

# My Dental

## CPA

### Basic Start Up Checklist (CPA Perspective)

This checklist is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to serve as a practical guide, based on our recommendations when working with clients. We defer to the dental supply company on the timing for ordering equipment and supplies.

#### What You Should Already Have:

- Relationship with a CPA
  - *We recommend developing these relationships shortly after or during dental school.*
  - *It is helpful for your CPA to have experience with dental practices, but it's not essential. What is critical is that your CPA has a strong business focus and understands small business operations.*

#### What to Do Early in Consideration of the Startup:

- Determine if you want to use a startup consultant.
  - *No doubt you can do everything on your own, but it is sometimes helpful to have someone other than your CPA beside you to help with insurance negotiations, licensing, marketing, and so on.*
- Develop a relationship with a banker who's very familiar with dental startups. (Provide, Bank of America, and Huntington all work with startups.)
- Consider locations.
  - *You will want to take into account rooftops (homes in the area), growth, and income of the area you will be building a practice.*
  - *Remember the adage: "location, location, location."*
    - ♦ For dental practices, I would say, "location, location, marketing."
  - *Once you have your location, work on office design, equipment, and budgeting.*
    - ♦ We recommend starting with at least three operatories equipped with space for two additional ones for future expansion.
- If not working with a dental startup consultant, you may want to work with a real estate professional who specializes in dental/medical facilities.
- Have your attorney create a business entity, typically a PLLC or LLC depending on the state you live in. If you have an entity that you were using as a 1099 contractor, that should be fine.
  - *Go ahead and make an S-election for the entity to be taxed as an S-Corporation.*
- Get a bank account in the name of the entity and under the entity's FEIN (Social Security Numbers for businesses). You should also get a business credit card. Make sure it has travel points or cash back.
- If we are working with a client, we will go ahead and set up QuickBooks Online and start keeping track of expenses. We do not charge for this service and begin charging once the entity is open.

### 3 to 6 Months Out From Opening:

- We encourage clients to place “Coming Soon” signage on the office exterior and create Facebook and Instagram accounts to engage the community. Let others follow and be excited with you.
- Select a practice management software.
- Secure the various insurances you will need. We recommend working with an agent.
- Begin drafting office procedures and employee manuals to establish expectations and compliance.
- Develop a marketing plan. I think this is a great time to interact with the community and start getting buy-in.
- Decide what insurance plans you will be in network with.
  - *We recommend working with an organization that specializes in negotiating PPO contracts and credentialing. It usually pays for itself in the long run.*

### 60 Days From Opening:

- Once you have an opening date, it’s critical to begin marketing your practice and scheduling appointments two months out from opening.
- Start looking for dental assistants and front-desk help.
  - *Most of the practices we work with start without a hygienist, and we work them into the practice as it grows. Ideally, they start part time and move to full-time as needed.*
  - *It is nice to have a dental assistant that can also help at the front desk when needed.*
- Consider using an AI (artificial Intelligence) receptionist to make appointments when you are not available. If you have not seen one in action, it is amazing what they can do.

### 30 Days Before Opening:

- At this point, you may be thinking, “what have I done?” Your practice is going to do great and be very successful. It is normal and desirable to be a little scared at this point. It is a big step.
- Consider bringing your team together in the office to start training and have a live front-office person making appointments.
- Expect a steep learning curve during this phase.
- Marketing becomes really important at this point, so hit it hard.
- Consider offering a promotion, such as free teeth whitening for the first 100 patients.

### Opening:

- The day has finally come. Understand your days may not be as full as you would like and are used to. This is normal.
- Marketing remains essential. Consistency in outreach will make the difference.

### Year One:

- The first year, you will need to work with your professional team, as every practice is different.
- General dentistry operates on a six-month cycle, with regular patient recall.
  - *The most important statistics to look at for a new hygiene practice, in my mind, are the number of new patients seen each month and the percentage of patients who return for the second cleaning. Once a patient has come back, they are generally yours.*

- Carefully watch growth over the year and start working a hygienist onto the schedule with the aim for them to be full-time by the end of the year.
- Consider if we need to equip the fourth op.
- Now, you are a business owner before you are a dentist. It is time to think like a business owner (Be a Business Owner First).
  - *Understand where we want to be in three years and start making decisions that will take us there. There is a time we have to make decisions for today, but always be thinking, “How does this work with my three-year plan?”*