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Business Of Dental Hygiene



NOWsmile For Independence!

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It has been suggested that a person may change careers three times over the course of his or her working life. At the youthful age of forty-one, with fifteen years of experience in my chosen profession, I realized that the time was now or never to follow my own desire for change. Passionate about my work and armed with the courage to accept great risk, I took a leap of faith and changed directions within my field, moving from employee to entrepreneur and starting my own independent dental hygiene practice.

As many in our profession can attest, the relationship between client and dental hygienist is unique and may translate into a lifelong friendship. I wished to provide my loyal clientele and friends with a place to feel at ease, in comfortable surroundings more suited to my personal style and free from the confines of my former employers and their visions and philosophies of the perfect dental office. I imagined an eco-friendly urban aesthetic with a less clinical approach to dental hygiene, where my clients would feel like they were in an extension of their own home or in the warm, inviting comfort of their favourite coffee shop. Headstrong and with a fire in my belly, I quietly resigned from my place of employment and set out to follow my heart.

Years of mental planning led to about six months of detailed financial strategizing, construction, and renovation, and the doors to NOWsmile opened at the end of February 2015. Working in a predominately female profession, I knew that I could face obstacles attracting new clients as a sole male proprietor. The public's perception of a dental hygienist is typically that of a female and not of a tattooed, bearded guy like myself. It's my personal belief that males may be considered more aggressive when it comes to performing dental hygiene services. As a result, potential clients may prefer seeing a female for a "gentler cleaning." This, of course, is without merit but a concern nonetheless when trying to establish a client base for a new business. Over time, male dental hygienists are becoming less of a

rarity and tattoos are now widely considered artwork, two developments that allow my clients to see more readily past my outward appearance and enable them to experience my professional capabilities firsthand. Thankfully, with established clients and loyal friends, various methods of online and print advertising, sports sponsorship, and word of mouth, I opened NOWsmile to a small but encouraging client base that kept me employed while I continued working diligently to fill my schedule.

These days, the personal challenges that I face involve the managing aspects of this great venture. As an inexperienced businessman, I strive on a daily basis to learn how to operate a functional and successful practice. Fortunately, having worked in the dental profession as a hygienist, assistant, and at the front desk, I've had the opportunity to immerse myself in and observe the inner workings of operating a clinic and am now putting those observations to use. Utilizing online technology and social media as means of advertising my business have also been learning experiences and are proving to be fundamental in attracting new clients. Entrepreneurship has been the realization of a dream, and I'm confident that I have made the right decision with this endeavour. I am encouraged by and motivated to ensure the success of my passion, and each day provides its own rewarding moments.

From its façade to its furnishings, NOWsmile is a friendly, happy, and fun environment that flows at a smooth, gentle pace and offers the casual atmosphere that I had imagined for my livelihood and clientele. I no longer feel like I'm going into work because I have built my place of employment as a comfortable second home—one that I love to visit every day. Many months of hard work, dedication, and perseverance have turned my vision into reality as I continue to push forward into the future. I feel proud calling into the office and listening to the front desk answer with "Good morning, NOWsmile!" because I immediately do just that and know it's going to be another great day of independence.