our flaws. Not true today.

And the growth of that knowledge continues at an expanding rate. One futurist predicts that today's high school students will have to absorb

more information in their senior year alone than their grandparents did in their entire lifetime.

That incredibly rapid pace of new knowledge is driving the forces of change at an unprecedented rate. That rate of change is continuing to accelerate. The effect of that snowballing rate of change on our businesses and our jobs can be cataclysmic.

It's almost as if a malevolent spirit were stalking our economy, rendering all the wisdom of the past useless, and casting a spell of confusion and uncertainty over the land.

The indications are that this rapid state of change will not be a temporary phenomena we all must live through. Rather, it will be the permanent condition we must accept for the foreseeable future. Rapid change is not a phase we're passing through, it's a process into which we're entering.

That means it is likely that the conclusions, paradigms and core beliefs upon which we based our decisions just two or three years ago are likely to be obsolete today. Even more sobering, the conclusions and strategies which we develop today will be obsolete in a couple of years. We can count on this continuing obsolescence of our best ideas and strategies to be the constant state of affairs.

One of my clients recently told his employees, "The only thing you can count on is that you won't be doing this job in three years." His point was that the job will change in that period of time to such a degree that it'll be a different job. The technology used will likely change, as will the customers, the systems and the focus of the job.

The insightful person will accept that rapid change is now a defining characteristic of our economy, and plan to deal with it effectively in an on-going basis. Instead of thinking we should just persevere until it's behind us, we should prepare for rapid change to be a way of life.

What's the best way to go forward in the light of this rapid change? What mind-sets can we adopt that will equip us to survive and prosper in turbulent times? What skills do we need to survive and prosper in the information age?

## Self-directed learning

I believe there is one core skill which will define the most successful individuals. *It's the ability and propensity to engage in self-directed learning.* The only sustainable effective response to a rapidly changing world is cultivating the ability to positively transform ourselves and our organizations. That's the definition of self-directed learning.

In the face of a world that is different one week to the next, our most powerful positive response is

**The insightful person will accept that rapid change is now a defining characteristic of our economy, and plan to deal with it effectively in an on-going basis.**

to cultivate the ability to learn. By "learning," I don't mean just the acquisition of new information, although that is a necessary prerequisite. Rather, I mean the kind of "learning" that requires one to change behavior on the basis of an ever-changing understanding of the world. Learning without behavior change is impotent.

The individuals who become disciplined, systematic self-directed learners will be the success stories of the new economy. Likewise, those organizations which become learning organizations will have the best chance of surviving and prospering.

## Read what others have said about it:

**“...the key thing as we go forward is the ability to learn. You cannot arrest the pace of development in the marketplace, in the world, socially and technologically. It is coming at an increasing rate. You’ve got to be able to learn and adapt...”** – Beale.

Because of the forces surging through our economy, it’s safe to say that tomorrow will be significantly different from today. It will be more complex and somehow significantly changed. That will be true of all the tomorrows in the foreseeable future.

The most skilled employees, therefore, will be the ones who can continually access the changing facts and growing complexity of their jobs, and then change appropriately.

That’s “self-directed learning.”

**“We understand that the only competitive advantage the company of the future will have is its managers’ ability to learn faster than their competitors.”** – Arie P. DeGeus

In a world that is rapidly changing, today’s hot new product is tomorrow’s obsolete dinosaur. More important than any one product is the ability to continually create new products. Today’s strongest employee could very well be tomorrow’s employment problem. More important than any one employee is the ability to find and maintain employees who are constantly growing. Today’s closest customers could be out of business tomorrow. More important than any one customer is the ability to attract and retain customers.

All of these are applications of the ultimate competitive advantage – the ability to learn faster than your competitors.

