

## VISUAL IDENTITY SYSTEM OF A DENTAL LABORATORY

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### ABSTRACT

The growing competition in the segment of medical services has introduced the need for clear differentiation and, also, the need for increased visibility. The dental laboratories has to promote the quality of their services, of the materials that they are using, the continuously need for novelty, and never the less the successfully and growing relationships with the dental practices, ("We grow together") Therefore, having a strong identity system, that is also in accordance with the values, that want to be promoted, is very important.

**Key words:** dental laboratories, visual identity, specialized dental works, vales

A successful relationship between the dental technician and the doctor begins with an honest image created around the dental laboratory, which must be reflected first in quality care and which finally materializes into a financial reward.

Due to fierce competition in dental business, the need for differentiation has become increasingly acute.

The identity of the dental practice is essential in defining the doctor's opinion about the technician's passion in dental art, the quality and consistency of the services offered, the aim for perfection, the lack of compromises in the quality of materials and, not least, the technology used. It must establish a different relation between the technician and the medical office, based on better communication, trust and quality, so as the patient to benefit of the best results for his money.

A visual identity system consists of all the

means that enable a company to visually stand out and differentiate itself from the competition.

Besides the differentiating factor, a visual identity is designed to send out to current and potential clients a clear visual message about its particular features that distinguish the dental lab and makes it unique. First of all, this message has to be honest, and it must be rendered in a concise and unified way, throughout all the elements of the visual identity. Also, the nature of this message is largely based on the target of the private dental practice, the desired client segment. A younger target, for example, will not be very receptive to a message designed for an older target.

The visual identity of a dental lab depends strongly on the company's market positioning. Besides the age segment it addresses, and the according message that has to be sent, market positioning means the way

the company will carry out its activities and the services that will be provided for its clients.

In the case of dental laboratories, positioning consists of establishing the set of services that the dentist and the patient benefit from. For example, there are dental laboratories specialized in different types of prosthetic works with ceramic and zirconium, implant prosthetics, using different computer programs. Also, in the case of this specialized positioning, we must consider the higher cost of investment, which implies that the clinic will try to reach a target consisting of clients who appreciate the high quality and up-to-date prosthetic solutions. It is recommended that all the choices made regarding the positioning process also be reflected in the visual identity of the lab, and all these advantages to be communicated to potential clients and dentists.

The visual identity system of a dental laboratory has the same main features as any company who wants to become a brand. These features represent the answer to the following questions:

1. The type of services, the final product (the prosthetic works)
2. What kind of values do they want to promote (quality, consistency, promptitude, diversity)
3. The name of the company (source, representative character, objectivity)
4. Qualities that differentiate it from the competition (accessibility, the quality of the materials, a complete set of works, continuous innovation and improvement)
5. To which type of clients the lab appeals (well trained doctors, with continuous desire of self-improvement)
6. The most important message to be sent (top quality, accessible services, effective communication between doctor and technician)
7. Use of promotional items: stationary,

signage, personalized objects, website.

All these elements have to be definite, clear about the message the company wants to send. Lately, the visual identity of the lab does not only address to the dentists, but also to the patient. A modern laboratory has now a special space dedicated to the patient.

The identity of a private dental practice starts primarily with its name. The naming process for the private dental market goes into three main categories: one where the name of the practice comes from the name of the owner, the second is an association of specialized names, like "stoma", "dent", "technician", or "smile" related, like: "smile", "white", and the last one, a combination of the last two categories ("White Dent", "Smile Dent").

The name of the dental practice should be as original as possible, suggesting the company profile (the laboratory), also it should include everything the office wants to symbolize, its market positioning, modern, top quality, up-to-date services.

At the base of a visual identity stands the visual signature - the logo. Normally, it is composed of the practice's name and a visual sign. But there are cases when well-known companies use only the visual sign as a logo - Apple or the NIKE arrow.

To have a greater impact on the clients, the logo must be definite and simple. Thus, the logo can settle quickly in the mind of the potential client and it can easily convey to the viewer the company's most representative features encapsulated in it. Simplicity in logos is dictated largely by the fact that the market, regardless of the business segment, is overcrowded by business competitors, and the clients tend to be receptive only to concise messages, easy to memorize.

