

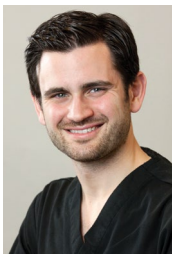
## Career Journey: When is the Right Time for the Next Step?

### Tips for Setting Yourself up for Success as You Navigate the Next Steps in Your Career Journey

Your dental career is filled with many important decisions. Should you own a practice, or just earn a strong income as an associate? If you want to be the boss, should you buy, or start from scratch? Would you like to own multiple practices? Do you dream of being a public speaker, mastering an aspect of dentistry, and educating your colleagues? Dentists are quite fortunate to be able to take their careers down multiple potential paths, but that means we are faced with the tough question: when is the right time for the next step?

#### HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO GUIDE YOU ON YOUR CAREER PATHWAY

- ▶ **Ownership isn't for everyone.** Depending on your lifestyle and entrepreneurial spirit, you might prefer to remain an associate dentist. There are also dentists who work for large group practices that are considered "owners" for legal reasons, but who don't have the full responsibilities (or benefits) of traditional ownership.
- ▶ **If you buy or start a practice, don't do it blindly.** Buying means you can get a head start, securing an established team with established systems, a patient base with expected revenue, etc. But, it also means you'll have a lot more work to do if your vision for your practice is very different from what currently exists. A *de novo* practice can be more like what you want from the start, but you have the heavy lift of building those systems and that culture... plus, no patient base. With proper planning, buying or starting a practice is a calculated risk.
- ▶ **Plan your business model.** Whether you buy or start a practice, you should be clear about the kind of dentistry you want to do. Consider your ideal target markets and figure out how you can deliver dentistry to them in unique ways. Don't try to be everything to everyone; be something special to select groups of patients.
- ▶ **Get comfortable giving feedback.** You should not become a business owner if you can't give constructive criticism. Your practice's reputation, your operations, and your overall success all depend on your ability to lead your team and to correct behavior that is not in line with your vision.
- ▶ **If you want to become a Key Opinion Leader (KOL), plan your personal brand.** A KOL is someone who writes, lectures, influences, and/or consults in the dental industry. If you aspire to have an impact on your profession outside of the operatory, there are many opportunities to do so, while earning an income and growing as a leader. But, take these steps carefully and with great thought to your personal brand.



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**HAVE A FOLLOW-UP QUESTION?** Please contact Dr. Chris Salierno directly at [drsalierno@gmail.com](mailto:drsalierno@gmail.com).

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