**“In fact, I would argue that the rate at which individuals and organizations learn may become the only sustainable competitive advantage.”** – Ray Stata

As the economy becomes more and more global, competition will increase. Few businesses will enjoy a secure market position. The quality of competition will also improve as competitors strive to out-do one another in providing customer service and value-added products and services. In this new economy, those who survive and prosper will be those who know how to learn, and who do so faster and more systematically than their competitors.

Those organizations which become learning organizations will be those who fill themselves with people who regularly engage in self-directed learning.

How, then, do you instill this “self-directed learning” in your organization?

Here are three tactics to begin the process.

## Wipe the slate clean

Imagine that you have written the history of your company or your career on a blackboard. You have every decision, every strategy, every success and every failure noted in detail. The sum of this experience provides the rationale for why and how you do everything that you now do.

Now, take a wet towel, and wipe the board clean. Erase the past. As you do so, you eliminate the unspoken acceptance of the way things are, and replace it with the new understanding that things may not be the way they should be. Just because something is, doesn’t mean it should be. The reason you started doing something may no longer exist. Remember, with a world turning over more or less

completely every two to three years, any decision or procedure which had its roots in a situation which is three or more years old may not be justified today.

This little exercise provides a mental image for a change in thinking that needs to take place if you're going to become a learning organization. You must begin to think about things that you do, not on the basis of the past (three or more years ago), but rather on the basis of the present and the future.

It's a way of eliminating one of the biggest barriers to learning and changing. That barrier is the mental obstacles that we put in our own way. Here's an example. One of my clients was frustrated with his continuing inability to motivate his sales force. He spent much of his mental energy and financial resources attempting to get his force of largely independent agents to spend more time with his product. Yet he never thought about going to market in ways other than through his traditional methods. When we broke down that barrier of relying on the past and wiped the slate clean, we discovered a marketing method which holds tremendous potential for his business. However, it took a change in thinking, a thought process that wasn't tied to his past in order to look at the situation on the basis of the present and the future rather than the past.

That principle can be applied in every area of your business, from something so fundamental and important as your method of reaching your customers, to something as mundane as the way you answer the phone, or fill out a receiving document.

### **Give learning a strategic emphasis**

Build in the need to become a learning organization in the most fundamental building blocks of your business.

*Dave Kahle has trained tens of thousands of distributor and B2B sales people and sales managers to be more effective in the 21st Century economy. He's authored nine books, and presented in 47 states and seven countries. Sign up for his weekly Ezine , or visit his blog ([www.davekahl.com/salesblog](http://www.davekahl.com/salesblog)) .*

Write it into your mission statement. Get the board to pass a resolution advocating it. Display your commitment to it predominantly in your personnel manual.

Talk about it at your employee meetings. Make it an agenda item in your executive meetings. Articulate it as an initiative in your strategic planning sessions.

And, begin to model learning behavior yourself.

### **Make self-directed learning a part of everyone's job description**

Begin to create learning expectations for yourself and all your employees. Talk about their need to learn and grow. Include it as an item on every job description.

Then encourage, develop and support learning opportunities throughout your organization. Here's what some things other organizations have done:

- 1)** Require every employee to attend a certain number of outside seminars, internet-based courses or other learning events per year.
- 2)** Reward the effective application of learning. In other words, when someone finds an effective way to change things, reward them. One of my clients holds a monthly employee meeting, where the employee who has made the biggest positive change in the way things are done is rewarded with \$150 cash bonus.

Begin to implement these strategies and you'll take the first steps to transforming your organization into a learning organization. You'll begin the process of mastering the ultimate skill for the new economy. **[FI]**

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# QuickBytes

## 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.

## TV on the go

Wanna watch TV while waiting in the parking lot for your next appointment? A growing number of apps allow you to do just that, according to a *Wall Street Journal* report. Apple's iPad made its debut last year with a TV app built in, and it continues to gain new ones. For instance, HBO just released one. These apps offer primarily delayed, not live, shows. iTunes sells TV by the episode, for