Besides the logo, the quality and tone of a visual identity are also dictated by the colour scheme and fonts used. Thus, through visual metaphors, the identity can quickly send out

the company's features to the viewer. Using a set of cool colours- blue, light blue, grey—we can convey the idea of premium services, aimed at a target with an income above average. A warmer colour scheme, instead-orange, green - can imply that the services are aimed at a younger, more dynamic target.

At the same time, we must take into account the fact that, depending on the kind of business we refer to, there are some colours that have negative connotations for the target and should be avoided. Also it has to be taken into account the fact that one of the visual identity's main target in dental offices is to gain the patient's trust and to symbolise the new, the modern technology, the quality of the prosthetic work. Chromatically, this can be achieved through a range of calming, cool, slightly desaturate colours – blue, violet (lila), light green, pink., In the medical field the blue and the green also present the advantage of conveying the feeling of clean, aseptic environment (for blue) and natural, youthful (for green).

As in the case of inappropriate colours for the dental field, there are also shapes and symbols that are inappropriate or are considered a cliché. Such an example is the logo in the shape of a molar. The problem is not the molar itself, but the fact that the molar has been used so often that it has become a cliché. Furthermore, using this symbol in a visual identity will not help differentiate a private dental practice from its competitors.

The completion of message of the visual identity and of the logo is followed by the customization of the dental practice's materials, also called applications. According to their purpose and use, the applications are divided into several categories:

- **Basic stationery:** business cards, letterheads, envelopes, official correspondence, pens, personal agendas, calendars;
- **Activity-specific documents** (handed

directly to the dentists): laboratory sheets, brochures that can explain the different dental works, prosthetic works), booking registry, financial accounting documents (invoices and receipts).

- **Equipment-customization:** customized medical equipment, badges
- **Interior signage:** panels and boxes for information and orientation inside the clinic;
- **Promotional items** and documents: brochures, catalogues, posters, flyers, website.

There are also objects that can incorporate elements of visual identity: dental prints boxes, boxes for mobile data braces or retainers that are shipped to the dental laboratory.

For reasons of visibility, the logo is normally placed in the upper left side of the personalized items, due to the fact that the human sight starts scanning any surface for information from its top left corner, downward.

The implementation of visual identity does not stop at a customized stationery and the signage (light box, totems, banners, advertising on cars, fliers). The identity process can also influence the interior design of the dental practice, the configuration of the workspaces and the access ways and the set of colours used for the furniture and the finishes, the ultimate goal consisting in the implementation of a unified and strong visual identity for the patient and the doctor.

A very important space inside a dental practice or a clinic, often treated with too little attention is the waiting room. This space is, on the one hand, meant to enable the doctor, patient to wait in a pleasant, comfortable space, and on the other hand it has to accustom the client with the visual identity of the dental practice/clinic, through the colours used on the walls and the furniture. It is also recommended to place

posters on the waiting room walls showing different types of prosthetic works, in order to lower the patient's anxiety.

The identity of a private dental office should not be limited only to the visual aspects. To ensure better results, the identity system can extend the concept of auditory identity - playing soft, relaxing music in the waiting room helps reduce stress levels and also covers some of the specific noise produced by the dental equipment.

Another important component that has a major influence on the patient's condition is verbal identity, the way staff employed in the dental office talks to the patient. From the greeting formulas and the tone of voice, these aspects help to highlight the professionalism of the staff, and they help in establishing a friendly and warmer relationship with the patient, increasing his confidence in the dental practice's services. This can be achieved through education, training and use of typical verbal formulas.

All these methods applied accurately and at the same time lead to enhancing the

patient's trust towards his dentist and the need for a quality medical act, thus persuading him to accept more easily a certain therapeutic solution, in terms of pain risk, period of completion, and also financially.

Very few private dental practices invest in a visual identity system. Most often, management representatives overlook the importance of development and differentiation of medical services with increased competition and consider that good service alone is enough to assure business success. The importance of proper presentation of the practice's dental works is also overlooked, the dental technician relying only upon verbal, empathic elements. The impact of visual identity on how the patient understands and perceives the medical work and, also, the impact the identity has on the patient's mental state, cannot be ignored. If all the elements of the identity system are implemented with accuracy and coherency, the relationship among doctor, technician and patient will be a successful one.

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