## Get up and go

You want to get up and go with your laptop, but when you return to your desk, you like a big monitor and all your peripherals, such as mobile phone, MP3 player, camera, tab and external storage drive. Samsung's Central Station is an IT hub available in a wired or wireless version. The company says you can bring your notebook back to your desk, and your PC will automatically reconnect

## Apple's iPad made its debut last year with a TV app built in, and it continues to gain new ones.

between \$2 and \$3 (for HD). Best of all, no commercials! Netflix offers an unlimited number of ad-free TV shows on the iPad for \$8 a month. Hulu Plus is another app that offers TV shows, but they do have commercials (probably because Hulu is backed by the major broadcast networks). Xfinity TV is free to verified Comcast subscribers. MLB At Bat allows you to watch almost every regular-season Major League Baseball game live, for a one-time payment of \$15, provided you're a subscriber to MLB's TV service, which costs \$90 a year.

to your USB peripherals, external display and Ethernet. With the wireless version, you bring the notebook close to the unit, and you're on. "The benefit of Central Station is that one minute you can be multi-tasking on your sofa — watching TV while checking your e-mail — and the next minute you can be back at your desk, instantly reconnected to your mouse, keyboard, MP3 player, and external HDD," says Samsung on its website. "Also, you get the additional benefit of an extended desktop on a large secondary display."





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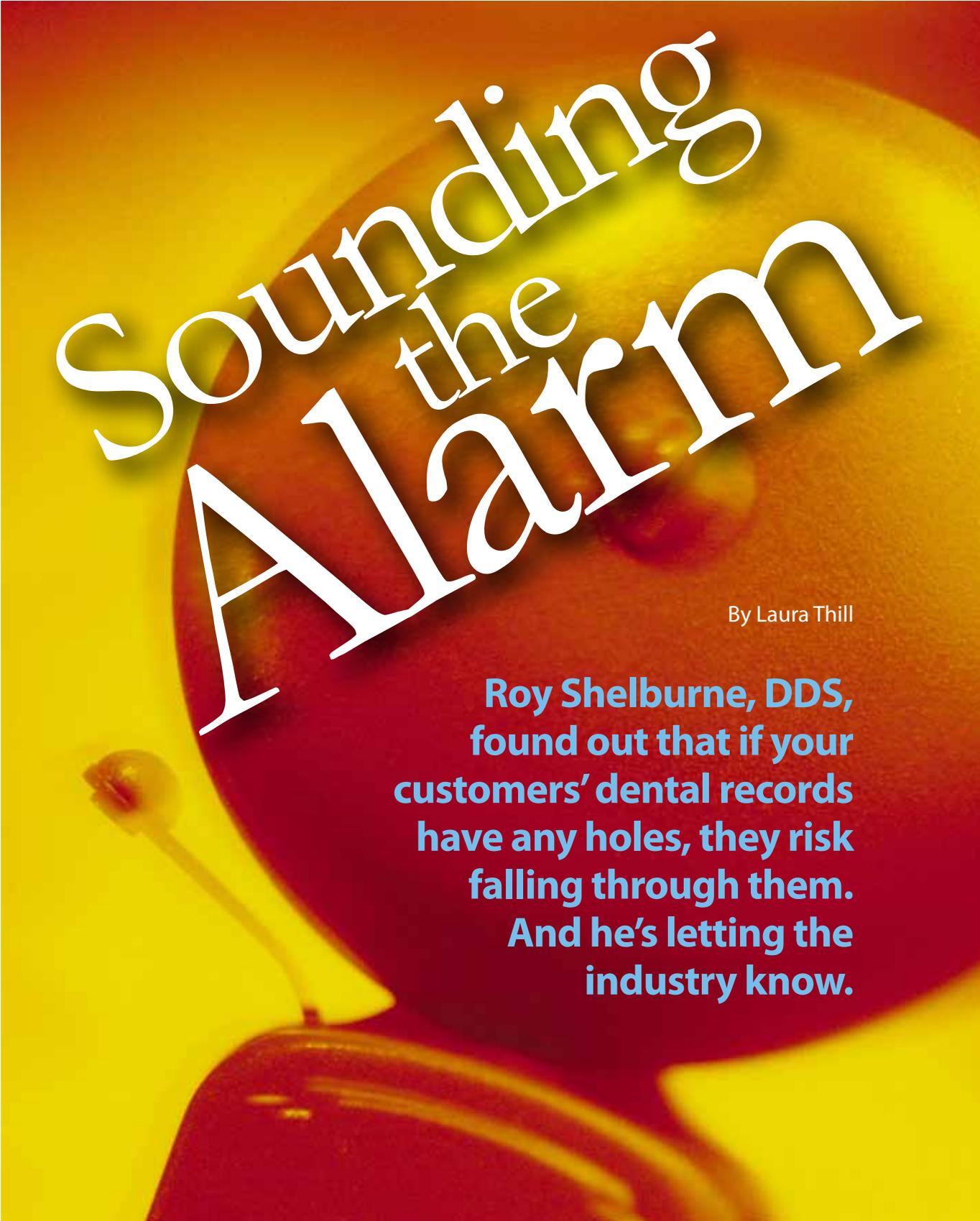
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# Sounding the Alarm

By Laura Thill

**Roy Shelburne, DDS,  
found out that if your  
customers' dental records  
have any holes, they risk  
falling through them.  
And he's letting the  
industry know.**

It's a fine line that separates a successful dentist and one charged with fraud. Ask Roy Shelburne, DDS. The owner of a small-town dental practice since 1981, Shelburne ran a meticulous business – or so he thought – for nearly 27 years. He served as secretary/treasurer and president for Southwest Virginia's Component 6 of the Virginia Dental Association and was a delegate to the Virginia Dental Association's annual meeting. And, together with his family, he volunteered as a short-term missionary with the Baptist Medical Dental Missions International (Honduras) and with the Mission of Mercy projects in Virginia. His patients loved him, and he loved what he did. As he learned, though, that wasn't enough. In March 2006, Shelburne faced a conviction of healthcare fraud stemming from unintended billing errors, a restitution of just under \$18,000, \$275,000 in penalty fees and a 24-month prison sentence.

### A great start

Raised on a farm in southwestern Virginia, Shelburne knew early on that farming was not a great fit for him. After graduating from Commonwealth University Dental, he returned to his hometown, Pennington Gap, Va., to open a solo practice in his grandfather's old hardware store building. Although he was new to dentistry, his roots ran deep in the community. "My grandfather was superintendent of schools, my father taught in the local high school and my mother was a nurse in the local hospital," he says. "With the help of Healthco and my dental rep, Wayne Bays, I put together a plan, hired a contractor and [implemented] the conversion [of the hardware store] in about four months. I saw my first patient July 27, 1981." Once he opened his doors, he never looked back, he adds.

Nestled in one of the poorest counties in Virginia, Shelburne serviced patients who often neglected their oral hygiene due to lack of education and tight finances. Still, his business flourished. "I really didn't have to try to attract new patients," he says. "As in 'The Field of Dreams,' I built it and they came. I was busy from day one." Together, with his wife, Debbie, Shelburne grew his staff to include two business staff members, three dental assistants and two hygienists. Eventually he implemented business and clinical systems designed to improve productivity and quality of service. And, after his son, Ross, completed dental school, he joined the practice as well. It was a dream-come-true, he notes, but one that turned into a nightmare overnight.

### If it's not in the record, it didn't happen

He remembers exactly when the ordeal began. Out of town at the 2003 American Dental Association meeting in San Francisco, Calif., on October 24, he received word that a team of FBI agents had battered down the back office door and confiscated all of the practice's medical and business records. He recalls being "shocked and terrified." Yet, the situation quickly worsened, he says. The search and seizure took place the day before the town's annual festival and, as one might imagine, was big news in a small-town newspaper. Shelburne was sure his reputation was ruined – regardless of the outcome of the pending investigation.

To his surprise, he was wrong. "My patients remained loyal and my practice continued to flourish," he recalls. But dealing with the FBI was no picnic, he adds. "Agents were in the office frequently to speak with staff members and to deliver records for duplication," he says. Sometimes, he would discover federal agents or prosecutors in the parking lot interrogating staff after work. The pressure drove several of them to leave, he notes.

The investigation extended far beyond his office parking lot, Shelburne continues. The FBI subpoenaed a video recording of a church service during which he addressed the issue. It visited businesses and colleagues with whom Shelburne had been in contact – sometimes even subpoenaing their records as well. Perhaps the worst of it was that the FBI also targeted his three children, all of whom were in college at the time, he says. "They would appear at

my children's universities, present their credentials to university authorities and stop my children or remove them from class," he recalls.

Medicaid conducted two audits during the three-year probe and ironically had no complaint with the patient care Shelburne provided or the way he had billed for services, according to Shelburne. Once a complaint had been lodged, however, a formal investigation was initiated. His Medicaid billing records were sent to a dental consultant (a non-practicing dentist in Kentucky) who determined there was possible cause for further review. It didn't

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matter that his practice had never drawn negative attention from Medicaid or the Virginia Board of Dentistry. The investigation moved forward and it was "a matter of time" before the federal prosecutors constructed their case against him, he recalls.

On October 24, 2006, federal agents showed up at his home to arrest him, read him his rights and confiscate his assets, including his vehicles. (They also appeared at his children's universities to confiscate their vehicles as well, leaving them scared and worried about their parents, he recalls.)

Shelburne was sure of his innocence, but shocked and disbelieving that such a thing could happen to him. It was happening, though, and, on one level, the government's charges were accurate, he admits. During the investigation and, later,

in preparation for his trial, it became apparent that his office records, billing and coding systems were not 100 percent accurate, he points out. And, while he says it was clear there was no fraudulent intent, the court system was looking to make an example of Shelburne to the healthcare community. "If something's not in your clinical record, you didn't see it and it didn't need to be done," he says. It's a tough lesson learned, he adds.

Indeed, the practice had made billing and coding errors, which Shelburne was unaware of, he admits.

During the review process, he offered to repay the Medicaid overpayment, along with any applicable fines. The government prosecutors, however, were intent on a prison sentence as well. Shelburne was certain that, because his errors were unintentional, he would be found innocent during the trial. However, that was not the case. "I learned that ignorance is no excuse in the eyes of the law," he says.

## 140 acts and 10 counts

There were 140 acts outlined in Shelburne's indictment, along

with 10 counts (one count of healthcare fraud, one count of racketeering, seven counts of money laundering and one count of structuring). In the end, he was charged with a single count of healthcare fraud. Some of the acts, which were not dismissed, included:

- Upcoding and submitting services not provided. For instance, following one patient's extractions, Shelburne's office mistakenly billed for both procedures using the same code – resulting in a little less than a \$2 overpayment.
- Submitting for services determined to be incomplete, medically unnecessary and/or detrimental to the patient's health. The dental consultant who testified for the prosecution stated that because caries or widespread decay was not evident on patients'

x-rays, restorations placed were unnecessary.

- Submitting billings for services, which were performed in such a way as to be the medical equivalent of performing no service. Although Shelburne's root canal success rate was over 94 percent, the prosecution blamed failures on inadequate treatment.
- Submitting inaccurate billings, which were not supported by documentation in patients' charts. For instance, Shelburne did not always record the diagnostic test he used to determine the need for treatment (e.g., occlusal stick with explorer, transillumination, x-ray, etc.).
- Submitting billings that reflect abuse of billing for emergency treatment. Prosecutors stated that exams should be included in the emergency treatment fee.
- Billing DMAS (Virginia Medicaid) and private health insurance companies for services rendered in connection with a single procedure, collecting for both and failing to reimburse either payor for fees collected. Although Shelburne's office stated it had attached the explanation of benefits form to DMAS and indicated that DMAS insurance was secondary, DMAS processed the payment as if there were no primary insurance.

## Fastidious recordkeeping

Roy Shelburne learned the hard way that, when it comes to recordkeeping and documentation, nothing short of perfection is acceptable. Today, he advises dentists to take the following steps:

- Chart your treatment records as if they will be scrutinized by a prosecuting attorney and a jury of your peers.
- Ensure that every document that leaves your office is completely accurate. (Your freedom depends on it.)
- Train yourself and your staff to conduct periodic audits of your records and billing systems.
- Employ experts to audit your records, billing and coding systems if you are unwilling or unable to do so yourself.
- Adopt necessary changes and improvements to your recordkeeping processes, including billing and coding.

It didn't matter that, over a period of 6 ½ years – the focus of the investigation – Shelburne was only overpaid by 0.5 percent of the \$3.5 million he billed in services. Nor did it matter that the investigation uncovered a number of services for which Shelburne could have billed DMAS, but did not, he points out. The total amount of the unbilled services exceeded the amount he was overpaid by DMAS, he adds – a fact that also did not matter to the prosecution or the jury.

The seven money-laundering counts were dismissed following a Supreme Court decision handed down four days before his sentencing, according to Shelburne. The racketeering and structuring convictions carried a \$200,000 forfeiture penalty. In addition, he was ordered to repay the \$17,889.57 overpayment, along with a \$75,000 penalty fee. But, that wasn't the half of it. Shelburne was sentenced to 24 months in Federal prison, followed by three years of supervised probation.

Shelburne voluntarily surrendered his dental license. Then, he waited. He waited to learn where he would serve his

prison term (In a prison two hours away? Eight hours away? More?) He waited to learn when he would begin his sentence. And, once he knew his assignment and starting date, he waited to learn if he would live in a medium security area or a prison camp (much less restricting). He was relieved to find out that he would spend the next two years in a facility in Manchester, Ky., in the prison camp. "My son graduated

from dental school in May of 2008 and was licensed to step into the practice that June," he notes. "We had hoped to practice together and serve the community side by side, but that was not meant to be." In August, Shelburne began his sentence in Manchester.

While the time apart from his family was excruciating, Shelburne was surprised to discover how "fine" his prison mates were. Indeed, he spent the next 21



## The journey home

Shelburne has been out of prison since May 2010. Upon leaving the facility, "the first thing I did was to kiss and hug my wife and daughter in the parking lot," he recalls. "We got into our vehicle and drove to the halfway house, where they dropped me off.

"We really haven't picked up the pieces," he continues. "That would suggest that we could somehow put back together

**"I may apply for reinstatement of my dental license on July. If it is granted, I hope to resume practice, a bit older and wiser."**

– Roy Shelburne

months (released three months early for good behavior) surrounded by people of "all walks of life," including physicians, lawyers, stock brokers, investment bankers, mortgage lenders, real estate brokers, judges – even a state senator. "I never felt threatened or scared while in prison," he says. Nor did he expect to be treated with so much kindness and respect, he adds.

In addition to his prison jobs, first washing windows and later working in the prison leisure library, Shelburne busied himself with a lot of writing and reading, teaching Bible studies and completing CE credits. "I also tried to mentor others who arrived and needed help getting through the process," he says.

what we had. What we had was gone. The past is the past and we – or I – choose not to go back there. To dwell on what was and what happened would serve no useful purpose. There has been no looking back – only moving forward to a new life and a new 'normal.' As long as we have each other, the future is very bright."

Since leaving prison, Shelburne has been working as a dental lab technician and speaking to dentists to caution them "to be careful in their record-keeping and billing/coding" protocols. "I may apply for reinstatement of my dental license in July," he says. "If it is granted, I hope to resume practice, a bit older and wiser." There are no guarantees, he notes, but if all goes well, he is more than ready to return to his practice and his patients. "Practicing dentistry has always been a pleasure and a great joy for me," he adds. [\[FI\]](#)

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# news

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## **Benco Dental's relief efforts help tornado victims in Alabama**

Benco Dental developed the Benco 4 Bama Relief efforts in response to the recent devastating tornados in Alabama. About 1 million people were without power, nearly 14,000 homes were destroyed and more than 200 Alabama residents were killed. The Benco Dental team reached out to local manufacturer representatives and asked for donations of supplies including diapers and hand sanitizers, and response was overwhelming with donations from large manufacturers such as Septodont, Procter & Gamble and Midmark as well as from Benco employees pouring in almost immediately. Benco employees also volunteered their time to help residents sort through wreckage, make repairs and offer emotional support. While many dental offices were spared from destruction, a few Benco Dental customers saw their offices either severely damaged or completely destroyed. For information about the Benco 4 Bama Relief Efforts, visit [www.benco.com](http://www.benco.com).

## **Henry Schein disaster relief hotline still open**

Melville, N.Y.-based Henry Schein Inc's disaster relief hotline will remain open for dentists, physicians and veterinarians who experience operational, logistical or financial issues as a result of tornadoes, hurricanes and other devastating storms. The toll-free number for all dental, medical and animal health customers is (800) 999-9729. The hotline is operational from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. CDT. Also, the Henry Schein Tornadoes Relief Fund remains open to support relief efforts. To donate by credit card, visit [www.hscaresfoundation.org](http://www.hscaresfoundation.org).

## **J. Morita announces Rose as new national sales manager**

J. Morita USA appointed Andrew Rose as the national sales manager for large equipment. Rose brings ten years of management experience, including five years at J. Morita, to the position. His previous roles at J. Morita have included sales for small equipment and consumables, as well as technical service specialist which entailed installation and training for both 2D and 3D x-ray units. This new position was created to help sustain J. Morita USA's growth in the area of capital equipment and will supervise all sales activities in the U.S. and Canada including training, strategy, dealer relations, and management of the outside sales team. He will report directly to Steven White, SVP of sales and marketing.

## **NDC announces two new distributor members**

NDC Dental announced two new members, Cramer Dental Sales Inc and PureLife Dental. Cramer Dental is Minnesota's only stocking distributor of dental supplies, selling a full line of dental merchandise and equipment, and now also provides access to the Quala brand of dental products. PureLife Dental was founded as the dental industry's first environmentally friendly dental supply company. The three sales reps and 10 customer service reps support its customer base with "green" programs and products

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## 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**® | PROTECTS<sup>SM</sup>  
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](http://crosstex.com)

\*Diaz K, Snaidone G. Quantifying exposure risk: Surgical masks and respirators. *The American Journal of Infection Control* 2011;38:501-8

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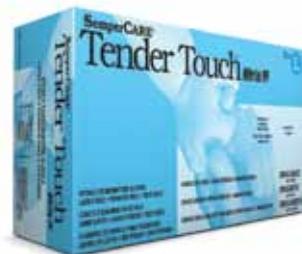


# MINIMIZE EXPOSURE.

Your customers require a glove with the strength to protect them from exposure to on-the-job risks. SemperCare® Tender Touch™ Nitrile is that glove. With a softer nitrile formulation, it maintains a high resistance to tears, punctures and chemical hazards. It also provides excellent tactile sensitivity and a comfortable fit. So, you can provide your customers with the everyday comfort they seek without sacrificing the critical protection they demand.

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 Tender Touch™ gloves you provide your customers will minimize risk and maximize comfort every time.

**Sempermed®**  
We are people protection.®



**For your free box of Tender Touch™ gloves,**  
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For more information visit [SempermedUSA.com/FirstImpressions](http://SempermedUSA.com/FirstImpressions)

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